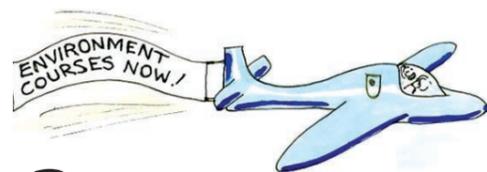


Society Matters



The Newspaper for all Social Sciences Students and Staff at the Open University
Issue number 11, 2008 – 2009



How green is the Open University?

In 2009 the OU launches a new foundation course on the environment and a third-level course on an earth in crisis, but does the University practise what it teaches? Yvonne Cook, editor of *Open Eye* and former editor of *Sesame*, discovers a university with progressive piecemeal policies but, as yet, no overarching sustainable strategy or an environment manager to oversee it



There is a story that in 1993, when OU courses were first offered in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, a party of former students travelled from Czechoslovakia to the main university campus at Milton Keynes to train as tutors. They were in for a shock.

'They arrived on the campus by bus and saw 2,000 parked cars. Their jaws dropped. They had studied the OU's excellent environment courses. The divergence between content and practise was staggering – and I think it still is,' said Dr Petr Jehlicka, Open University Lecturer in Environmental Geography and chair of a new third-level course for 2009 called DU311 *Earth in Crisis: environmental policy in an international context*.

The sad truth is that, at a university with a Professor of Transport, Stephen Potter, who is an acknowledged expert in sustainable travel, the campus (in 2008) has 2,455 parking spaces, nearly all occupied during working hours. In addition, although the OU adopted a new sustainability policy earlier in 2008, it has so far stopped short of a high-level commitment to making sustainability a theme across all its activities. According to the university secretary, Fraser Woodburn, many of the ingredients for a sustainable OU are already in place. However, making an objective assessment of the University's green credentials is no simple task.

The OU has a claim to be super-green, on the basis that it is a large-scale, distance education institution. In 2002 the University's Design and Innovation Group published a study called 'Towards Sustainable Higher Education', which compared distance educators to conventional face-to-face universities. The group's head, Robin Roy, Professor of Design and Environment, said, 'We found that distance teaching reduced energy use and CO₂ emissions by nearly 90 per cent. In those terms, the OU is probably the absolute best in terms of low energy and CO₂ emissions.'

However, Robin agrees that in terms of the OU's own housekeeping, there is still some way to go. 'The OU tries to encourage staff to save energy and recycle, but I am not sure how much people are changing their behaviour as a result. What it really needs is for each university department to appoint someone whose responsibility it is to make sure taps are not left dripping, everybody has a recycling bin by their desk, people are turning off lights and radiators are not going full blast while the windows are open, and so on.'

However inherently green distance education may be, it does not alter the fact that the OU has a large physical infrastructure, which makes it a big consumer of energy, resources and transport, and a significant producer of CO₂, the most important of the greenhouse gases linked to climate change. In 2004 the main campus at Milton Keynes was using more than 20 Megawatts of heating a year, an amount that brought the University within the ambit of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, launched in 2005 to curb power use in large organizations such as power stations and chemical plants.

for the first time. The OU now has a Carbon Management Plan, which aims to reduce its carbon emissions by 15 per cent by 2016, equivalent to an annual saving of 2,989 tonnes. It has also devised strategies on energy, the environment and, most recently, sustainability. All are publicly available on the Estates' energy website, www.open.ac.uk/energy-matters.

There have been measurable improvements. Since 2005 the OU has reduced its energy consumption to below the threshold for the EU Emissions Scheme through a range of measures, including more efficient heating and better insulation. It now purchases all its electricity from renewable sources, and has reduced its gas consumption by 23 per cent and water consumption by 19 per cent since 2001.

Energy is not the only area to be targeted. More waste is being recycled. The University's computing department has developed a Green Computing Guide. Its materials procurement department, which buys more than £10 million worth of paper a year for course materials and other uses, operates an environmental policy that insists its suppliers work to Forest Stewardship Council standards. Even its caterers have been reducing food miles and recycling cooking oil for bio-fuel. And *Society Matters* is now printed on recycled paper.

Transport, though, remains a problem. Staff commuting accounts for 22 per cent of the University's carbon emissions and business/fleet travel a further 16 per cent – largely because public transport links to the main campus are poor. The University has notched up some small successes, including increasing the number of registered car-

sharers, but a number of academics would like to see more radical measures to get staff out of their cars and onto public transport or bicycles.

The Estates department is looking at further green measures. A new agreement with Salix, part of the Carbon Trust, will provide additional funding for energy-saving projects. Combined heat and power systems, and even an on-campus wind turbine, are under discussion. Alan Burrell, head of the Estates department, thinks the OU has the potential to be at the forefront of green universities in the future. 'We have done a lot, but we can do a lot more. We are in a unique position amongst universities

Continued on Page 2



Cycle to work day, 8 July 2008. The annual event attracted 125 participants to Walton Hall

In addition to a 48-acre campus at Walton Hall, the University also has thirteen regional centres and two warehouses, and a network of study centres largely rented from other institutions.

The good news is that the OU is actively reducing its energy consumption. In 2004 it appointed an Energy Manager to monitor a range of energy-saving policies and activities implemented primarily by the University's Estates department, which manages buildings and infrastructure.

In 2005 it was among the first twenty UK universities to join the Carbon Trust's Higher Education Carbon Management (HECM) pilot programme, which required it to estimate its carbon footprint

Green shoots – OU ranked 75th in University Green League

People & Planet, the UK student action group, ranked the Open University 75th out of 119 higher education institutions in its 2008 Green League table. The OU scored zero in the areas of environmental auditing, Fairtrade status and ethical investment policy.

The ranking, published in *Times Higher Education* on 3 July, shows that 117 universities have environmental policies. Seventy have full-time environmental staff; 88 have schemes to involve staff in environmental management; 73 have conducted comprehensive environmental reviews. No university achieved full marks on energy resources, and only 13 used more energy from non-renewable sources last year. Ten universities received full marks on ethical investment. Overall, 15 universities were deemed to have 'failed'. The OU, which makes its first appearance in the table, was awarded the equivalent of a class 2.2 degree.

The Open University said in a statement to *Society Matters* that the Green League results are based on 'inputs rather than outputs' and do not measure fully all that the OU is achieving. The University explained the Green League assessment does not take into account the fact that the OU is inherently more sustainable, due to the distance-learning nature of the institution. Defending its zero scores, the OU said it does sell Fairtrade and Rainbow Alliance products but Fairtrade status is primarily designed for conventional universities. It does not invest in stocks and shares and so is ineligible for an ethical investment ranking. And it plans to conduct an environmental audit next year. *Society Matters* will report on any progress made.

Rank 2007-2008	Rank 2006-2007		Environmental policy	Environmental staff	Total score	Class
		Max points available per category	10.0	12	60.0	
1	(5)	Univ of Glos	10.0	12	55.0	1st
2	(2)	Univ of Plymouth	9.5	12	52.5	1st
3	(8)	Univ of the W of Eng	10.0	12	51.5	1st
4	(8)	Anglia Ruskin Univ	9.5	12	49.5	1st
5	(38)	Loughborough Univ	9.0	12	47.5	1st
5	(8)	Univ of Cambridge	9.0	12	47.5	1st
5	(50)	Univ of Central Lancs	10.0	12	47.5	1st
75	(-)	Open University	8.5	4	27.5	2:2
119	(102)	London Sch Hygiene & Tropical Med	2.0	2	7.0	Fail

The full table is available on the *Society Matters* Extra weblink

Source: *Times Higher Education*, 3 July 2008

Feeding on empty

In 2008, food prices in the developed and developing world are soaring. Global inflation in food, as measured by the international food price index, increased by 40 per cent in 2007, and has soared further this year.

Levels of world cereal crops are at an all time low. As food-aid programmes run out of money, world leaders meet in frenzied anxiety about diminishing food stocks; they are beginning to acknowledge, at last, the severity of this 'man-made' global food crisis.

Forecasters, such as the international think-tank Chatham House, have predicted that demand for food will rise by 50 per cent by 2030. The UN have reported that to simply keep up with the growth in human population, more food will have to be produced in the world in the next 50 years than there has been produced during the previous 10,000 years. About 40 per cent of the world's agricultural land is already degraded. In 1980 the world's population was 4.4 billion. By 2050 it is expected to reach 9 billion.

From Haiti to Uzbekistan, the poor are bearing the brunt of the problem. Hundreds of people have died in protests across the world. In India, rice has been rationed. In April the World Bank predicted that at least 100 million people across the globe could face starvation. EU estimates suggest that 25,000 people are dying daily from hunger as food prices reach their highest level since 1945.

The causes of this international food crisis are very complex. A variety of factors have been identified, ranging from climate change, poor farming practices, deforestation and soil erosion to global overpopulation. Speculation on commodity futures in the world's stock markets, following the collapse in confidence in conventional financial markets and the fall of the dollar, has exacerbated the problem. Following the credit crunch the search for profits has resulted in enormous fluctuations in market prices that do not appear to be related to shifts in supply and demand.

As the world's oil reserves decline, the switch by governments, including our own, to force increasing acreages of farmland to convert from food production to the production of crops for bio-fuels, has distorted the system of production to the extent that an attempt, if it was, to satisfy environmental priorities has created increased food scarcity and pushed up prices. In July the World Bank reported that biofuels have driven up food prices by over 75 per cent since 2002.



'No subtext' by C K Purandare

By 2010, across Europe it will be mandatory, for example, for petrol retailers to mix 5.75 per cent of bio-fuels into fuel sold to motorists. However, it is not just in the EU that we are being asked to burn crops to fuel our cars – the USA, India, Brazil and China have similar prospective schemes. India, for example, has pledged to meet 10 per cent of its vehicle fuel needs with bio-fuels. In America, bio-fuel consumption for motor vehicles is now enough to cover all the import needs of the 82 nations classified by the UN as 'low-income food deficit countries'. It is probably too simplistic to suggest that our transport systems can lead to starvation in the developing world, but the connection is unavoidable.

In seven of the past eight years, the world has consumed more grain than it has supplied. The growth in bio-fuel consumption has

not only benefited the rich countries and denuded the poorest, but it has depleted global grain stockpiles, pushing millions more of the world's poor deeper into poverty. The International Monetary Fund reported in April that corn-based ethanol production in the USA accounted for half the increase in the global demand for corn. Jean Zeigler, a UN expert on the right to food has called this new phenomenon a 'crime against humanity'.

We may be on the cusp of the biggest structural change in the world food market for over a century. In the next few years, relief and aid programmes in the developing world may be undermined, while the tensions of international politics may further impinge on the life chances of humanity. Increased competition over depleted resources could lead to conflict and war.

The world's population is growing at around 80 million people a year. In the rising powers of India, Brazil and China, a huge growth in middle-class populations has led to a revolution in demand for those consumer goods we in the West have taken for granted for so long.

Unfortunately, as the world seeks a sustainable future and struggles with ways to limit the damage done by humanity to our environment, it is likely that there will be millions of losers. In 2008 the British Government predicted that by 2050 half the arable land in the world might no longer be suitable for production because of water shortages and climate change.

Today the UN's World Food Programme is unable to cover the increased cost of food aid to the poorest nations in the world. If you are one of the 2.8 billion people in the world who live on under \$2 a day, you may pay for the recent surge in growing grain for petrol with your life. And it looks like the situation is likely to get worse.



Editorial

Welcome to the eleventh edition of *Society Matters*. *Society Matters* is for all staff and students in the social sciences, and has a wider reach within the University and across the University sector. It provides a space in which students and staff can debate freely key issues of the day. We try to inform and stimulate imaginations and to demonstrate the relevance of social science to all we do in our lives, especially in those areas over which we have little or no control.

This issue has a 'green' focus. We explore the extent to which the University itself takes its environmental responsibility seriously. We have also taken a more detailed look at ethical concerns, and we have not ignored vital international agendas. The articles in this issue feature contentious and hotly contested areas of everyday life, but they are examples of the way in which *Society Matters* has risen to the challenges connecting us to our contemporary world.

The response from contributors to this issue has been so impressive that we could not find space in the print issue for all the contributions. Last year we successfully launched the *Society Matters Extra* website, and this year it contains over a dozen excellent articles that we hope you will find interesting (www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/about-the-faculty/society-matters/society-matters-extra.php).

There is no Dean's column in this issue because we wanted to highlight individual contributions. There are further Social Sciences' staff and student contributions on *Society Matters Extra*.

Society Matters has tried to blaze a trail that triggers imaginations and enlightens, that challenges our mind sets, that informs, and that stimulates us to think 'beyond the box'. What is vital is the explanatory power not of one discipline in the social sciences, but all of them, together. We hope, however modestly, that we will make a difference to your learning and teaching experience with the University.

If you want back copies email r.s.skellington@open.ac.uk

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How green is the Open University? *Continued from page 1*

due to the volume of students we teach – if we can find a way of raising the awareness of sustainability with our student base, past and present, then significantly more can be achieved. We can then impact more than any other institution on the Higher Education Funding Council's Vision Statement on Sustainability.'

At a meeting in April, the OU's senior management team, known as the Vice Chancellor's Executive, discussed whether sustainability should become a theme across all the University's activities, including learning, teaching support and research. So far, they have not committed to such a strategy. 'We have many of the ingredients to do that and we are, for example, carrying out an audit of our curriculum,' said Fraser Woodburn. 'I am certain that we will take further initiatives there.'

Currently, though, the OU has no cross-departmental environment manager to co-ordinate a university-wide strategy. 'There are little bits and pieces

happening all over the place,' said Energy Manager Mick Sackett. 'What we need is one person in charge to pull them together.'

Dr Gordon Wilson, director of the OU's Environment, Development and International Studies programme, believes that an environmental manager is key. 'Embedded into OU courses is the principle that joined-up – rather than piecemeal – thinking, policy and action is required,' said Gordon. 'Such an appointment needs to be made at a senior level, and the person appointed needs clout to be able to change embedded institutional cultures.'

'The exciting new Level 1 environment course U116 *Environment: journeys through a changing world* is expected to be an introductory flagship to the study of environment and sustainability and to attract a large number of students when it is first presented in 2009. Its key message of possibility is something the OU itself should heed.'

Green OU facts

The OU uses over 21,000,000 kW of gas per annum (enough to heat your house for 1,061 years), over 20,000,000 kW of electricity per annum (enough to power your house for 4,360 years), and nearly 109,000 cubic metres of water per annum (enough for the average household for 955 years). Its annual utility bill is £1.5 million. Its energy and water consumption combined is equivalent to an annual carbon emission of 12,700 tonnes.

The UK higher education sector emits 3½ million tonnes of CO₂ per year.

For articles on U116 and DU311 see pages 7 and 17 of this issue.

DD101: the exciting new Level 1 course in the social sciences

DD101 *Introducing the Social Sciences* will be first presented to students in October 2009. Simon Bromley, Course Team Chair and our new Associate Dean of Curriculum Planning, outlines what makes the course so revolutionary and appealing, and explains how it will encourage students to have fun while learning and to progress to further OU study

DD101 *Introducing the Social Sciences* is an exciting new development for the Faculty as we renew our curriculum to address the changing world and the opportunities offered by new educational technologies.

The course is being prepared by a course team from all the Faculty's six departments: Economics, Geography, Politics and International Studies, Psychology, Social Policy, and Sociology. It will provide a broad interdisciplinary introduction to the social sciences, with a particular emphasis on skills development, including those skills relevant to employability, and the facilitation of independent learning and critical thinking. At the same time, we want our students to have fun, to finish the course successfully and to follow on to further study, especially to the wide range of exciting awards that the Faculty and wider University offer.

We take the academic and intellectual development of our students extremely seriously, and DD101 will integrate learning about the topics and subjects of the course and practising and improving skills in new and exciting ways. However, we won't have done our job properly unless students also achieve the 3 'F's': finish it, follow on to further study, and find it fun to study.

Introducing the Social Sciences begins with an interesting and exciting DVD and associated text materials. The DVD introduces social sciences' ways of thinking and establishes the main strands of the course. Drawing on topics around the high street, supermarkets and the production of 'waste', students will then study the changing nature of contemporary society and engage with debates about social and material worlds in relation to consumption, consumer society, the power to shape markets and the relations between consumption, production and the environment.

The course also addresses questions about the sustainability of contemporary consumer society and the implications of this both nationally and internationally: how does society deal with risk, are we becoming happier and can we make a sustainable world? We study the issues of identity and who 'we' are in relation to family histories, the places people live and how identities are shaped and embraced. Looking at migration, the contested nature of national identities and changes in personal identity issues of mobility, connections and belonging are explored in relation to the ways in which identities are made and shaped for people and places, as well as the ways in which people live together and apart in families, neighbourhoods, nations, diasporas and beyond. Questions of governing, social order and security are studied through topics such as anti-social behaviour, the routine regulation of interaction in streets and among traffic and in the making up of populations by state censuses – issues about what is governed, by whom and where are explored in relation to political disorder, transnational fears and desires and international conflict and order.



One Nation Under CCTV, by graffiti artist Banksy, London

One strand is about the material environment and explores how places and lives are connected and disconnected through material things and processes. Are we living in a more or less material world? Are changing ways of making society and living more or less sustainable and how might material and environmental questions be addressed by society? How do social scientists incorporate material issues (such as livelihoods and environments) into their work? Students will be equipped with an understanding of the ways in which peoples' engagement with the material and social worlds are related and an awareness of issues of sustainability.

A second strand is about identities, mobilities and connections, and addresses questions about who we are and where we live. How are places and lives connected and disconnected? Are our lives becoming more mobile and what new kinds of connection and disconnection are being made in different places and spaces? How do social scientists study and understand identities? Students will gain an understanding of the complexity of 'who I am' or 'identity' as both social and individual, and an awareness of some different theories of the processes by which identities are made and taken up.

A third strand is about ordering, governing and security, and addresses questions about how social order is made, broken and repaired. What are the relations between governing and the making of social order? What are the relations between national, transnational and international modes of ordering and governing? How do social scientists study social order and governance? Students should develop an understanding of some of the different ways in which societies are ordered, governed and secured, and an awareness of the roles of different sites and processes of governance.

Introducing the Social Sciences integrates its text materials very closely with parallel work on the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and supporting audio and DVD materials. Students will engage with all these elements throughout the course, although special care has been taken to ensure that students are not overloaded in terms of workload, and that they are only attending to a single medium of teaching at any given time. As students progress through the course, they will gain confidence in learning from all types of media and be prepared to engage with any of the mix of materials they might encounter at higher levels of study. We will also use the VLE and supporting audio material to invite students to explore the world of subjects, courses and pathways of study beyond Level 1 so that they can see something of what might lie ahead and make informed choices about their future personal and career development. In addition, we will provide students with the means of assembling a portfolio of evidence about what they have studied and the skills they have acquired, which they can take with them after they have finished the course.

The 60-point course will be presented twice a year (in October and February) and its two 30-point versions, DD131 and DD132, will be presented in the spring and autumn of each year, beginning in the spring of 2010.

Introducing the Social Sciences will be the new Level 1 compulsory social sciences course for a number of undergraduate awards hosted by the Faculty of Social Sciences, including the BA/BSc (Hons) Social Sciences, the BA (Hons) Politics, Philosophy and Economics, and the BA (Hons) Criminology and Psychological Studies. It will also make a core contribution to a wide range of inter-Faculty awards and to awards in other Faculties.



Letters To The Editor: The OU Tesco deal

Society Matters published several articles in issue 10 about the Open University's partnership with Tesco. The two letters below reflect the divided nature of a bumper postbag



Dear Richard,

It was with great horror that I read in *Society Matters* that the OU has joined forces with Tesco. Whilst this seems like a very lopsided deal, and that alone is enough to create concern, I'm more concerned that the association devalues the degree that I'm studying. Tesco are constantly in the news for the wrong reasons, and have been the subject of corruption allegations (the latest being the milk price fixing scandal). How could the OU possibly cheapen itself to join the Tesco 'rewards' scheme? The rewards scheme only benefits Tesco and/or people who don't need the benefit (i.e. if you can afford to do the amount of shopping required to rack up the amount of Tesco points required to pay for a degree, then you can afford the cost of the degree anyway).

The association between Tesco and the OU also conjures up images of the worthless degrees that are available for purchase in the USA.

I will explain why I dislike Tesco. My local area has had considerable issues with Tesco, who have ridden roughshod over our council and attempted to have our local park (the town's only green space) cut up to allow lorry access to a proposed development. My town centre already has Sainsbury's, Waitrose and the Co-op; there is an ASDA close by, and it is only 5 minutes drive from Bluewater (the largest shopping mall in Britain). Tesco were opposed by the council and the vast majority of residents. However, the council were pressured to put the deal through. It took an independent enquiry at the most senior level of government to overturn Tesco's plans, which were clearly not in the public interest. The

Tesco petition was signed by over 90 per cent of the town's residents, and Tesco eventually withdrew their legal challenge to the enquiry ruling due to the bad feeling that had been created in the local community.

Regards
Chris



To the Editor

I read the articles in *Society Matters* about the OU/Tesco partnership. While agreeing with many of the points raised, I would like to add my own viewpoint as someone who reduced their course fee by £250 with Tesco vouchers. Two years ago, as a recently divorced parent supporting three young children on an income of £13,000, I asked for financial assistance from the OU. I was told that as I already have a degree (from 20 years ago), I am not eligible. Now on an income of £16,000, I dread having to pay nearly £1000 for my final course next year. Without the vouchers I would be unable to justify the expense. I could stop studying, but, as a teacher interested in Special Educational Needs, I wish to complete my Psychology degree in order to achieve GBR with the British Psychological Society, which will enable me to take a sideways step in my career. I would also like to point out that the articles failed to mention that, if you use a Tesco credit card (which I clear each month), double points are earned on each transaction in store, and points are gained from all other purchases made with the card; points may also be earned from linking your Clubcard with certain energy suppliers. I live close to a large Tesco store and have not purchased more than I would normally, but I have altered my strategy for payment and how I choose to use my vouchers. It is not the ideal way to pay for my study, but as it is the only way available to me, please don't remove it.

Jacqueline Cox
Cambridge

DD208 Welfare, Crime and Society

Do you want to know how welfare, crime and society interconnect? Are you interested in issues related to social justice and security? DD208 could be the new second level course for you. Course chairs Sarah Neal and Nicola Yeates explain

DD208 *Welfare, Crime and Society* is an exciting new Level 2 multi-media Social Policy course that will be offered for the first time in October 2008. How is social welfare provision interwoven with crime control concerns? The effect of these entanglements upon policy development and people's lives is central to DD208's core questions.

The course is concerned with several fundamental questions at the heart of our understanding of contemporary social policy. Is it possible to detect a punitive approach to social welfare policy, and a welfare approach to crime control policy? How do responsibility and punishment apply to both welfare and crime control policies? Are these approaches new or have they always been evident in policy responses in the UK and elsewhere?

How does a focus on the links between social welfare and crime control help us understand important issues of social concern, such as anti-social behaviour, corporate crime, community safety, environmental degradation, child welfare, warfare and poverty?

How are ideas of responsibility, conditionality, punishment and 'dangerous populations' used in contemporary policies? Are these new applications for old concepts or are they reconstructed with different meanings? How might we view and understand such developments?

How can looking at historical responses to these questions in our own and other societies help us make sense of what's going on currently? In a globalizing world of rapid social change and interconnectedness what are the effects of social regulation, surveillance and penalization on people's lives? Do these policies impact on some social groups and populations more than others? Do they enhance our sense of security and well-being or do they undermine it?

What kinds of evidence can best help us answer these questions? Are some sorts of evidence better than others in helping us understand these trends and their effects? How is evidence mobilized in the course of research, evaluation and policy-making? And how do different kinds of evidence reflect – or challenge – the worldview of those involved in making policy and delivering services?

How do we know what is happening? What kinds of evidence can we draw on to answer the questions? How do we interpret the evidence? The place of evidence within social science and policy development is a key focus of the course.

While the course focuses on the contemporary UK, students will encounter material from a range of countries around the world – South Africa, the USA, Australia, Kenya, Iraq and Spain amongst others.

The course also engages with a transnational perspective in its emphasis on how people, policies, social problems and social science debates work across political borders, looking at other societies and the policy concerns and developments that link them to the UK. These connections between people and places around the world arise from processes of migration and multicultural resettlement, advances in technology and communications, economic production and markets, policy networks and so on. Such processes both create



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new policy problems and share new policy thinking about social welfare and crime control across national borders.

One particular concern of the course is the idea of the UK becoming a more diverse society. What sorts of diversity are at issue here? And what sorts of policy responses (crime and/or welfare) are better able to meet the needs of this more diverse society?

The course emphasizes that contemporary policy approaches and interventions often draw on older ideas, concerns and values. Students will come across an emphasis on the importance of history in understanding the many ways in which social welfare and crime control policies are entangled – both in the UK and in other countries around the world.

Students are reminded that many of the social issues and debates they encounter are not just of 'the now'. For example, the development of gated communities in 21st-century UK has a history that goes back to at least the 18th century and Georgian residential squares. The desire to keep some populations securely in and others securely out is not without precedent, but the initiatives, policies and strategies for securing such communities change over time. So, too, do the sorts of people who are feared and the kinds of policy responses to deal with them.

DD208 examines these interconnections through four core concepts: surveillance, social justice, security and community, which are evaluated around four different levels – the local, the regional, the national, the international and the global. Each of these concepts demonstrates the ways in which social welfare and crime control policies are entangled. The concepts carry vital social and political meanings that are made explicit and analysed. Social welfare and crime control policies are developed around each of them. Some

are more connected than others are. For example, building gated communities may have implications for the security of those who live within them, but may also pose problems of social justice for those who are excluded.

We hope all students keen to develop their knowledge and skills in social policy and criminology, or to develop their understanding of the policy dimensions of social science, will enrol in DD208.

Further details about the course, its content, study materials and how it fits into various social science degree programmes can be obtained from l.c.adams@open.ac.uk

Admissions to hospital in England and Wales for wounds and injuries from knives and sharp objects

2002 – 2003	2006 – 2007
10,372	12,340
Persons under 16	
95	179
Persons 16 – 18	
429	752
In London	
139	324
Persons 14 or under	
438	436
Prosecutions for knife possession	
1997	2006
4,489	7,699

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Endless new criminal laws, a massive increase in people jailed, and a rise in fear of crime

More than 50 new criminal justice bills have been introduced by New Labour since they came to power in 1997. Labour has created more than 3,055 new criminal offences, passed 115,000 pages of legislation and introduced more than 50 Bills, including 24 criminal justice measures. Compare this with the 60 years between 1925 and 1985 when governments managed to get by with only six Criminal Justice Acts, an average of one every decade.

Remarkably, New Labour is creating offences at twice the rate of the John Major administration. During the last nine years of Conservative rule, only 500 new offences were created. This legislative fix is addictive. In 1997, New Labour introduced 160 new offences. In 2005, they added another 527.

Some of the new offences were needed, and some involved repealing antiquated law, but bizarre new offences have been created, adding to the thousands on the statutes. These include laws forbidding the selling of grey squirrels, the impersonation of traffic wardens and the offering of air traffic control services without a licence. In 1998, if you created a nuclear explosion you broke a new law. And did you know that you could be breaking a new law if you fail to nominate a neighbour to turn off your burglar alarm while you are away from home, or if you import potatoes from Poland, or obstruct



the Adult Learning Inspectorate, or interfere with the work of the Children's Commissioner for Wales?

The impact of many of these legislative changes is difficult to assess, but observers believe that our freedom has become more constrained and that more police time is wasted, while the judicial system has slowly become clogged up with trivial offences. The tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime mantra has generated heavy-handed regulation and an obsession for controlling the minutiae of everyday life. Some offences have fallen in number, others, some serious, have risen, while the prison population has increased by a third.

According to the British Crime Survey (BCS), between 1997 and 2007 all crime fell by 32%; burglary fell by 55%, violent crime by 34% and vehicle thefts by 52%. The BCS claimed that the risk of becoming a victim of any form of crime in 2008 was 24%, the lowest rate since the creation of the BCS in 1981.

However, in 2007, firearm offences recorded by police in England and Wales rose to 9,508 – more than double the number in 1999. Knife crime offences have increased to 148,000, a rise of 28% since 1997.

The risk factor in 2007 was 3.4% for violent crime.

Fear of crime has risen. Opinion polls have regularly found that only around a fifth of the British public believe that crime is falling, while a Mori survey in 2007 found that over 55% of the country believed that law and

order was the most important issue for government.

Since 1997, the prison population in England and Wales has increased from 61,467 to over 82,000, a record high. England and Wales now boast the highest prison population rate in Western Europe, at 147 prisoners per 100,000 of the population. By 2008, in England



and Wales, one in six prisoners will be on remand, one of the highest levels in Europe. Two-thirds of women who enter prison are on remand. Since 1997, 17,000 new prison places have been created and another 9,000 are planned before 2011.

The latest profile data on prisoners in England and Wales shows that 17,000 are serving sentences for violent crime, and 10,000 for drug offences. The social backgrounds of inmates contrast significantly with the general population: only 5% of the general population have two or more mental disorders compared to 72% of male prisoners and 70% of female prisoners. Thirteen per cent of the general population are drug users, whereas 66% of the male prison population took drugs prior to sentencing.

Our MPs are out of touch and over-compensated

The author, broadcaster, columnist and comedian, Mark Steel, whose recent television series *The Mark Steel Lectures* proved such a hit for both the Open University and the BBC, reflects on the bizarre world of MP's expenses

I doubt whether many people had Margaret Beckett down as one of the more imaginative politicians, but we were wrong. Many MPs submitted expense claims for unnecessary taxis or new kitchen units, but Margaret put some art into her claim and demanded £1,900 for plants and a pergola, which apparently is a frame for the plants to thrive on. This was for her second home of course, because obviously everyone has a pergola and a thousand pounds worth of plants in their first home.

Gardening isn't really my thing, so every time I read this story I find myself shrieking 'Nineteen hundred quid for sodding plants – what was she buying – triffids?' Or maybe she's got one like the thing in *Little Shop of Horrors* and every time she heads off for *Prime Minister's Questions* it grabs her by the ankle and yells, 'Feed me Margaret, feed me.'

In a nod towards sanity, she was only granted £1,300, but how can she begin to justify this? When she submitted her claim, was there a covering letter that said, 'When I was Foreign Secretary I entertained the President of Syria on our patio, and he was just about to sign a non-aggression treaty when he said, "I look forward to peace between our nations – hang on, your wisteria has prematurely withered due to an absence of adequate framing that would allow the foliage to flourish in the resulting spacious environment. I consider this a gross insult to my people. I pronounce a curse upon you, your nation and your disreputable horticulture. Rest assured I want this matter resolved within 24 hours or you may consider our nations at war, madam."'

We only know about Margaret's expense claim because a few MPs were ordered to reveal their expense details; who knows what the others have claimed for. There is probably a junior minister who has claimed for a snooker table in his second dolphinarium. I bet one has claimed for a milking shed, one for a canal, one for a pyramid

and one for a ghost train, who will then defend himself by saying, 'The sum of £50,000 is due to the global increase in the price of skeletons as a result of the worldwide plastic fibia (*sic*) shortage.'

Barbara Follett, who is a millionaire, claimed £1,600 in one year for window cleaning. Maybe she'll explain this by pointing out that her windows were cleaned by Damien Hirst, who polished them with squid ink, but one of the panes will shortly be exhibited in the *Tate Modern*, providing an exciting boost to the nation's heritage.

Here is the best part. The 'difficulties' raised by this complex and sensitive issue have been investigated by the politicians themselves, and one of the measures they've decided on is that all MPs should receive an automatic annual allowance of £23,000 for their second home. No doubt some of them will now yell, 'That's not fair, now the others get a bonus but we were swiping that much already.'

This is presented as a compromise. So maybe we should tackle other social problems in the same way. The complex issue of mugging can be dealt with by getting an all-purpose committee of muggers to investigate the problem, and they can come up with a compromise in which all old people have to empty their purses and hand over the contents to strangers in the street.

This way, the nation's muggers will be spared complex archaic procedures such as pretending to be from the gas board while rifling through an old person's sideboard.

Why is the issue of MPs' expenses usually portrayed as complex? Most institutions manage an expenses system without too much trouble. However, an MP claims thousands for wages paid to a son who did nothing, or for a forest full of shrubs and a John Lewis proscenium walkway on which to exhibit the things and this is 'complex'.

And then they claim this is an inevitable result of their meagre pay, which is a fraction of what they'd earn 'in the private sector',



as if they've done us a huge philanthropic favour when they could all so easily be on the board of Unilever.

However, if they had not become politicians, they could be working in Costa Coffee. Margaret Beckett might just as well say, 'I consider my wages rather modest, when you consider that if I hadn't entered politics I'd have been earning £100,000 a week playing central midfield for Barcelona.'

However, worst of all is that they are so out of touch with normal life; they can't see why so many are aghast at this practice. If Margaret Beckett is approached by a family in her constituency with five living in one room and no heating because it has been cut off, presumably she'll say, 'I know – it's like when they only gave me £1,300 for plants for my second home – aren't these bureaucracies dreadful?'

In July 2008 MPs voted by a majority of 28 to retain the system and rejected the proposals for external auditing

Ethics and partnerships: the OU and the St Athan Military Academy

The Open University now boasts a Centre for Ethics and includes ethical teaching in its curriculum, but it does not yet have an ethical policy guiding its corporate partnerships. The recent link between the OU and the Metrix consortium has led to protests in Wales and may result in far wider ramifications for the institution

Life at the OU in Wales took a new turn recently, with demonstrations against the University's involvement in a military training consortium taking place outside our building.

Over the past year, the 'Stop the St Athan Military Academy Campaign' has been publicizing and attacking the OU's involvement in the Metrix consortium, which followed its success in being awarded a government contract to run a training agency for all of the British armed forces at St Athan in South Glamorgan.

The OU is a member of the consortium, along with some major arms manufacturers, including QinetiQ and Raytheon. Raytheon manufactures Tomahawk and Patriot missiles, and missiles capable of carrying cluster bombs; QinetiQ hit the headlines with criticisms by the National Audit Office of the process whereby, in the privatization of DERA, the responsible civil servants became multi-millionaires overnight.

Thousands of training jobs from around the UK will be moved to St Athan, just outside Cardiff, where up to 5,500 jobs will be created. This figure is one that fluctuates and is contested, but it is claimed that the St Athan Military Academy, costing £15 billion, will be the largest ever public-sector project in Wales.

The project is welcomed by local MPs and Welsh Assembly Members, by the Welsh Assembly Government and by all of the major political parties in Wales. Nonetheless, several Plaid Cymru members of the National Assembly for Wales have spoken against it, and there are a small but vociferous number of people in Wales opposed to the militarization of the economy. Anti-militarism has been a core element of the nationalist struggle since its inception, and is a perspective shared by many key figures in public life.

Does this new partnership fit with the mission of the OU – to create and enhance life opportunities? There are concerns about any institution's associations with the arms trade. Jennie Lee, one of the main founders of the OU, was firm in her stand against arms, in that she was against the UK acquiring a nuclear deterrent.

Various UK universities (including St Andrews and several Cambridge colleges) have adopted ethical investment policies. University College London, under pressure from students and alumni, is among those that are considering doing so. The School of Oriental and African Studies and Goldsmiths, University of London and Bangor University have withdrawn investment from arms companies. The OU has still to decide on whether it needs to devise

I too believe that universities and their staff should aim to encourage students to 'think ethically' and equip them to confront the great dilemmas and paradoxes of our time.

Vice Chancellor Brenda Gourley
Independent Open Eye, 1 July 2008



Protesters outside the Welsh Regional Office, Cardiff, 2008

clear and fully transparent ethical guidelines to steer its business partnerships.

Other institutions have been more forthright. The Norwegian state pension fund, which includes its petroleum fund, and Liverpool City Council are among the bodies that have disinvested from Raytheon, on the basis of its implication in war crimes and killing civilians in Iraq and Lebanon.

Of course, military technology and the armed forces are involved in defence as well as attack, and there are plenty of us who subscribe

to notions of 'just wars'. But the plan is to train not just British troops, but armed forces from around the world. The idea of training troops for the Burmese government is more controversial than training British troops.

Others do not share this political or moral concern, but object on pragmatic grounds: that the OU risks tainting its brand. In a sense, the greatest asset of the OU is its brand. The brand isn't just a logo but is a reputation, and the reputations of organizations increasingly are linked to their ethical and environmental policies and practices. We only have to look to Nike, McDonald's, Tesco, the Body Shop and the Co-operative Bank to see the centrality of 'the brand' to business performance.

Across the economy and around the world there is a huge growth in the 'corporate social responsibility' agenda. In one sense, this is recognized by the OU, which recently launched a Level 1 course on *Ethics in Real Life* and takes very seriously its commitment to development in Africa. At the same time, it is in partnership with the World Bank to develop a private university in Pakistan, in collaboration with Tesco regarding using clubcard points to pay course fees (see *Society Matters* No.10), and is now linked with the Metrix consortium.

This suggests the need for an ethical, environmental and corporate responsibility framework for the OU's relationships with other organizations. With its deservedly high standing, the OU brand is of enormous benefit to us all. The good reputation of the OU is an asset and needs to be defended actively.

In response to the University's involvement in the Metrix consortium, the Open University Branch of the University and College Union (OUBUCU) has formulated a set of ethical guidelines to be applied to the future selection of its strategic partnerships with external organizations. The guidelines set out criteria regarding the arms trade, ecological sustainability, animal welfare and corporate responsibility to 'filter' out partnerships which may commercially damage the University's brand. At the time of going to press, a paper setting out the arguments for their implementation has been presented to the Vice-Chancellor and the Branch awaits a response to its suggestion that a forum be established between union and management to discuss the guidelines. The union believes the University cannot be financially successful in the future unless it is committed to an ethical approach to partnerships.

Cultural hallmark: at the coalface of difference

Stuart Hall defined the huge changes in 20th-century Britain during his 18 years as Professor of Sociology with the Open University. Now 76, he talks to the *Observer's* Tim Adams about his pioneering new venture, and the alarming cultural shifts that define the new century

Stuart Hall arrived in Britain from Jamaica in 1950 with a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford, a Merton College scarf and a raft of ideas about independence. He will never forget sitting at Paddington Station and watching his fellow islanders, the *Windrush* generation, coming to London from Kingston in their Sunday clothes; he thought, 'Where on earth are these people going to?' and, 'Where do they think they are going to?' He has spent much time in the last 58 years working on the answers to these two questions.

If he were a less modest man, Hall might lay claim to having invented the idea of multiculturalism in Britain. Having abandoned a PhD on Henry James in 1958, he became the founding editor of the *New Left Review*, which did much to open a debate about immigration and the politics of identity. Along with Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart, he established the first Cultural Studies programme at a British university in Birmingham in 1964, bringing the study of popular cultures into the understanding of political and social change. In 1979, with the arrival of Thatcherism, of which he was a prophetic and nimble critic, he brought these ideas to the Open University and became, for nearly two decades on BBC 2, the progressive insomniacs' icon.

In all of these roles, Hall quietly and radically sought to redraw mind-maps of Britain. He looked at how the post-colonial world was shaped by our understanding of difference and by the need to rub along with each other. He retired from the OU in 1997, and has spent the last decade establishing a space in which these arguments about identity can be made. This space is Rivington Place, a new £8m art gallery in Hoxton, designed by architecture's man of the moment, David Adjaye. Its aim is to 'diversify the mainstream of arts organizations, to give space to show people who are being left out of the Tate or wherever, and to create a context for the wider understanding of our worlds'.

'I thought to myself when I left the Open University: do you want to go on pretending to be an academic now? Sit in your study without an institution to be part of?' Hall knew that wasn't for him; he had always worked with a team. He had hoped to travel more, but kidney failure and the need for dialysis three times a week prevented that. He would have to do his travelling in his head.

Hall became the chair of two foundations: Iniva, the Institute of International Visual Arts, and Autograph ABP, which sought to promote photographers from ethnic minorities. The two organizations needed a home, and so Hall launched a bid for lottery money. After nearly a decade of wrangling with public/private partnerships, of arguing for European money and Hackney money and Barclays money, that home has finally been built. If he is exhausted, Hall doesn't show it.

The need for Rivington Place has never been more urgent, he believes. Since he and his fellow board members started to imagine it, the ideas it will engage with have been under siege. 'We started at what now looks like the high point of multiculturalism,' he says, 'in the pre-9/11 world. Differences were everywhere, hybridity was everywhere, and no one had completely retreated into tribal enclaves.' In the years since, he suggests, retreat, among white, black and Muslim communities, has deepened misunderstanding and ignorance.

Hall hopes the artists, showing at Rivington Place will work at the 'coalface of difference', chipping away at entrenched positions. 'They are open to the crucial conversation: how much do we give up and how much do we retain of our cultural identity in order to be ourselves? These are deep issues and are more charged than they have ever been.'

I wonder if Hall is hopeful that the damage to the multicultural ideal done by the rise of fundamentalisms of all kinds can be reversed? 'I don't quite know about hope,' he says. 'It seems to me that globalization holds the possibility of one world but within that ideal are massive disparities of power, wealth and vision. I thought there was more hope before the eruption of Islamism and all that has become visible since 9/11 ... Al-Qaida is one extreme, but there is a whole gradient of Islam that has been open to dialogue for many years and we have failed to respond to it. We know nothing about

it. We stereotype it. We never had the tough argument that leads to better integration.'

He is optimistic that such a dialogue will continue even while cultures are squaring up to each other. He believes that this can begin to happen in places like Rivington Place, or in film and literature, or at street level outside. London, for him, remains the model of this tolerant debate, 'or at least the best one I know. The fact is this city will never go back to looking like it did when I arrived here in 1950. You can have as many border police and thought police as you want, as many of Gordon Brown's and David Cameron's definitions of Britishness. It is a more genuine multicultural society than New York, where there are not the same black/white worlds. And what gives me hope is that there are still many, many people here who try to live it that way.'

Hall does not shy away from some of the harder questions this implies, but he has no simple answers. He views symbolic debates, such as that over the wearing of the veil by British Muslim women, as an empathy failure on both sides, 'a lag between one modernity and another ... If you come from a culture where relations between women and men are much more traditional, you begin to see what not wanting to be exposed to the gaze of a man really means.'

He hopes that Rivington Place finds languages that can bridge such gaps. I wonder, thinking about the debate over the Danish cartoons, where he stands on the right to comment on other cultures, on the right to offend.

'I tend to think some things are off-limits,' he suggests. 'Not in the sense that you should not be able to say them, but you need some care about how and when you go into them. If you wanted to make a joke about concentration camps you should think twice. At least twice. Given the complexity of relations between Islam and the West, I would think at least twice about those cartoons. You cannot simply say it is my right to do it and then be surprised at the consequences. You have to take on the personal risk and decide whether it is worth the price.'

'Isn't that a remit for intimidation?'

'I think you always need the double perspective. Before you say that, you have to understand what it is like to come from that "other" place. How it feels to live in that closed world. How such ideas have kept people together in the face of all that has happened to them. But you also have to be true to your own culture of debate and you have to find some way to begin to translate between those two cultures. It is not easy, but it is necessary.'

Hall first encountered the nuances of such conversations at his home in Kingston when he was growing up. He was born into a middle-class family who were in thrall to what he calls 'the colonial romance'. People think all Jamaicans are black, he suggests, and don't understand the gradations that can exist within a single family like his own. 'My mother's connections to England were more recent. My father's side was not pure African either; it had Indian in it, and probably some English somewhere. I was always the blackest member of my family and I knew it from the moment I was born. My sister said, "Where did you get this coolie baby from?" Not black baby, you will note, but low-class Indian.'

Hall's mother's maiden name was Hopwood, and she once suggested to her son that she might have some Habsburg blood in her. 'I mean - craziness,' he says, laughing. He believes cultural studies was born for him when he was first told that he could not bring black school friends home, even though, to white eyes, he was black himself. 'It was the subaltern position, on the knees to the dominant culture. After the war you could hear the voices in Kingston whispering "independence, independence, independence". I could not understand why my family was not part of that.'

Hall's sister was crushed by that mentality; she fell in love with a black medical student but was barred from seeing him by her mother. After a breakdown she had electric shock treatment and has never had another relationship. 'She stayed at home. She looked after my mother, and my father, then my brother who was blind, until they died.' His sister's life is, he says, 'one of the reasons I have never been able to write about or think about the individual separate

from society. The individual is always living some larger narrative, whether he or she likes it or not.'

It is also a fate he believes he escaped. He came to Oxford determined to understand black Jamaica. Hall had never met anyone from Trinidad or Barbados before he got to England, but he found himself taking on the political identity of the West Indian 'diaspora'. Other contemporaries responded in different ways: V. S. Naipaul, who came from Trinidad, was with him at Oxford but wanted nothing to do with the West Indian Society of which Hall became a part. 'Everyone has to work out their own relation with these things,' Hall suggests, 'but for Naipaul to suggest that he came from a place without history always seemed perverse. He knew as well as I did that the islands had more history than they knew what to do with.'

I wonder what his parents made of his work, his efforts to break down barriers of understanding. He laughs a little. 'My mother once came to visit and I happened to be speaking in Trafalgar Square; it was anti-apartheid or CND or something. I had a Che Guevara beard. She came along but afterwards the event was never once mentioned. She was happy, I think, that I stayed here.'

One place where his ideals have worked has been in his marriage. In 1964 he married Catherine Barrett, a Yorkshire woman 13 years his junior, whom he met on a march at Aldermaston. As a mixed-race couple in Birmingham, they grew up together with prejudice. Catherine became a post-colonial historian; she wrote about the freeing of slaves in Jamaica and took Hall to places on the island he had never visited before. For him, the wonder of it has been to watch 'someone who is English become inward with another culture. She knows more about Jamaica than I do. It has been a fantastic experience, watching her journey.'

If his own life - he has two children - is a good example of what he calls 'the old melting-pot ideal,' Hall is not naïve enough to think of it as a future. Things can turn around and go the other way. Identities can harden. 'In the 20 years after I came, most British Pakistanis said their nationality was more important than their religion, for example. Now it is the other way around.'

He would, surprisingly, begin to extend that fact to himself as well. Towards the end of our interview he suggests that he 'feels much less at home here now than I did when I came.' It seems an odd thing to say, but he is in no doubt. 'I have lived here for 57 years but I am no more English now than I ever was,' he says. He looks at me squarely. 'I am not a liberal Englishman like you. In the back of my head are things that can't be in the back of your head. That part of me comes from a plantation, when you owned me. I was brought up to understand you, I read your literature, I knew *Daffodils* off by heart before I knew the name of a Jamaican flower. You don't lose that, it becomes stronger.'

He smiles. I smile. He doesn't blame me, he says, or anyone. But the least we can do is acknowledge our difference. Then we can start to talk.

Rivington Place opened on 5 October 2007:
www.rivingtonplace.org

This is an amended version of an article that first appeared in the *Observer* on Sunday 23 September 2007:
www.guardian.co.uk/theobserver/2007/sep/23



Working with Stuart Hall: a personal memoir

Bram Gieben, Staff Tutor in Scotland, reminisces on working with an extraordinary talent who revolutionized our Social Science curriculum and research, and whose impact is still with us

The single most important thing to say about Stuart Hall's time at the OU is that his dedication to teaching and to the needs of all students was exemplary. In the 1970s and 1980s the Social Science Faculty was at the vanguard of an extraordinary increase in student numbers at the University. Stuart was at the heart of it, chairing a series of famous and influential courses in the area where sociology met politics and cultural studies. The titles still resonate: *Understanding Modern Societies*; *The State and Society*; *Beliefs and Ideologies*; and *Culture, Media and Identity*.

The way in which Stuart managed the dynamics of large course teams was memorable. His example generated a warm and good-humoured atmosphere, and the discussion was, of course, extraordinarily stimulating. He had a way of bringing out the best

in the people who worked with him. The largest egos were moved in the direction of collegiality while the more insecure members of the team felt valued, and were increasingly encouraged to contribute, knowing that their contribution would be judged only on its merit, never on formal status. There was something exhilarating about that openness, that egalitarianism, that mutuality of respect.

In his writing, and in his packed summer school lectures, Stuart had a talent for teaching ideas to students who thought they hated theory. Students found the combination of breathtaking articulacy, playfulness and sweetness of disposition irresistible.

One very important thing I remember about working with Stuart is that you laughed a lot. In fact, in the sociology office we laughed so much that we had complaints about the noise. One of the Faculty's

senior secretaries, whose room was above ours, actually made two complaints. First, she couldn't get any work done. Second, she couldn't get a transfer into Sociology!

For twenty years I worked closely with Stuart. I discovered that he had infinite reserves of warmth and patience. Despite the size of the job he had to do, the phone calls and letters that poured in every day, the requests for interviews, book reviews, lectures, and trips abroad, he always had time for people. He was interested in everybody. He cared about how you were 'in yourself' as they say in Scotland.

Stuart was a distinguished public intellectual, an inspirational teacher, and a great leader of course teams. However, he is more than that: he is a wonderful human being.

U116 Environment: journeys through a changing world

The University's first ever Level 1 course on the environment will connect global concerns to peoples' own experience and actions, and challenge students seeking sustainable solutions to the planet's problems, argues co-chair Roger Blackmore

Our world is changing fast. We can no longer ignore the growing impact we are having on our planet and its life, whether it is global climate change, competition for resources or loss of biodiversity. We also cannot ignore the effects that environmental change is beginning to have on societies around the world.

Many people are sounding warnings about environmental challenges to come; not only are they sounding the alarm, but they are themselves beginning to sound alarmed. As Al Gore says in *An Inconvenient Truth*, 'scientists are virtually screaming from the rooftops'.

But are we really changing our planet irrevocably and threatening our life-support systems, or are the warnings exaggerated, merely the pleading of a self-interested group of environmentalists?

The problem with raising global issues is that people can soon switch off. We can feel overwhelmed by the scale of the problem. What have global issues got to do with litter in the streets, food prices or pollution from traffic? Can changing our light bulbs or travel plans really save the world? Too much talk of doom can easily lead to a sceptical backlash if the worst scenarios don't come to pass.

An interdisciplinary group of academics from Social Science and Science and Technology has taken up the challenge to connect global issues to peoples' own experience and actions. We are preparing a new, 60-point Level 1 introduction to the environment, due for first presentation in October 2009. The course is U116 *Environment: journeys through a changing world*.

At present, there is a partial gap in the University's provision of broad-based environment courses. There are popular 60-point courses at Level 2, U216 *Environment*, and at Level 3, U316 *The Environmental Web*. Level 1 is served by the 30-point course, T172 *Working with our Environment: technology for a sustainable future*, which is also broad-based, but is aimed more at students studying science and technology. When T172 ends in 2009, U116 will replace it and provide a new 60-point Level 1 entry point for students studying pathways in Environment and International Studies, as well as pathways in Environmental Sciences and Technology. It will become a core course for both the Environmental Studies and Environmental Science degrees.

From 2009, U116 will become a core course for both the Environmental Studies and the Environmental Science degrees. Incentives to study by offering Certificates in Higher Education are under consideration. For example, students could study U116 in



This 'monster' sculpture made from everyday throw away waste can be seen at the Eden Project in Cornwall. It represents both a philosophy about waste management as well as helping the Eden Project focus on its own actions to become waste neutral

conjunction with other relevant Level 1 courses such as DD103, the new social sciences foundation course, or S104 *Exploring Science*.

At the same time we hope U116 will be attractive in its own right, especially for those students who have a general interest in environmental issues but who are following an Open Degree. We

discusses the merits of possible solutions. The course will keep up-to-date by maintaining contact with the people and places on the journey, through initiatives such as the Creative Climate project. The broad aim of the course is to help students become better informed and more aware global citizens. Watch this space!

Climate change hits poor and minorities hardest

The full force of the dangers of climate change is disproportionately affecting the world's poorest people, especially its minorities, according to a report published in March 2008 by the Minority Rights Group (MRG). The MRG called for richer polluting nations to pay for 'climate proofing' the world's vulnerable regions in the developing world. International concern increases over people living at the margins of these societies who receive no protection, especially as climate change affects traditional communities' access to land and stops minorities, such as the Karamonajong in Uganda, planting their crops and hunting as they have done in the past. The UN has recognized the security implications for poorer nations,

highlighting the increased likelihood of wars and mass migration as food becomes scarce and infrastructure collapses. At Bali, in December 2007, 190 nations signed up to a roadmap aimed at binding countries to help the minority victims of climate change. However, the current vogue for creating bio-fuel plantations, which is forcing traditional peoples off their land to fuel the ethanol industry, may extenuate the tenuous relationship between climate change and the survival of minority groups.

In April 2008, the MRG findings were reinforced by a report from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who warned the developed world to prepare for a huge movement of people

because of climate change. By 2050, as many as one billion people could be misplaced by global warming, especially in Africa, Central America and Asia.

Craig Johnstone, the UNHCR deputy high commissioner, said humanity faced a 'global-scale emergency' whose effects would accumulate over the next four decades. Environment Secretary, Hilary Benn, said a global agreement must be reached. 'Climate change is the most serious long-term threat to development in poor countries, and, if unchecked millions of people may be forced to migrate to escape the effects of drought, flooding, food shortages and rising sea levels.'

Education, empowerment and the environment

Student Paul Fox was diagnosed with depression in 1998. Now, ten years on, he explains how OU study has transformed his life, especially the *Diploma in Environmental Policy*

Wordsworth believed that the experience of nature can benefit the human spirit; can help make us, in some sense, psychologically whole and help us realize our potential. Chris Belshaw's words, in *Contested Environments*, the third book in the OU course U216 *Environment*, echo exactly how I now feel.

I was diagnosed with depression in 1998 and left work in 2002. I was lost, very down and I found myself standing on the edge of a very dark place. The road to recovery has not been easy, but I firmly believe that the journey along it began in 2004 when I enrolled on Y154 *Open to Change* (which has now been replaced by Y165 *Learning to Change*). This pertinently titled course, with the help of an incredibly supportive tutor, enabled me to develop the skills

and confidence to engage with distance learning, and continue on a voyage that has irrevocably changed my purpose, well-being and life.

Studying evolutionary psychology in DSE212 *Exploring Psychology* rekindled a latent childhood interest in the natural world. I have subsequently volunteered with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, bolstering my self-esteem. This has given me some much-needed exercise and provided insights into the fantastic world of conservation.

Now, another environmental opportunity is unfolding. In addition to studying towards a Diploma in Environmental Policy with the OU,

I now have an amazing opportunity to pursue a career in a natural environment as inspirational as that which enthused Wordsworth.

Thanks to my OU studies, I have now embarked on a new job as project officer (dealing with promotion, recruitment, events and activities on the east coast of Yorkshire) for the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, a conservation charity.

Gazing over chalk cliffs on the East Yorkshire coast, the 'experience of nature', as both student and volunteer, has enabled me to come closer to realizing my potential than I could ever have imagined. The OU, together with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the RSPB, have empowered me, and have infused me with an appreciation and enthusiasm for life and the natural world.

Introducing our new suite of 15-point courses

Janet Fink, Director of the Short Courses Programme

The introduction of these four 15-point courses to the Faculty's curriculum is an exciting innovation that has allowed us to respond to new areas of interest in the social sciences and to provide more choice for students. The cutting-edge topics covered by the courses have been selected because they offer opportunities for learning more about issues that are fast emerging as central for understanding not only global events at the beginning of the twenty-first century but also our personal experiences and family lives. Their appeal is, therefore, broad and it is likely that students will find more than one of interest to them.

D270 Family Meanings

Jane McCarthy, Reader in Family Studies, outlines the new short course on the family

We live in a world that often seems characterized by change and uncertainty. Amidst shifting personal and political landscapes, we struggle to know how to respond to the perceived risks of modern societies. In this context, what happens in family lives can easily become identified as a major arena in which social ills germinate and, hence, where they can be put right. Consequently, families are high on policy agendas, and the subject of public rhetoric as well as professional interventions.

It is noteworthy, however, that academic discussions around families have often been dominated by such public agenda. Yet the social sciences have a unique and invaluable contribution to make to the study of contemporary families and relationships. For this reason, the Faculty of Social Sciences is currently expanding its courses in these areas, beginning with the short Level 2 course *Family Meanings*. The course offers a sound base on which to build both academic and professional studies of families and relationships.

By focusing on family meanings, the course centralizes the concept of 'family' itself. Students will explore how we think about, study, and produce knowledge about everyday family lives, as well as the ways in which social policies and professional practices focus on families. There will also be opportunities for students to reflect on the assumptions and values embedded in their own family meanings and experiences.

The course begins with an in-depth examination of qualitative evidence about how people talk about 'family' and introduces statistical approaches to studying family patterns, exploring some of the assumptions that underpin research.

We develop students' basic skills in the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data sets. Theoretical approaches to family meanings are explored through a discussion of family discourses and practices. Key concepts of intimacies and personal lives are discussed as alternative frameworks to 'family' for studying relationships.

We examine the ways in which family meanings are embedded in contexts, which are themselves shaped by material inequalities, systematic differences of power, and cultural understandings. Thus, while much of the course draws on UK-based research and debates, we also explore family meanings across diverse contexts, including policy and professional practice contexts.

By the end of the course, students will have developed tools for exploring the powerful, emotional and morally charged notion of 'family', and be able to attend to their own lives, professional practices, and public representations of families with new insights and skills.

Since the courses involve just twelve weeks of study, students will be able to use them in many different ways. For example, those new to the OU might find the Level 1 courses – D170 *This Sporting Planet* and D171 *Introduction to Counselling* – helpful in identifying the pace and nature of study before embarking on a bigger course such as DD100. However, these two courses also provide the chance for our Level 1 students to further extend their study skills before moving to higher level study, as well as giving them a unique opportunity to learn more about these fascinating areas.

D270 *Family Meanings* and D271 *Politics, Media and War: 9/11 and its impacts* offer similarly flexible routes for students looking to develop particular interests and skills, either in the transition from Level 1 to Level 2 or from Level 2 to Level 3. They can also be used to reduce possible breaks in study pathways and to create stimulating and interdisciplinary combinations with other courses inside and outside the Faculty. To see what might be possible, students can check out the details of all the University's short courses and courses more generally at www3.open.ac.uk/study/

D271 Politics, Media and War: 9/11 and its impacts

Richard Heffernan, Reader in Government, on a cutting-edge introduction to responses to 9/11 and the war on terror



Gagged media workers against the War picket outside the BBC, London

Franklin Roosevelt said of the day of the attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941 that it 'would live in infamy'. The same has to be said of 11 September 2001 when terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington DC took the lives of some 3,000 people, mostly civilians, in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The victims, largely American, included nationals from some ninety countries. In addition to the destruction of a much-loved architectural landmark, the atrocity cost the global economy countless billions in economic losses.

Politics, Media and War: 9/11 and its impacts is a short 'taster' course in international politics and media sociology. It examines the international consequences of 9/11 and considers the varied impacts of the terrorist threat posed by individuals and groups who claim Islamic legitimization for their actions.

This threat, witnessed at work before and after 9/11 in countries as far apart as the USA, the UK, Spain, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Egypt and Indonesia, increasingly reflects the modern phenomenon of 'asymmetrical warfare', one waged by states and non-state actors, where terrorist organizations are seen to threaten the peace and stability of the world.

This short course examines the military and political response of the USA, the UK and their allies to this terror threat both at home and abroad. It offers a brief and straightforward introduction to the changing nature of war and terrorism, and discusses the growing 'securitization' of many areas of social life.

The course explores how the British state balances the trade off between security and civil liberty in the face of organized and disorganized terrorism. The course also examines the role the media plays in defining the nature of political violence, representing global conflicts and shaping popular and elite perceptions of the terrorist threat.

By exploring the varied geopolitical causes and consequences of 9/11, the course provides a simple introduction to contemporary, cutting-edge issues in international politics and media studies. Its aim is to help students make sense of contemporary global events and evaluate the public policies such an event as 9/11 can provoke. *Politics, Media and War* is delivered online through the Open University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Students work through a set of structured readings, suitably signposted, drawn from a number of perspectives and reflecting the opinions of politicians, policy makers, commentators and academics.

D171 Introduction to Counselling

Darren Langdrige, Chair of D171 *Introduction to Counselling* and Lecturer in Social Psychology, on how our new short course on counselling teaches basic skills

We live in a complex and fast-changing world that presents us with many challenges. Much of the time we get on with life and tackle the problems that it presents using our own resources and the support of our friends and families, but sometimes we find that certain problems stretch our coping mechanisms too far and then we may find it helpful to talk with someone outside our immediate family or friendship network. The growth of counselling in the West has been remarkable and reflects an increasing perception that talking about one's problems with a professional can enable us to tackle a wide variety of concerns and get our lives back on track. It may only require a few sessions talking with a counsellor to realize that we have the capacity to cope and move on, although occasionally more sustained support may be necessary.

Being a counsellor is a particularly satisfying profession where you can really make a difference to the lives of others. It is also a highly flexible occupation. Some people work full-time but many others

find it an ideal way to work part-time or in a voluntary capacity. Furthermore, an understanding of the fundamentals of counselling may be useful for many people working in a wide variety of other professions, from nursing and social care to human resources and teaching.

D171 *Introduction to Counselling* is a new Level 1 short course (15 points) designed to provide an introduction to this fascinating and valuable profession. The course includes an introductory textbook on the theory and practice of counselling along with a DVD providing examples of counselling skills and counsellors in action. While you will not qualify as a counsellor by taking this course, it will provide a first step that furthers your understanding of the theory of counselling, and you will develop some basic counselling skills. Professional bodies recommend that everyone wishing to pursue a career in counselling should first complete a short course like this so that they understand more about what is involved in this profession

before committing to the longer formal counselling training.

D171 is an accessible course and therefore appropriate to all students wishing to study with the OU for the first time. Its high academic quality is guaranteed and an important factor given the variable quality of counselling education available today. You will learn about the fundamentals of counselling, its cultural and historical origins, what distinguishes it from psychotherapy and an understanding of the three main theoretical approaches to counselling. This will provide a foundation for further study in this and other related areas in counselling, psychology and the social sciences and better equip you to understand the nature of this profession. The course will also facilitate the development of basic counselling skills, which may be useful in your current or a future work role. We hope you find the course an enjoyable and fascinating route into study in Higher Education that may well change your life and career for the better.

Football in a war zone

The transformational qualities of sport have never been more evident than in war-torn Iraq. *What the Papers Say* sports writer of 2007, James Lawton, reminds us of the power and magic of the world's greatest game and reflects on the significance of a little noted Iraqi victory in last year's Asian Cup

The next time somebody tells you that football isn't worth the chequebook it's written on, that it is rotten beyond redemption, just show him a picture of the Iraqi kid who, for once, is smiling despite the clatter of gunfire; smiling because his team have just won the Asian Cup. We don't know if he is Sunni or Shia, Kurd or Arab. We just know he is a kid who loves football. The world, if anyone making such a mess of the place cares to look, is full of them.

The power of the game can be seen wherever you go. Youngsters play in the slum streets of Africa and Asia and the poorest corners of Europe and the Americas, and even in the former minefields of Bosnia and the killing fields of Cambodia. We are reminded of the game's capacity to stop the world for 90 minutes when we see the smile of the Iraqi kid. What else could put the misery of his ravaged country on hold, however heart-breaking the brevity of the interlude, quite like the universal game? Would a Middle Eastern foray by the new man of peace, Tony Blair, or a burst of platitudes from Camp David by George Bush and Gordon Brown have the same effect? Maybe not.

In Iraq, there are too many wounds to be healed by one night of euphoria – there were at least 120 serious new ones when a car bomb went off among fans celebrating, in the street, the semi-final victory over South Korea, and there were also 50 new graves to dig – but even if football will never, on its own, stop hate or war in the Middle East, no more than it did in the trenches of the First World War after the fabled Yuletide kick-about by German and British soldiers, it will always be capable of a profound comment.

It will always make for itself the point that in its beauty and freedom of expression, when it is played beyond the cheating and the corruption that have been heaped upon it so relentlessly in recent years by those who profit from it most, it sends the powerful message that even sworn enemies have more in common than they may think.

For those who know and love the game, there is no revelation in the picture of the smiling young Iraqi, only huge reinforcement of the view of the great writer Albert Camus, that he learnt more about life and character while playing in goal for the University of Algiers than he ever did hobnobbing with the Left Bank literati.

We have all seen the power of football. Ian St John, the great striker of Liverpool and Scotland, a man of such fierce combativeness that his adoring manager Bill Shankly once said he would have made



An Iraqi boy celebrates his country's 1-0 victory over Saudi Arabia

a potential world middleweight champion if he had pursued his promise as a fighter rather than signing for his local club Motherwell, knew much exhilaration in his title-winning career. But when he talks of the great experiences of his life, he still counts among the highest his walk back from the stadium in Buenos Aires in 1978 after watching Argentina beat the Netherlands in the World Cup final. Argentina, under the rule of the generals and heading for the disaster of the Falklands War, was not the happiest place, but St John recalls a delirious city where, for a few hours, all the misery in the world seemed to have been sluiced into the South Atlantic. 'I had to walk miles with the traffic at a standstill,' said St John, 'but I didn't begrudge a yard of it. I just felt so proud to be part of football, to feel the warmth and the power of it to touch people. I danced with an old lady.'

Sir Bobby Charlton tells similar stories, and reports the emotion that comes when he sees kids emerging from shanties in Nairobi glowing in their football kit.

The face of the Iraqi kid reminds us that there is no game like football, nothing that captures the yearnings for distraction and joy

for quite so many people.

Hooliganism has ravaged the image of football for nearly half a century now, but football didn't create the problem, society did. The professional game has never seen its role as a protector, still less as an exemplar of all that is best in sport. It has been too busy accumulating power and hoarding the profits. The resulting crimes cannot be placed at the door of the game, which has again proved its ability to entrance the world.

The magic of football was perhaps never better expressed than one evening during the 1982 World Cup when the Brazilian team staged a training session in a little town in the hills above Barcelona. The atmosphere was of fiesta, and the young boys who were invited to join in a pick-up game with such stars as Socrates, Roberto Falcao and Zico had eyes that you suspected would shine for ever.

Down the years, football has attracted so much avarice, indiscipline and arrogance that the temptation to assign such memories to a gilded past has maybe never been stronger. But with football, when you least expect glory, it produces a force and a spontaneity to lift almost any heart. As in 1998, when a brilliantly organized World Cup was won by the 'rainbow' French, inspired by a Zinedine Zidane who grew up in the most notorious high-rise slum in

Marseilles. Brazil became the glory of world football when it finally absorbed brilliant black players, represented perfectly by Pelé.

Maybe it was more than a random fact that the coach who inspired an Iraqi team riven by ethnic and religious rifts to victory over the sumptuously accommodated and meticulously prepared Saudi Arabians just happened to be a Brazilian. Jorvan Vieira said that he had fulfilled his contract by 'bringing a smile to the Iraqi people'. He had used something beyond the means of any politician. He had released the power and the magic of the world's greatest game.

Our thanks to James Lawton of The Independent for permission to reprint this article which first appeared on 30 July 2007

In May 2008 Fifa suspended Iraq from international football for one year after Iraq disbanded its Olympic Committee and national sport federations on 20 May, in breach of Fifa and Olympic regulations

D170 This Sporting Planet

Kath Woodward, Senior Lecturer in Sociology, puts sport at the heart of our social and political life

Sport is a huge global phenomenon that matters to individuals, communities and nations. It takes up a massive amount of media space and time. It is enormously popular at all levels – for participants, spectators and the followers of popular culture. Mega sports events and sporting heroes attract huge media interest. Governments encourage people to participate in sport themselves as part of social inclusion and health programmes.

Sport is not confined to the sports pages. It frequently hits the front page. The social divisions that occupy policy makers and affect all of us in our daily lives are played out in the field of sport. The run up to the Beijing Olympics has highlighted conflicts and contemporary debates at the global political level and raised moral and ethical issues about who is included in and who is excluded from the Olympics and the Paralympics.

Sport has been used to provide displays of national unity, whether as political manipulation, like Hitler's 1936 Olympics, when a sporting event became the focus of political, racialized conflict, or in the promotion of cultural and social cohesion bringing together the imagined community of the nation at the men's FA Cup (why not the women's?) or test series in cricket.

Sport has also been a significant site of protest, some of which, like the black power salutes of the US athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the Mexico Olympics in 1968, have become iconic.

This Sporting Planet, one of the Social Science Faculty's suite of four 15-point courses, is the first course about what makes sport social and the global relevance of sport. It uses ideas from the social sciences to explore the global and economic implications of sport, why people really care about sport, and why sport is political. It is a course for everyone who is interested in sport, whether as a fan, a



Welford Primary School – a Paralympic mural

participant or as someone who wants to find out why sport occupies such a prominent place in contemporary societies.

Sport may sometimes be marginalized as a serious issue and object of study because of its associations with play. However, the phenomenon is too big and sport is more than just a game. Sport has transformational qualities; it is rooted in cultures and can instigate

change. Nelson Mandela is reputed to have said, 'sport can change the world'.

The course offers some explanations of why sport matters by introducing the core debates in the social science of sport and demonstrating the links between sport, society, culture and politics. It provides the first stage in developing some of the skills needed in the expanding field of employment in the sport and leisure industries. The course is an exciting mix of hard copy and web-based material. We use the Internet to keep it up to date, which means that we can hit the big issues as they hit the press. Examples will change with each presentation. Classic sport texts can be found in the workbook.

The first part of the course works through globalization, the media, culture, and the economics and politics of sport using a range of material from sports such as football, cricket, boxing, tennis and athletics so that students will be equipped to answer some of the big questions about what sport means and how sport fits into the wider society. The second half of the course is devoted to a mega event, the Olympics, and explores both historical material on former Games and the more current concerns with Beijing and the run up to London 2012.

Why do major cities compete to host the Games, and what impact do the Games have on these cities and nations? What makes the Games political and what sort of politics are played out at the Olympics? What is the role of the media in representing the Games and what are the links between the media and sponsorship in sport. These are all questions that concern *This Sporting Planet*. As sport and society become more profoundly shaped in the 21st century, this exciting and innovative course will provide you with some answers, and pose more questions for the future.

The rise of China and India

Instead of pandering to the Washington consensus we need to respond positively to the challenge of the growth of these new powers, argues Raphael Kaplinsky, Professor of International Development

Since the late 1980s, both China and India have grown rapidly. Other economies have grown at similar rates in the past, and for longer periods. However, the distinctive characteristic of these two 'Asian Driver' economies is their size. Each accounts for approximately one-fifth of global population. Thus, whilst expansion in Japan and Korea left the external world unchanged, sustained growth in China and India changes the ball game for everyone.

The external impact of their growth is transmitted through a number of channels – through trade, through aid, through investment flows, through migration, and through the environment. These impacts may be complementary for other countries, in which case all gain. Alternatively, they may be in competition with other countries. In these cases, China and India's gain is at the expense of all other countries. In some cases these impacts may be direct, for example as a consequence of China's

growing trade with another economy. However, more often, and more difficult to unravel are those impacts that may be indirect. For example, China's clothing exports to the USA squeezed out Lesotho exporters to the USA, resulting in a 27 per cent decline in employment in Lesotho clothing firms.

Perhaps the most pervasive and challenging indirect impact of the Asian Drivers falls upon the environment. China is already the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, and India is catching up rapidly as its investments in infrastructure and automobilization gather pace. This has led to severe environmental degradation within these two economies, but the negative environmental impacts are beginning to spill over and to affect the earth's biosphere adversely. Their thirst for water – allied to changing rainfall patterns arising from climate change – is also beginning to have regional impacts in Asia, with unknown implications for the sustainability of peace in the region.

From the development perspective, perhaps the greatest effect on other countries of China's rise is its impact on the relative prices of manufactures and commodities. China's rapid expansion of manufacturing has led to a fall in the price of manufactures, whilst infrastructural investments in China (and now in India) have led to a boom in commodity prices – minerals, metals, energy and food.

This poses two major threats to the accepted wisdom on modern development strategy. On the one hand, it makes industrialization



Anti Coca Cola campaigners bang the side of a passing delivery van. World Social Forum, Mumbai, India

more difficult as countries have to cope with Chinese competition in the manufacturing sector. On the other hand, it provides a major opportunity. Exporters of commodities such as oil and gas, minerals and many agricultural products find themselves in a world of rising demand and rising prices. However, these opportunities may be difficult to grasp, since typically in poor countries commodity exports are associated with war (as in the Congo), civil conflict (for example over diamonds in Sierra Leone), corruption, and a series of problematic challenges to the management of the economy. What implications do the above hold for the UK's development policy?

There is a much-reduced need for UK development assistance in China, which has made great strides in the reduction of absolute poverty levels (although with rapidly deepening inequality).

Absolute poverty levels in India remain stubbornly high and exist predominantly in rural areas. UK aid should be directed to these pockets of poverty, rather than support the central government and lead firms and research institutions.

The UK needs to cooperate with both China and India in the generation and adoption of more energy-efficient technologies. In some respects we have much to learn from the Asian Drivers, since in some sectors they are making substantial technological strides without our assistance.

Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly affected by China. Its

programmes instituted after the Gleneagles Agreement.

Minerals and commodities are capital-intensive sectors and create little employment. They use imported technology predominantly, and are usually foreign-owned. Therefore, the spread effects within countries are generally limited.

China has taken advantage of Sudan's resistance to the coordinated attempts by western countries and Japan to resolve the Darfur crisis amicably in order to gain access to the region's energy resources. It has begun to respond to western pressure to join in international criticism but its steps have been indecisive.

However, China and India do not only represent a threat to the development challenge. They are a source of technology, of entrepreneurship and a rapidly growing market for products from other developing countries. Less obviously, but perhaps with more significant long-term impact, they show what can be done with a combination of enhanced skills, dynamic entrepreneurship and governments who are not afraid of running against the Washington Consensus and its inflexible adherence to free markets.

The challenge for UK aid should therefore be to assist other developing economies – particularly (but not exclusively) sub-Saharan Africa – to take advantage of these opportunities without being submerged by the challenges posed by the rise of the Asian Driver giants.

manufacturing exports have been undermined, affecting adversely Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, South Africa and Swaziland. Manufacturing for the domestic markets is now more problematic for local producers, who find it difficult to build their capabilities in the face of low-cost imports. Attention needs to be given to the protection and encouragement of industrial sectors since they are the source of much learning and employment.

The fruits of the boom in the commodities sector are spread unevenly between and within countries. The boom in demand for energy only benefits five major oil exporters; the boom in the price for minerals and metals only benefits 12 African economies. Most African economies, and especially their urban dwellers, will be affected adversely by rising food and oil prices. In fact, for most African countries, recent oil-price rises have wiped out the debt-forgiveness

Enacting European citizenship

How do acts shape our ideas of European citizenship and the very idea of citizenship itself? Mike Saward, Professor of Politics, introduces a ground-breaking new research programme led by the Open University and funded by the European Commission

European citizenship is an unprecedented project in the making, a historic experiment in a form of citizenship not tied exclusively to nations. It has a formal and a legal side, of course, but there is more to it than status and rights. There is a dynamic element as well; citizens, third country nationals, refugees, illegal aliens and states enact claims to European citizenship.

ENACT is a consortium bringing together researchers from three original member states of the European Union (UK, Belgium and the Netherlands), two new member states (Hungary and Latvia) and a candidate state (Turkey) to explore in depth how European citizenship is claimed, disputed and built – in short, enacted. OU researchers and their partners will explore varied rich cases, such as mobile citizens (the Roma especially), young people in Latvia, and groups on the edges of European citizenship in Germany, Hungary and Turkey. The European Court of Justice, and national courts policing the boundaries of citizenship, will also come under the microscope. Acts that articulate claims to citizenship (and produce claimants) create new sites of belonging and identification. Our partners include Radboud University (the Netherlands), Central European University (Hungary), Koc University (Turkey), the Centre for European Studies (Belgium), and Riga Graduate School of Law (Latvia).



Acts of citizenship stretch across boundaries; they differ from traditional, and still important, sites of citizenship such as voting, social security and military obligation. They also produce new subjects and scales of citizenship. By investigating acts we expand the focus from what people say (opinions, perceptions, attitudes) to what people do – an important supplement to a conventional focus on what people or authorities (the EU as well as national courts, agencies, organizations) say about European citizenship and identification.

By investigating 'acts of citizenship', we aim to determine the meaning given to the idea of European citizenship by those whose acts create a sense of belonging and attachment. Under the University's leadership, ENACT will produce major publications and policy briefings and, in addition, make an innovative new contribution to OU teaching materials on citizenship.

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The Tibetan flame is nearly extinguished

As humanities student Paul Rowlinson explains, sport and politics are closely entwined. At the summer Olympics, it will be surprising if the politicians are alone in using the games for political motives

In March this year, I received an email requesting that I sign a petition calling on the Chinese government to respect human rights in Tibet and dialogue with the Dalai Lama. Without hesitation, I 'signed', as well as keying in the email addresses of any of my contacts who might have an idea who the Dalai Lama is.

We have all seen the farcical pantomime of the Olympic torch making its way around the globe, despite the attempts of numerous protesters. It will be interesting to see how much protest there is at the games in Beijing this summer, what it consists of, and if it is tolerated. The media are raising the real prospect of symbolic protests by many of the athletes.

When several countries, including the USA, boycotted the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, many people said that sport should never become involved in politics, least of all the Olympics. In an ideal world perhaps, but not in the world we live in. After all, sport receives the kind of large-scale fanatical support that politicians can only dream of.

Millions of viewers will watch the Olympics worldwide. The range of sports and countries involved will ensure that even the least athletic of us will be encouraged to tune in and



Demonstrators protest against the Olympic Flame, which was part of the global protest against China's policies towards Tibet

watch the USA take the lion's share of the medals.

I hope that the athletes will take the opportunity to make at least one political statement of some kind. I hope we will see some form of protest by at least one athlete, perhaps akin to the Black Power salutes by the two US sprinters at the 1968 games in Mexico. However, I'm afraid it will do nothing to staunch the flow of Tibetan blood onto Chinese hands. Nor will it restore the Dalai Lama to his former glory, or his beloved country, or its population.

Since the Dalai Lama fled Tibet in 1959, more people than even he could have hoped for have absorbed Tibetan Buddhism. I wonder if it is any consolation to him when he thinks of his country's lost generations and the slow but almost certain genocide taking place there.

Please show your support and sign the petition at:

www.avaaz.org/en/tibet_end_the_violence/

Original art by C K Purandare at: www.art-non-deccom

China remains a land of torture and repression

The Beijing Olympic Games has led to an intensification of authoritarianism in China, argues Shao Jiang, who escaped Chinese persecution in 1997

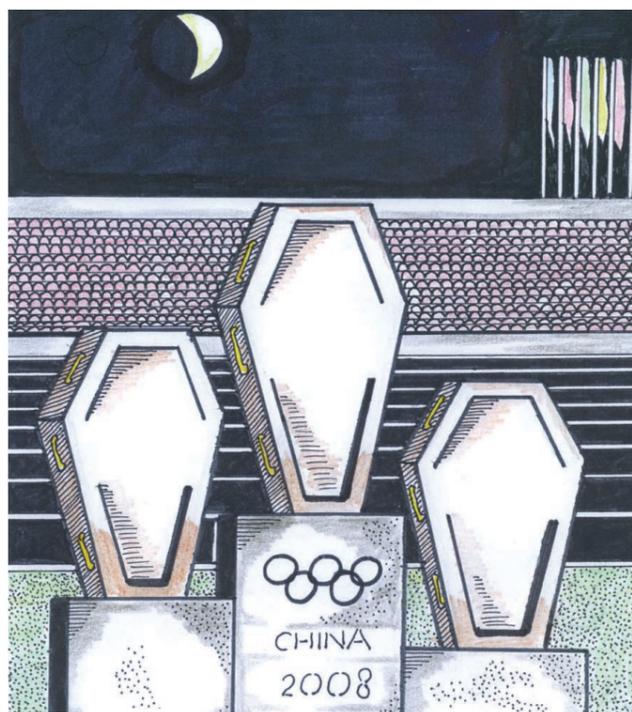
The crackdown on human rights activists in China has intensified. It has never been easy for people to speak out about issues such as political freedom, the death penalty, HIV/AIDS, land grabs, or the environment – I know this from personal experience – but if anything, things are getting worse.

Back in 1989 in Beijing, I helped organize the pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square. We held public discussions around sensitive political issues. After the Tiananmen massacre, I was arrested and held in prison for 18 months, followed by repeated harassment and detention. But I was still one of the lucky ones.

Many of the participants were killed – their relatives built the network called the 'Tiananmen Mothers'. Many are still in prison, among whom is Hu Shigen, a lecturer at Beijing Language Institute, who was sentenced to 20 years in prison in 1992 for commemoration of the victims of 4 June 1989. I escaped in 1997 and now live in the UK, where I'm free to protest at China's human rights record; a right I exercised, peacefully, when the Olympic torch came to London.

However, the situation for those I left behind is quite different. An Amnesty report earlier this month spelled it out, 'Much of the current wave of repression is occurring not in spite of the Olympics, but actually because of the Olympics.' Dissenters are targeted and silenced. Anyone making direct connections between human rights abuses and China's hosting of the Olympics is treated particularly harshly.

Ye Guozhu is serving a four-year sentence after he applied for permission to hold a demonstration about forced evictions in Beijing. He has reportedly been tortured with electro-shock batons in prison. Wang Ling, his associate, had also campaigned publicly after she lost her property because of Olympic construction. She was recently thrown into a 'Re-education through Labour' camp for 15 months, where conditions are notoriously harsh. We got a clear hint as to what conditions will be like during the Games when the



Ministry of Public Security held a press conference in November 2007 to lay down the law about public protests. Anyone wishing to hold assemblies, parades and demonstrations during the Olympics, they announced, would have to comply with the law – including an obligation to apply for permission in advance. As Ye Guozhu's

case shows, such permission is almost never granted. And the consequences for those who try to protest peacefully can be dire.

In March this year, Yang Chunlin was sentenced to five years in prison for 'inciting subversion' following his 'We don't want the Olympics; we want human rights' campaign, which was meant to defend peasant rights from land seizures by developers and officials. It's reported that he was tortured in police detention: for seven days in August and September 2007 his arms and legs were stretched and chained to the four corners of an iron bed so that he couldn't move. He was forced to eat, drink and defecate in that position. On 3 April, human rights activist Hu Jia was sentenced to three and a half years in prison for 'inciting subversion of state power' when he spoke up for imprisoned civil rights lawyers. Earlier this year more activists were detained or put under surveillance and there were broad police sweeps of petitioners, vagrants, beggars and other 'undesirables' in Beijing, ahead of the National People's Congress. The Party likes its big events to go smoothly; no one is going to be allowed to get in the way. And there is no bigger event than the Beijing Olympics.

Recent events in Tibet highlighted the situation yet more clearly. The crackdown on the peaceful protests of 10 March and what followed – violence from the police and the army, mass arrests, 'wanted lists' of protesters posted online – showed that the authorities' attitude to peaceful demonstrators has changed little in 19 years. However, they have learned to keep the media away.

Amnesty has released the first of four online animated films, highlighting the crackdown on peaceful protests in China and asking people here to join its 'Human Rights for China' campaign. Campaigning techniques have moved on considerably from our 1989 protest camp. Sadly, the attitude of the Chinese authorities to peaceful protest has barely moved an inch.

This is an edited version of an article that appeared in *The Independent* on Thursday, 1 May 2008 www.amnesty.org.uk/china

Human rights in China

Amnesty International has long maintained that official statistics regarding human rights in China have always under-estimated the true picture of the scale of human suffering, partly because of the corrupt nature of much of China's judicial system. For example, Amnesty estimate that, in 2005, China executed not 1,770 people, as officially acknowledged, but 3,400. The situation could be much worse than Amnesty believes, for other sources, including those within the National People's Congress, suggest that up to 10,000 people are executed in China each year. There has also been considerable international pressure to prevent the Chinese authorities from expanding the use of lethal injections, despite China's commitment in 2007 to review the use of the death penalty.

'The extension of the lethal injection programme flies in the face of the clear international trend away from using the death

penalty and ignores the problems inherent in this punishment. Arbitrary application, miscarriages of justice including execution of the innocent, and the cruel and inhumane nature of the death penalty cannot be solved by changing the method of execution,' said Catherine Baber, Director of Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific programme. Evidence shows that lethal injections can cause convulsions and a prolonged and painful death, have the potential to cause physical and mental suffering through botched implementation and, by involving health personnel in executions, this form of execution goes against codes of professional ethics that oppose medical or nursing participation. 'A positive legacy for the Beijing Olympics can only be achieved when China's world record of executions comes to an end,' said Baber.

In 2008, there are 68 crimes in China that are punishable by the death penalty including embezzlement and tax fraud. There are other concerns about China: its record of harvesting organs for transplants from living people; the treatment of minority ethnic groups, especially the persecutions of Buddhists in Tibet and Muslims in the far western Xinjiang Province; the severe impositions on freedoms, such as the freedom of speech, particularly in relation to the much censored access and use of the Internet; the curbs on political and religious affiliations; the restrictions on freedom of movement, especially upon rural workers and peasants who have long been discriminated against as second-class citizens; worker's rights and welfare; and torture and arbitrary detention without trial, especially in the run up to the Olympics.

Water becomes the new oil as world runs dry

Annual world water use has risen six-fold during the past century, more than double the rate of population growth. By 2025, almost two-thirds of the global population will live in countries where water will be a scarce commodity. Western companies have the know-how – and the financial incentive – to supply water to poor nations. But, as Richard Wachman reports, their involvement is already provoking unrest

The midday sun beats down on a phalanx of riot police facing thousands of jeering demonstrators, angry at proposals to put up their water bills by more than a third. Moments later a uniformed officer astride a horse shouts an order and the police charge down the street to embark on a club-wielding melee that leaves dozens of bloodied protesters with broken limbs.

Is this a film clip from the latest offering from Hollywood? Unfortunately it is not. It's a description of a real-life event in Cochabamba, Bolivia's third largest city, where a subsidiary of Bechtel, the US engineering giant, took over the municipal water utility and increased bills to a level that the poorest could not afford.

Welcome to a new world, where war and civil strife loom in the wake of chronic water shortages caused by rising population, drought (exacerbated by global warming) and increased demand from the newly affluent middle classes in the emerging economies of Asia and Latin America.

At a city briefing by an international bank in 2007, a senior executive said, 'Today everyone is talking about global warming, but my prediction is that in two years water will move to the top of the geopolitical agenda.'

The question for countries as far apart as China and Argentina is whether to unleash market forces by allowing access to private European and American multinationals that have the technological know-how to help bring water to the masses – but at a price that many may be unable, or unwilling, to pay.

As Cochabamba illustrates, water is an explosive issue in developing countries, where people have traditionally received supplies for free from local wells and rivers. But in the past 15 years, rapid industrialization, especially in places such as China, has led to widespread pollution and degradation of the local environment.

A report from accountancy giant Deloitte & Touche says humans seem to have a peculiar talent for making previously abundant resources scarce: 'This is especially the case with water,' it observes.

According to the firm's findings, more than 1 billion people will lack access to clean water in 2008. Paul Lee, research director at Deloitte, and one of the authors of the report, says, 'Demand for water is expected to be driven by economic growth and population increases. India's demand for water is expected to exceed supply by 2020.'

The World Wildlife Fund has forecast that in the Himalayas the retreat of glaciers could reduce summer water flows by up to two-thirds. In the Ganges area, this would cause a water shortage for 500 million people. Lee says, 'The lack of the most important form of liquid in the world is therefore a fundamental issue and one that the technology sector can play a major role in addressing.'

He and others, including the World Bank, believe that private industry can, sometimes, solve problems by taking water out of government hands and removing subsidies. If water becomes more expensive, so this argument goes, people are more reluctant to waste



it, although Taylor agrees that government needs to make certain that the poorest sections of society are protected, and that there is 'proper [price] regulation'. By allowing prices to rise to help meet the cost of supply, companies could upgrade infrastructure and, in many cases, build new systems from scratch.

Even in Britain it is recognized that efficiency is vital to avoid leaks. In the developing world, leakage can account for the loss of up to 50 per cent of all clean water supplies in major cities.

But protecting the poor is not always easy. Take the example of desalination. Although it offers a solution for countries where demand exceeds supply, the technological process uses a huge amount of energy, making it 'too expensive for many African and Asian countries', says Lee.

Max Lawson, senior policy adviser for Oxfam, says, 'We are sceptical that private-sector involvement is the solution for very poor countries. In fact, there is an argument that much greater public sector involvement and cash is needed to channel supplies to where they are most needed.' But Abel Mejia at the World Bank in Washington says the organization does not favour one form of investment over the other: 'We lend to private companies and governments, but we are not ideologically motivated. Solutions may need a mix of private and public money.'

The World Development Movement lobby group has, in the past, criticized the World Bank's enthusiasm for private firms controlling water projects; it prefers public-private partnerships, run on a not-for-profit basis.

It is in China – the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gas – that the water problem is most pronounced, as fears grow that the country is turning into an ecological disaster area. The head of the country's national development agency said recently that a quarter of the length of China's seven main rivers was so poisoned that the water was harmful to the skin. Moreover, water-related issues are sparking popular protests after the sanctioning of dams and irrigation projects that have displaced hundreds of thousands of people who have no recourse to compensation. Beijing has passed legislation to punish companies that pollute supplies but, in China, such laws can be difficult to enforce.

So pressing are the issues surrounding water that China has invited Western companies to run systems in many towns and cities. One of the biggest is French-owned Veolia, once part of the Vivendi utilities empire. In parts of China, water provided by Veolia no longer has to be boiled, but the cost to consumers has doubled. For the middle classes, the price is still relatively low – but most Chinese are not middle class. Many say that up to half their income is now being swallowed by water bills. That leaves Beijing between a rock and a hard place because, like many emerging economies, it desperately needs Western know-how and technology to solve its water problems, but it is anxious to avoid the kind of civil unrest that the Bolivian government experienced in Cochabamba.

In the City of London, there is a growing realization that investing in water technology companies offers opportunities for savvy shareholders, and possibly for ethical investors. 'There is also an appetite from institutions for water-related investments – they know it's going to be big,' says Julian Sevaux, managing partner at Stanhope Capital.

Olivia Bowen, an independent financial adviser at the Gaea Partnership, says, 'New climate change funds have recently come to market; some are well established, such as Impax's Environmental Markets Fund.' GE and Dow Chemical are among the big US companies diversifying into water services, while the UK-based Thames Water is expanding overseas.

But the crux of the problem remains. By 2025, almost two-thirds of the global population will live in countries where water will be a scarce commodity. And that could lead to conflict, as United Nations secretary-general Ban Ki-moon warned last week.

Asia looks vulnerable, with China planning to syphon off Tibet's water supply to make up for shortages in the parched north. Elsewhere, the Israel-Palestine conflict is, at least partly, about securing supplies from the River Jordan; similarly, water is a major feature of the strife in Sudan that has left Darfur devastated. When it comes to this most basic of commodities, the stakes could not be higher.

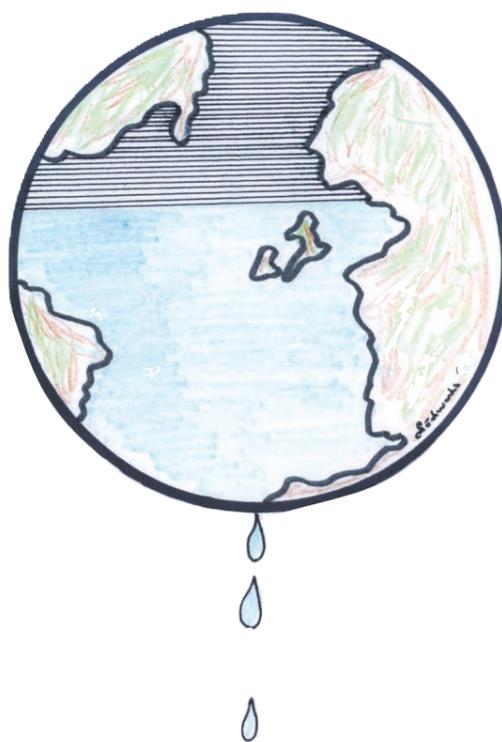
Drip feeding?

The OU needs to develop an ethical trading policy argues Senior Research Fellow Alan Woodley

Once upon a time an employee decided that the air at work was not good enough to breathe. So she bought an expensive oxygen cylinder and took it to work with her. The kindly employer spotted this and, although he knew the air was perfectly breathable, he took pity on her. 'Fear not, my good woman. We will supply you with oxygen! We know a good supplier. They happen to have been boycotted by just about everybody because they eat babies, but hey, they offer a really good deal.'

A fairy tale? Try substituting water for oxygen. It's the colourless, odourless and tasteless liquid that constitutes 70 per cent of your brain. The OU, like every other employer in the UK, provides workers with a free and unlimited supply of this top-quality life-giving product. Adam's Ale, Corporation Pop, call it what you like, it is literally available on tap. How good is that?

Not good enough, obviously, because millions of people choose to buy 'designer water' that, drop for drop, costs more than petrol! That is their prerogative, and I leave them to their collective madness. However, I am happy to note that the fever seems to be passing – the sales of bottled water dropped by 16 per cent last year. What I am



bothered about is the magnanimous decision of the OU to supplement tap water with limitless amounts of what is an expensive, unethical, and probably inferior, product.

Here are my arguments. Think about the needless 'water miles' from its transport. Think of the cost to the OU – don't forget to factor in the bottle-lifting training cost. Tap water undergoes far more rigorous quality control than bottled water. Studies have shown problems with water coolers in sunlight, out-of-date water and irregular cleaning.

Above all, why is the OU using Powwow, which is a part of Nestlé? Nestlé is the most boycotted brand in the UK because of its 'unethical use and promotion of formula feed for babies in third world countries' and other corporate practices (see blogs.guardian.co.uk/businessinsight/archives/2005/09/01/branded.html). Some 38 per cent of Students' Unions across the UK have also boycotted Nestlé products (see www.cardiffstudents.com/your_union/ethics_environment/nestle-boycott).

My answers? Tap water is fine by me. If people want chilled water, run the water cooler off the mains supply – they actually do this in the OU main refectory! If you are going to use water coolers, get them from an ethical supplier. AquAid, for example, say that every water cooler they site raises enough money to bring two children in a developing country water for the rest of their lives. Above all, the OU needs to develop and adopt an ethical trading policy so that its peerless educational credentials are matched by its working practices.

Alan's blog can be accessed at: woodleywise.blogspot.com/



Spin, corporate power and the social sciences

David Miller, Professor of Sociology in the Department of Geography and Sociology at Strathclyde University, tells us why social scientists should be concerned with corporate power

Put the phrase 'sociology of corporate power' into an internet search engine and there are very few results. The growth of corporate power has increased rapidly in the last 25 years and therefore its study should be a natural for the discipline, especially since the exercise of power is so central to social science. But the critical silence is deafening. Exploring the ways in which questions of corporate power are linked with the major problems of our age is one of the most pressing issues confronting the world today. Now is the time to address this neglect.

The four most important challenges faced by humanity in the foreseeable future are the progressive neutering of processes of democracy, the climate crisis, wars between and within countries, and the widening gap between rich and poor. In each of these challenges, corporations are implicated. I don't claim that they should be studied to the exclusion of all else, but the rise of transnational corporations has transformed the way in which societies all over the world operate. How are these involved in the four great crises facing humanity?

Taking democracy first, the role of corporations in undermining democracy is deep rooted. In fact it is the fundamental basis of the political activity of corporations. Let us start with the level of governmental power closest to me as a social scientist working in Glasgow – the Scottish Government. Successive governments under devolution have operated an explicitly pro business policy agenda, albeit accompanied by a thin veneer of rhetoric about social justice. This has meant that corporations have been welcomed into the machinery of government as never before.

In 2001 the Scottish Parliament set up a 'Business Exchange' (SPBE) because most new Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) had, supposedly, little business experience and required some education to bring them up to speed despite the largest single category of previous job experience being in business. Ostensibly the exchange was designed to operate 'in an open and transparent manner' and have 'no connection with lobbying in any form'. But this is not what happened. In early controversies it transpired that three-quarters of the business representatives on the exchange were lobbyists, and that one MSP had signed a 10-year confidentiality deal when visiting the offices of drugs giant Pfizer. In 2002 the Standards Committee of the Parliament condemned the Exchange for failing to 'provide sufficient transparency or accountability'. More recently it has emerged that the interim head of the Exchange (whose term of office reportedly ended in January 2008) is himself a lobbyist.

The infiltration of corporations into government has been a recent phenomenon in the UK and has been preceded by years of conscious campaigning by business lobby groups. This is one of the means by which corporations secure their own interests and exacerbate inequalities between rich and poor. Lobbying operates at the level of individual firms, but also through industry sectoral groups and truly

class-wide alliances. Both individual firms and industry sectoral groups engage in lobbying for competitive advantage, but all three also engage in defending the interests of capitalism in general. This is done through groups such as the International Chamber of Commerce. Others, such as the European Services Forum and the European Round Table of Industrialists, are more recent and highly active in pushing for deregulation in order to open up public services to the private sector. Such groups ensure resources are transferred from the poor to the rich, thus directly affecting the life chance of millions of people all over the world.

When it comes to climate change, corporations are exceptionally active. Among a myriad of strategies, two can be noted. The first – associated with some of the more global corporations – is exemplified by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). Its distinguishing feature is that it does the opposite of what it says on the tin. It is the main corporate lobby group seeking to undermine sustainable development. It lobbies for piecemeal reform so long as there are no binding and enforceable rules. Since it was created in 1992, it has been remarkably successful in sabotaging meaningful action on climate change. In fact, it is one of the key interests behind the redefinition of the phrase 'sustainable development' from its original meaning ('sustaining the planet') to 'sustaining capitalism'. Amazingly the Scottish section of the WBCSD was actually funded by the Scottish Executive in order that it could lobby ... the Scottish Executive!

The other major strategy for dealing with climate change has been denial. Corporations are not content to simply make statements on climate that fly in the face of scientific consensus. They know that their words are widely mistrusted. Instead they invest millions in creating and funding front groups and fake institutes in a bid to dominate the information environment, or at least to sow enough doubt that the public will not demand and governments will not accede to sensible action to save the planet.

The continued occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan are not the product of corporate lobbying. Some elements of the oil industry were critical of the invasion of Iraq. Although control of oil is part of the reason that the USA and UK remain in Iraq, the more general corporate interest is not necessarily served. Nevertheless, sectional corporate interests in the oil, armaments, infrastructure and military services industries have made enormous sums of money from the suffering of the Iraqi people.

What can social scientists do about all this? The first thing that we can do is research, write and teach about how the world is and how it could be. When one looks for the best recent research on corporate power in Iraq or corporate lobby groups in action, it is often small activist groups or even larger NGOs that are leading the way. It is the duty of academics to constantly reach out beyond the academic journals, to communicate with and take an active role in

civil society. This means making research available and exploring the ways in which power operates. We must involve ourselves in making this knowledge count in public debate, political action and decision making.

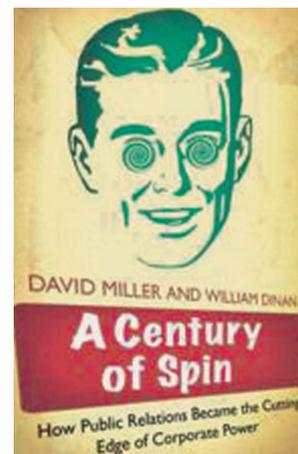
Corporate power has been the focus of my own research, and one initiative that has come out of this has been the website Spinwatch (www.spinwatch.org). This is run by a collective that has been set up as a non-profit corporation off campus. Spinwatch has allowed us to reach a wide audience and to work together with activists, journalists, NGOs and concerned citizens to research and report on deceptive spin and other corporate techniques.

Spinwatch was launched in 2004. In its second full year it served over 3 million pages and it continues to grow. New developments include our www.nuclearspin.org site, which exposed the deceptive spin involved in the push for a new generation of nuclear power. We have experimented with wiki technology (as used by Wikipedia) in order to develop an online research resource that is built up incrementally.

The rise of the global justice movement in the last decade has resulted in the emergence of a series of initiatives that have attempted to re-engage academia with the issues surrounding corporate power and its abuse. At the international level there have been the International Network of Scholar Activists and the European Raison d'Agir founded by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. In the UK the Network of Activist Scholars in Politics and International Relations and the Public Interest Research Network were created. The Public Sociology movement launched by Michael Burawoy in his presidential speech to the American Sociological Association (ASA) was a decisive moment, coming as it did in the same period as the ASA vote against the war in Iraq. Other similar projects are underway in the UK including the Participatory Geographies network.

However, it is noticeable that UK sociology seems not to have made as much headway in this direction. There is no 'public sociology' working group at the British Sociological Association or even any other new critical working groups on the 'war on terror' or Iraq or climate change or democracy. Whatever the reason, it is simply not good enough for sociologists to avoid debating these issues. We should get our findings out into the public domain and not leave them hidden under a bushel of incomprehensible jargon in the far corner of the room known as the academic journals.

David Miller is co-founder and co-editor of www.spinwatch.org. His most recent book, *A Century of Spin* (co-authored with William Dinan), was published by Pluto Press in 2008. A full version of this article can be found on the *Society Matters Extra* website



Get off my land!

George Callaghan, Staff Tutor in Economics in Scotland, explores how Scottish communities are reclaiming their land

A fierce wind blew the hair back from Joanna Morrison's face as she dug into the hard hillside ground on the morning of Friday 21 March 2003. Twenty-two-year-old Joanna, whose family has lived on North Harris in the Western Isles for generations, was planting a tree to celebrate the community buy-out of the land.

In buying the 50,000 acre North Harris Estate, the North Harris Trust was the latest community to take ownership of their land helped by funds from the National Lottery and the growing feeling of community empowerment engendered by the Scottish Parliament's Land Reform legislation. North Harris was one of a number of rural communities that are taking up the challenge of running their own affairs.

The history of North Harris, while unique, shares with other buy-outs one important feature – ownership. In North Harris' case, the owners have included the fifth Earl of Dunmore, whose family owned the estate from 1834 to 1868, and Sir Edward Scott, a financier from London, whose son Sir Samuel Scott sold the land in 1919 to the industrialist Lord Leverhulme. Ownership of the estate then became fragmented, with land sold and retained in a piecemeal fashion. While some owners displayed admirable philanthropy and (relative) generosity, for example allowing tenants access to game and fishing, others forced tenant crofters onto marginal unproductive land.

The uncertainty over whether the next owner would be a darling or a demagogue – a core feature of inheritance and a free market in land – was one of the deciding factors in persuading Harris residents to buy their land.

The 900 people of North Harris, and others who have purchased their own land, now face many difficult issues. Chief amongst these is how to develop a sustainable local economy in an area typified by historically low investment in infrastructure, an outflow of young people and an inflow of those retiring early. Limited access to markets and skills in areas of relatively low economic value, such as agriculture, fishing and forestry, was also a pressing influence.

What assets do such communities have that they might utilize?



One asset is the important social science concept of agency – the capacity for individuals or communities to influence their future. History can often be presented in a way that equates poverty with passivity, where people are acted upon rather than act. However, as the history of crofter revolts and land raids demonstrates, the people of the Highlands and Islands have long sought to challenge and change landlordism.

In the process of buying their own land, highland communities both drew on and enhanced this capacity to act for themselves. One early finding of our research is that community confidence has grown. Through forming buy-out committees and steering groups, chairing meetings, applying for grants and dealing with politicians and policy makers, local communities have added to their social capital.

Apart from their agency buy-out, communities have another important asset – the land itself. One way they have used this asset is to develop renewable energy schemes. For example, the Isle of

Gigha generates income from three wind turbines and the residents of Eigg make money from a small-scale hydro scheme. However, energy schemes have also led to conflict, with the plans for a large-scale wind farm in Lewis leading to heated local and national debate in 2008.

Another way of using land assets is to generate both stocks and flows of assets. The Assynt Foundation, which bought land in North Harris in 2005, has plans to sell small plots of land to housing developers and use the profit to build affordable housing. They also want to construct small bothies in remote areas of the estate. This accommodation, constructed from local materials, could then be let out to tourists, providing a flow of income to the foundation.

Change, however, often leads to conflict. In the case of the Assynt Foundation, for example, conservation bodies such as the John Muir Trust argue that eco-lodges tame the wildness of the land. Yet, as others in the Foundation argue, in the eighteenth century, before the highland clearances replaced people with sheep and deer, a population of 500 lived on the estate. Is the John Muir Trust's concept of wildness a modern creation, a middle-class urban imagining of a never-real past? Or is it an admirable attempt at preservation?

Another area of conflict concerns renewable energy, where the Foundation's attempt to build a small-scale wind scheme generated antagonism rather than electricity. Some members of the community, which is small but well organized and vocal, wanted no change, arguing that changes to the physical landscape might dent tourism – and their sitting-room views. Are these people protecting nature or are they looking after their own interests at the expense of future generations?

Can economic development and environmental preservation work together? What does sustainable development mean in practice? How do remote rural communities develop and prosper? One outcome is clear: the people on this land now have a greater say in their future and no more will the cry 'get off my land' be heard!

Greening the Emerald Isle

Dr Liam Leonard, Visiting Scholar SSRC and Assistant Lecturer, Department of Sociology and Politics at the National University of Ireland, Galway, discusses the impact of growth on the Irish countryside and the response of those concerned by threats to communities and their hinterland

Having enjoyed the benefits of economic growth associated with the 'Celtic Tiger' boom of the last decade, communities in Ireland are beginning to witness the downside. Infrastructural projects came to be perceived as threats to locals and their health and environment, or to the heritage of the nation itself. Offshoots of rapid development such as hyper-consumption, a buoyant property market and increased car ownership led to further demand for roads, waste management sites and water treatment facilities. Such was the link between growth and infrastructure that those communities which voiced concerns about projects were deemed to be backward thinking and against progress.

The first of these collective responses emerged in the wake of the attempt to build onshore pipelines on the west coast of County Mayo for the natural gas of the Atlantic Field. Local farmers objected to this proposal, and resisted attempts by the multinational involved to gain access to their land. As a result, five local men were imprisoned for 94 days for refusing to agree to an injunction that would allow the agents of the multinational access to their property. What followed was a campaign that gripped the nation's imagination, as 'Shell to Sea' protests sprung up across the island and beyond in response to the community's demand that the gas be processed offshore.

The imprisoned men's traditional lifestyle of farming in an Irish-speaking Gaeltacht community represented to many observers an authentic and traditional way of life that had been abandoned in the rush to embrace the consumption-fuelled prosperity which had become prevalent in recent years. The fact that the Mayo farmers put family and community above profit or gain provided many observers with an indication of the wider context that had become the subtext of this dispute; that Ireland had, in some ways, sold its soul in return for multinational investment and growth. The men were released in the summer of 2006, and their campaign for justice continues.

The second issue to emerge in recent years was the campaign to save Tara, seat of the ancient High Kings of Ireland in County Meath, near Dublin. The capital city had become home to almost one in three of the Republic's population, and the pressure on existing infrastructure such as roads became intolerable. Attempts to address the roads' issue were compounded by the surging rise in private car ownership at a time when transport policy favoured a reduction in investment in public utilities such as rail. Over the last decade, a number of disputes have emerged in response to this policy shift, as environmentalists and archaeologists united to defend forests at the Glen of the Downs in County Wicklow and the site of Carrickmines castle in County Dublin.

This band of 'eco-warriors' and academics were mobilized again in response to the state's plans to build a motorway alongside the

ancient site of the High Kings of Ireland at Tara, in County Meath. The Tara dispute became a standoff with legal challengers and celebrity advocates such as Irish actor Stuart Townsend and his wife, Hollywood star Charlize Theron, adding their support to the campaign. A re-examination of the state's prioritization of tolled roads over public transport resulted. The campaign to save Tara continues, with archaeologists currently excavating the site and recording their findings about the ancient Celtic way of life.

Accelerated growth has also led to waste disposal development. The burgeoning waste crisis, which has



emerged in the aftermath of increased consumption associated with accelerated growth, has led to community action. Ireland had fallen foul of European directives on waste management, due to an over-reliance (of up to 93 per cent) on landfill. In order to deal with this crisis, waste policies were introduced with plans for regional incinerators across the country. Previous attempts to introduce an all-island incinerator in Northern Ireland were opposed by both nationalists and unionists together. As a result of the networks

created from the Northern campaign, communities mobilized in regions such as Galway, Cork and Meath, and more latterly in Dublin.

These regional campaigns benefited from links with the global anti-incinerator and 'zero-waste' campaigns, and from the support of experts from the USA and Britain. As a result, the state's regional waste policy was challenged, as communities began to inform themselves of the dangers posed by the dioxins and furans that are released into the air and food chain from incinerator emissions. Nonetheless, there were positive outcomes to the community engagement with the waste issue, and regional recycling was introduced in many areas with great success. The state has not abandoned its plans to introduce incinerators completely. Two major plants are planned for Cork harbour and Poolbeg in Dublin; these will deal with the bulk of municipal and industrial waste.

Last year, the construction of housing, which had come to provide the second cycle of the 'Celtic Tiger' boom, caused another environmental crisis when the mass construction of new houses in rural areas led to the contamination of water supplies with effluent from archaic treatment plants. In the western city of Galway, often referred to as 'the fastest growing city in Europe', drinking water supplies were contaminated with the Cryptosporidium virus. Lax regulation of the construction industry by the state had created a growing strain on the city's water and sewage systems, and after heavy flooding in the winter of 2007, water supplies in Lough Corrib, which supplied Galway City, became contaminated. Hundreds of people fell ill due to the virus, and a boil water notice was called by the local authority. Panic buying of bottled water ensued, and the boil water notice lasted from March until August 2007, costing retailers and hoteliers millions in extra expenses. The water crisis also became an issue during the general election, which was called in May, and was said by some commentators to have cost the city's Mayor a seat in the Dublin parliament, Dáil Éireann.

Ultimately, the costs of economic growth have led to greater environmental degradation and an undermining of significant aspects of the nation's heritage. In particular, rural communities have borne the cost of Ireland's transition from a rural agrarian society into an industrialized and globalized economy. While communities have demonstrated a commitment to retaining some aspect of the traditional values and heritage of the 'Emerald Isle', the state's policy of prioritizing rapid infrastructural development in order to underpin private consumption and multinational investment over local community services may prove to be ill advised as fluctuations on the global markets continue. As the cycle of the 'Celtic Tiger' draws to a close, the values and concerns of these local communities may provide a new direction for the post boom era.

Life expectancy between rich and poor countries increases to 30 years

Life expectancy in the world's richest countries now exceeds the poorest by over 30 years according to the latest report from the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The data, for 2000–2006, shows that average life expectancy in Britain stood at 78.8 years, an increase of more than 7 years since 1970–75, and 30 years since 1900. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, life expectancy stood at 46.1 years, an increase of just 4 months since 1970–75. This gap is widening across the world as Western countries, and the growing economies of the Far East and Latin America, continue to advance more rapidly than Africa and the countries of the former Soviet Union.

The OECD report, published in May 2008, identified some of the causes of this gap. The report recommends going beyond the immediate causes of disease – poverty, poor sanitation and infection – to tackle deeper issues, such as the social hierarchies in which people live. Social status was crucial to longevity. If people increased their social status, argued the Global Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, they would gain more control over their lives and improve their health because they were less vulnerable to economic and environmental threats.

The research revealed that even in rich countries, such as Britain, life expectancy inequalities are manifest. In Glasgow, the poorest

men have a life expectancy of 54, lower than the average life expectancy in India. The disparities in life expectancy according to social class were still marked.

Professor Sir Michael Marmot, chairman of the commission established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2005, concluded that the key to reducing the gap is empowerment. 'We talk about three kinds of empowerment. If people don't have the material necessities – food to eat, clothes for their children – they can not be empowered. The second kind is psychosocial empowerment: more control over their lives. The third is political empowerment: having a voice.'

USA the most heavily armed nation on Earth

The USA is home to nearly one-third of the world's firearms according to the Small Arms Survey of 2007. US citizens now own 270 million of the 875 million known firearms. The survey conducted by the Geneva-based Graduate Institute of International Studies revealed that 4.5 million of the 8 million guns manufactured each year in the world are made in the USA. Federal sources estimate that over one-half of all US households own at least one firearm.

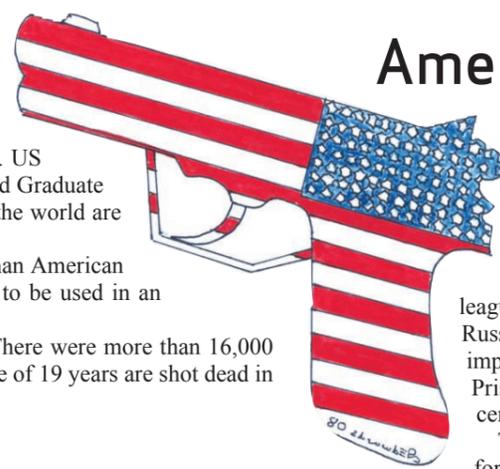
Since the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1964, more Americans have died by gunfire in the USA than American armed forces killed in war and conflict in the 20th century. A gun in a US home is 22 times more likely to be used in an accidental shooting, a murder or a suicide than in self-defence against attack.

In 2005, there were more than 14,000 gun murders in America; over 400 of the victims were children. There were more than 16,000 suicides by firearms, in addition to 650 fatal accidents involving guns. On average, eight people under the age of 19 years are shot dead in America every day.

The US depression 2008

Housing foreclosures, job losses, and fast-rising food prices are having a huge impact on the capacity of many Americans, especially its poor and minority populations. Projections by the Congressional Budget Office in Washington indicate that from October 2008, 28 million people in the USA will be using government food stamps to buy essential foodstuffs, the highest recorded level since the US food assistance programme was created in the 1960s, and an increase of 1.5 million since 2007. The scheme is open to all Americans who live just above the poverty line.

Application for the food stamps – electronic cards that are filled automatically once a month by the US government and swiped by customers at retail outlets – rose by over 10 per cent in 2007. As the world's growing food crisis bites, the amount of food stamps per household has so far not increased. The cost of feeding a low-income family of four rose by 6 per cent in the 12 months to April 2008.



Americans in prison

For the first time in history, more than 1 per cent of the US adult population is now in jail. In March 2008, the Pew centre, using data supplied by the US Justice Department and Bureau of Prisons, revealed that there are now 1.6 million American adults in prison. The USA tops the world's incarceration league table, and now far outstrips China and Russia, which boast the second and third highest imprisonment rates in the world respectively. Prison spending in the USA has risen by 127 per cent since 1987.

The figures for US minority populations make for even more disturbing reading. One in 36 Hispanic adults is currently behind bars. The number of African-American adult males in prison is now 1 in 15. For black men aged between 20 and 34 the incarceration rate is an astonishing 1 in 9. The USA now spends \$50 billion a year on prisons. Some states spend more on prisons than they do on higher education.

In the UK, over 84,000 people are currently in prison. If the US ratios were reproduced here, as many as 500,000 prison places would need to be found.

Is the Earth in crisis? A new course explains why

Phil Sarre, Senior Lecturer in Geography, outlines our new third-level course, DU311 *Earth in Crisis: environmental policy in an international context*, which seeks to find out more about the causes and consequences of environmental problems and challenges politicians to do more

We know more and more about the causes and likely consequences of an increasing number of environmental problems, some of which look likely to have serious implications locally or globally, but national and international policy responses seem always to be too little and too late.

DU311 *Earth in Crisis* examines a range of environmental problems, asks what we should be doing to encourage more effective responses, and explores how better we might overcome the constraints that have produced the current crisis.

Block 1 introduces course questions and themes using climate change as the focus. Although scientists produce evidence that the problem is real and model the consequences as serious, politicians have so far failed to prevent it getting worse. What constrains responses that are more effective? Is it the cost of prevention, the way economics calculates inputs from nature, or the way that governments pursue their narrow national interests in international negotiations? Should climate change be redefined as a problem of security? Are fossil fuels crucial, both as drivers of our historical development and in questioning what we will leave for future generations?

Do underlying issues link different problems? For example, do

the way we define environmental problems, the assumptions we make about nature and society, and the way we value economic growth shape our judgements? How does the difficulty of agreeing anything impact on our interventions? The block examines how inequality between people and inequality between countries affects our knowledge, interests, values and power.

Block 2 develops course themes and concepts through three stages. First, we examine processes that have been suggested as causes of environmental degradation, arguing that industrialization has produced unprecedented affluence as well as degradation, and that population growth and urbanization are more symptoms or scapegoats than causes. We go on to analyse water use, biodiversity conservation and agriculture, showing how society depends on and alters nature, and how different groups benefit or suffer from the way society allocates goods and costs.

We consider how the governance of international politics, law, economy and corporations has operated to privilege certain groups, countries and activities and to harm others. We show how the Brundtland concept of sustainable development attempted to deal with both international inequality and environmental degradation. Its effectiveness has been undermined by a new approach to

governance, which stresses free markets and discourages regulation, but disempowers poor people.

Block 3 considers some recent attempts to bring about social and environmental change. We look at international organizations including the UN and the World Social Forum, and explore those 'bottom up' struggles by social movements. We look at a unique collaboration between nation states, initially motivated by security concerns. These focus upon economic development and environmental protection, and on struggles for livelihood in the less developed world.

We assess whether 'ecological economics' can help overcome some of the problems of conventional economic calculation. Across the world, many change agents are pressing for policies they consider desirable, but they are undermined or opposed by the very constraints that have weakened environmental policy in the past, so their feasibility is in doubt.

Finally, we conclude that we cannot rely on politicians, or any other group, to solve environmental problems for us. We must take responsibility as global citizens both to change the lifestyles that drive environmental degradation and to press for the policies that we want.

Rich countries' ecological damage to the developing world

The environmental damage caused to developing countries by the world's richest nations is more than the entire third world debt of \$1.8 trillion, according to the first systematic global analysis of the ecological damage imposed by rich countries published in January 2008 in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*

There are huge disparities in the ecological footprint inflicted by rich and poor countries on the rest of the world because of differences in consumption.

'At least to some extent, the rich nations have developed at the expense of the poor and, in effect, there is a debt to the poor,' said Prof. Richard Norgaard, an ecological economist at the University of California, Berkeley, who led the study. 'That, perhaps, is one reason that they are poor.'

Using data from the World Bank and the UN's Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the researchers examined so-called 'environmental externalities'. These are costs that are not included in the prices paid for goods but which cover ecological damage linked to their consumption. Six areas were investigated: greenhouse gas emissions, ozone layer depletion, agricultural development, deforestation, over fishing and the conversion of mangrove swamps into shrimp farms.

The team calculated the costs of consumption in low-, medium- and high-income countries, both within their borders and outside, from 1961 to 2000. The team used UN definitions for countries in different income categories. Low-income countries included Pakistan, Nigeria and Vietnam, and middle-income nations included Brazil and China. Rich countries in the study included the UK, USA and Japan.

The magnitude of effects outside the home country was different for each category of consumption. For example, deforestation and



agricultural intensification primarily affect the host country, while the impacts from climate change and ozone depletion show up the disparity between rich and poor most strikingly.

Greenhouse emissions from low-income countries have imposed \$740 billion of damage on rich countries while, in return, rich countries have imposed \$2.3 trillion of damage. This damage

includes, for example, flooding from more severe storms as a result of climate change.

Likewise, CFC emissions from rich countries have inflicted between \$25 billion and \$57 billion of damage to the poorest countries. Increased ultraviolet levels from the ozone hole have led to higher healthcare costs from skin cancer and eye problems. The converse figure is between \$0.58 and \$1.3 billion.

'We know already that climate change is a huge injustice inflicted on the poor,' said Dr Neil Adger at the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research in Norwich, who was not involved in the research. 'This paper is actually the first systematic quantification to produce a map of that ecological debt, not only for climate change but also for these other areas.'

'This is an accounting tool that allows you to say how much the high-income world owes the low-income world for the environmental externalities we impose on them,' he said.

The team confined its calculations to areas in which the costs of environmental damage, for example in terms of lost services from ecosystems, are well understood. That meant leaving out damage from excessive freshwater withdrawals, destruction of coral reefs, biodiversity loss, invasive species and war. So the researchers believe the figures represent a minimum estimate of the true cost.

'We think the measured impact is conservative. And given that it's conservative, the numbers are very striking,' said co-author Dr Thara Srinivasan, who is also at Berkeley.

Newspaper gaffes



Killer skunk floods London.
London Evening Standard

Cemetery could be a death trap.
Sleaford Target

Man with false leg hit with toilet seat.
Watford Observer

Give me risk-free savings.
Northern Rock advertisement, July 2007

Climate change: Britain under threat, not in Scotland.
Daily Express



Police called to pull up drunk's knickers.
Weston and Somerset Mercury



We felt we needed an umbrella organization to help flood victims.
Mary Dhonau, Sky News

Due to unforeseen circumstances we are unable to publish a horoscope column today.
Newcastle Journal

Houses of Parliament is an anagram of shameful operations



Society explored, as it happens

BBC/OU Society Blog is an innovative website designed to highlight the contributions of an eclectic range of writers who work in the Social Sciences Faculty. The BBC's James Heywood explains

Where do you go for up-to-date expert insight into the workings of society? Each month thousands of people turn to the Open2.net Society Blog to learn about the world they inhabit.

Since last October staff in the Social Sciences Faculty have blogged about the issues filling the newspapers, lending their expertise and insights on the matters of the moment. What does Obama stand for? Is there any good news about climate change? Are rogue traders

symptoms of fundamental flaws in our financial system?

The aim of the Society Blog is to connect the expertise of the university with the general public – the sort of people who watch Lenny's Britain or Indian School. It is going well, largely due to the quality of the writing. Thanks go to Engin Isin, Jason Toynbee, Jessica Evans, Joe Smith, Kath Woodward, Mark Banks and Parvati Raghuram for making time to share their knowledge.

Since 1998, Open2.net has provided online support for the partnership between the BBC and the Open University. We cover a variety of subjects, from Egyptian mathematics to workplace surveillance. We offer videos, podcasts, interactives and thousands of articles, all made with the help of OU experts.

Why not look for yourself? You can read the latest post, and all the blogs since October 2007, at open2.net/blogs/society/index.php.

Under suspicion: the strange tale of the Caribbean Steel International Orchestra

How the eviction of a calypso band from a budget airline flight raises questions about racism and post 9/11 hysteria

Now and again you read a news report in the media that connects with real life in the most profound ways. You may have read some of the media coverage concerning the black steel band who were ejected from a budget airline because someone thought they were terrorists. They have become known as the Talipan.

In early February 2008 I read about the black steel band led by a blind calypso musician who won damages against one of the leading budget airlines for ejecting them from a flight from Sardinia because a British psychology lecturer on holiday with his family thought they were terrorists. It showed how post 9/11 hysteria can impinge on human rights. It touched on the power of casual racism and intolerance to shape human action. It said much about the treatment of people with a disability. It showed how mere suspicion, however groundless, can have grave ramifications and how regulations can often make situations far worse than they are.

I was interested in the case partly because I too am a regular visitor to Sardinia and have used the same airline on numerous occasions when flying in and out of Alghero.

The incident happened on New Year's Eve 2006. After performing to critical acclaim on the island, the London-based Caribbean Steel International Orchestra, whose four members were the only black passengers onboard, were escorted off a Stansted-bound plane at gunpoint after the lecturer threatened to remove his family from the plane if the pilot did not insist upon the band's removal. The band's leader is believed to be the only blind tenor pan player performing in the world today.

The band had sat together in the terminal building, a fact that had been noted by the suspicious passenger. He grew alarmed when he saw band members sit separately by the windows on the plane (they had pre-booked priority window seats on the flight which resulted in them sitting apart). Following the complaint that he thought they were terrorists, the crew evicted the five musicians from the plane and they were escorted to the airport building for interrogation by the armed Sardinian authorities.

The university lecturer had also complained to the stewards that the blind band leader, who was wearing dark glasses, was behaving suspiciously; the lecturer had thought he was 'reading a newspaper'. The band leader had sat next to a passenger reading a newspaper and, being an avid football supporter, had asked him to read out the

football scores for him. As he did so the leaders' glasses appeared to scour the result page in the passenger's newspaper.

After a 20-minute delay while their identities were checked by the Italian authorities, the band were given permission to rejoin their flight home. However, the captain refused access even though the band's leader had his disability card inspected and his sightless eyes verified. He had lost his sight in 1983 after a cataract operation failed.

In court the budget airline claimed that the captain had taken the 'safety first option' after he noted 'tension' on the flight because of the incident. After promptings from the band's MP the budget airline offered the band members £100 each and vouchers for their flights home, but no apology. Although the band were allowed to leave the island on New Year's Day, they had to fly to Liverpool instead of Stansted, forcing an uncomfortable overnight stay because they missed their London bus connection and could not find a hotel room that early in the morning. The band were forced to spend a cold and wet New Year's Day night in a kebab shop and then a bus shelter before the bus station opened and they could return to London. They arrived home two days later than intended and missed spending the New Year with their families.

Each member was awarded £800 compensation, in addition to the extra costs of £190 each incurred. In his written judgment, District Judge Southcombe told the City of London county court that the captain had 'ample time' to reassess the situation once the Italian authorities had checked each band member's identity and papers. 'Just because a passenger was black or someone did not like the look of him or her, it was not acceptable to offload that passenger', he explained.

Judge Southcombe concluded that the band's 'embarrassment at being the only black persons removed from the aircraft at gunpoint for no reason, their inability to be with their families and friends on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, the overnight stay in the cold in Liverpool have to be taken into account'. The sum awarded, he declared, reflected the 'extreme situation' the band found themselves in. The psychology lecturer did not give evidence in court. Various media reports suggested that he was, in fact, a professor of psychology.

The budget airline is appealing against the verdict while the band

members have called for an investigation into the incident by the Civil Air Authority. The budget airline has steadfastly refused to offer the band a full apology. It commented: 'While we sincerely regret the inconvenience they suffered, our crew were absolutely right to prioritize passenger safety/security at all times.'

The story begs many questions. Would the incident have happened if the band had sat together on the plane? Would the incident have happened if the band's members were all white? Would the lecturer's suspicions have been aroused if the band leader was of normal sight? Why did the reported 'tension' spread so rapidly among the passengers? Was the reaction of the captain excessive? Why, once the band member's papers had been checked, were they not allowed back on the flight when it was clear they were talented musicians returning home from a successful tour of Sardinia? And why were the budget airline's regulations followed with such prejudice when it was clear that there was no danger to the plane, or the occupants?

Some might argue that such extreme situations are justified in the post 9/11 context, that the captain had no alternative but to deny the band access even after the Italian authorities had checked all the documentation.

But consider this. What if the band members were terrorists but white skinned and their leader able-bodied? It would be highly unlikely that they would have been stopped. The lecturer's suspicions would not have been so aroused.

As Roosevelt once observed in the last century in another decade noted for its paranoia, quite often there is 'nothing to fear except fear itself'. Indeed, one might argue that exhibiting racist behaviour on an airplane could itself, if taken to extremes, be prejudicial to the safety of the occupants. It is also outrageous that, not for the first time, the budget airline concerned showed such scant regard towards a passenger with a disability.

And the final irony? Guess who were selected to play at the opening of the new Terminal 5 at Heathrow last March. Yes, you guessed it. The Caribbean Steel International Orchestra!



The truth in dementia care

Within dementia care, a debate about telling the truth is challenging the standards of practitioners and agencies. Chris Sherratt, an independent consultant and trainer in dementia care, explains

When is it right to tell a lie to a person who has dementia? This might appear a surprising question. For example, would you expect your GP to tell lies? In dementia care, however, telling lies can be common practice. It is seen as a helpful, arguably necessary tool to relieve distress or minimize aggression. It is also used simply to save time.

Here are two examples. The first, Mrs W, aged 94, lives in a care home and insists that she must leave immediately because she has to get back home to give her children their tea after school. As staff try to calm her she becomes aggressive. Eventually she is calmed by being told that her husband has phoned to say that he is giving the children their tea. The second, Mr X, aged 81, lives in the same care home, and calls out to a passing member of staff, saying that he needs to go to the toilet. He does this regularly, and was taken to the toilet a few minutes ago, so the member of staff says, 'I'll be with you in a minute' and carries on with her work.

The debate has been running in the *Journal of Dementia Care*. It includes discussion about whether major deceptions (medication hidden in jam) or minor ones (colluding with a person who thinks they are at work rather than in care) are justified, or whether they constitute dishonest practice just as much as telling direct lies. There appears to be wide acceptance that the practice of dishonesty is necessary at least sometimes. There is also a growing consensus that the current practices are in need of clear guidance, and do have limitations.

Opposition to the use of dishonesty is based on two arguments. The

practice would not be necessary if adequate skills were developed, and dishonesty is immoral in principle and therefore can never be justified. The fact that this debate is taking place indicates that the need for fuller ethical guidance in dementia care is recognized, but the ability and, at times, the willingness of the profession to put such guidelines into practice has to be in doubt.

When I introduce the issue of honesty into training sessions with people working in dementia care, it is clear that many see lying as the only solution to some situations. It is also clear that many do not even appear to be troubled by questions of deception or morality. This is supported by one of the few surveys of attitudes to lying, which quotes some interviewees arguing that guidelines are needed for times when it is not appropriate to tell a lie – so among these respondents lying is not even seen as a last resort.

When discussing this with carers of people who have dementia, I often ask two questions. Is it right in principle to tell the truth? Do you always tell the truth to your children? The answer to the first question is yes, and to the second, no. Therefore, people who have dementia, who have difficulty expressing their innermost thoughts and wishes, are given the status of children.

I meet many wonderful people working in dementia care, but the minimum requirements to work in this difficult area are not high. Only a half of care home staff are required to have NVQ level 2, and the minimum age of 18 does not apply to all staff. Many are paid the minimum wage, and staff turnover is a further obstacle to developing good practice.

The training task is major, but many managers are reluctant to invest in quality training. I have seen some dementia care training programmes that could fill a manager's tick box but would be more likely to do harm than good. For example, there are courses that claim to do the impossible task of preparing staff to work in dementia care in three hours, and there is a course entitled 'dementia and aggression' – the immediate linking of dementia with aggression is misleading, and possibly dangerous.

Despite their disabilities, many (perhaps very many) people who have dementia know when they are not being treated honestly, but these people usually do not have the capacity or power to change things for themselves. The responsibility therefore falls to relatives, the care profession, regulators and, above all, to funders to insist that the issue of honesty is addressed, both in theory and in daily practice. In asking whether a service is fit for a purpose, it is common to use the 'parent' test (i.e. to ask whether a person would be happy for his or her own parent or grandparent to receive the service). It is perhaps more relevant to ask each individual whether, if they should develop dementia in future, they would be happy to receive this quality of care.

If you have experiences of caring for a loved one with dementia and want to share your observations, contact either chrisherratt@talktalk.net, or the editor at rs.skellington@open.ac.uk



Unpaid carers save public services £87 billion a year as 300,000 more pensioners move below poverty line

Carers' unpaid work saves the state £87 billion, but many put their own health at risk to fulfil their duties according to a study by Leeds University, published in June 2008. Six million people in the UK look after a sick, frail or disabled relative, partner or friend. In the same month, government figures revealed a further 300,000 pensioners were now living in relative poverty, swelling the number of poor pensioners to over 2.5 million.

More than three-quarters of carers (77 per cent) believed their own health had suffered because of their responsibilities, and almost a fifth (19 per cent) ignored feeling ill 'all the time'. Of almost 2,000 people polled, more than two-thirds said they had put off seeing a doctor because they had too little time.

Another 65 per cent said their own health problems had affected their ability to care, and 96 per cent reported concern about who would take over if they fell ill.

Many other carers reported feeling isolated; seven out of ten had not had a week's holiday or free time in the past year; and 64 per cent said they were sometimes unable to cope.

The findings were released as council leaders warned that lack of state support means that frail elderly people who need help with eating and dressing are being left to fend for themselves.

The Local Government Association (LGA) urged improved funding for care for disabled and elderly people because nearly three-quarters of local authorities have stopped providing help with basic daily tasks. The LGA, which represents more than 400 councils in England and Wales, is campaigning for more money and a simpler care system so that vulnerable people do not miss any benefits they are entitled to.



Elderly people at a nursing home watch the Nottinghill Carnival, London, 2008

Dementia blues

Care for the elderly in the UK is in crisis, especially for dementia sufferers

At the beginning of December 2007, Vitangeolo Bini, a retired policeman from Florence, visited his 82-year-old wife, Mara, in hospital in Prato, Italy. Mrs Bini had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease since 1995 and was in the terminal stage of the illness. Mara was unable to recognize Vitangeolo and had lost the power of speech.

For years Vitangeolo had cared for his wife, and this day was like many others in the little ward of the hospital that specializes in care for people like Mara. Vitangeolo sat quietly by her bedside, gently stroked her face and murmured softly to her. He then placed two towels over her head and chest and shot her dead. He turned to the other patients in the ward and explained: 'Excuse me, but I couldn't bear to see her suffer any more. I did it because I loved her.'

How many of us will have to bear similar burdens of care and anguish in the future? The ravages of incapacitating diseases such as Alzheimer's and dementia, in all its many debilitating forms, will increasingly affect far greater numbers of our populations. In Europe, over 18 per cent of women in Mara's age group suffer from Alzheimer's, and the figure nearly trebles for women in their 90s. In England, a fifth of all adults will experience some form of dementia before they reach 70. It is estimated that nearly one million of the UK's population suffer from some form of dementia.

Across Italy, despite its strong Catholic aversion to mercy killing, Vitangeolo's act generated huge sympathy and support. It raised the profile of those who suffer from such debilitating conditions, and made the plight of those who care for them daily far more visible.

In the UK in June an Old Bailey judge took mercy on a pensioner who tried to help his wife kill herself to end her care home ordeal. Gilbert Brown admitted attempting to help his wife commit suicide and walked free from court after entering an attempted suicide pact with his 80-year-old wife because of her 'degrading' treatment at a nursing home. Gilbert Brown, 83, said his wheelchair-bound wife

Doris, 79, was subjected to humiliating treatment at the privately-run home for dementia patients. Mr Brown claimed he took matters into his own hands to save his wife of 58 years from 'further loss of dignity'. Judge Jeremy Roberts QC said: 'This was a mercy attempt and one of humanity. There is no question of you going to jail.'

Two-thirds of the UK's 250,000 care-home residents have some form of dementia, yet only six out of ten are in special dementia registered units. Only a month ago, the Alzheimer's Society revealed that in British care homes people suffering from dementia are ignored for hours at a time and condemned to live out their lives in isolation, lost in their own inner worlds.

There are more than 700,000 dementia sufferers in Britain, a figure that will rise to 840,000 by 2026, and 1.2 million by 2050. One in 1,000 of our population under the age of 65 develops the condition, rising to 1 in 20 over 65, and 5 in 20 over 80. Dementia costs Britain £14.3 billion a year in health and social care – more than the combined cost of caring for those suffering from cancer, heart disease or stroke.

Meanwhile, our systems of poorly resourced 'care' struggle to cope, especially in England. For many the treatment is appalling and undignified. Government appears trapped in blinkered thinking and unrealistic expectations. Not only is institutional care bereft of resources and a clear strategy to equip it to meet the demands of demographic trends, informal carers are being asked to shoulder a huge burden of responsibility, thus saving the State millions of pounds each year.

Care is becoming a scarce and expensive resource that is only available to the better off and those people who can sell their homes and use their life savings to pay for the inadequate care they receive. Many more children of those suffering from dementia, who are themselves approaching retirement, will have to shoulder the responsibility of caring.

Research by Resolute International for Saga indicates that while current inflation is 2.5 per cent, care home cost inflation is over 3.5 per cent. Average weekly care home costs currently stand at £540 per week and are expected to double to more than £1,000 a week in the next 20 years. A four-year stay in a care home could cost an average of £223,478 by 2028. The findings come at a time of widespread discontent over the means-test system, which requires anyone with savings or property worth more than £21,500 to pay their own bills if they need to go into a care home.

Our civilization deserves better from its Governments, not least a uniform and national approach to the welfare of the elderly. Spending billions on unwanted wars, for example, seems folly compared to the primary task of caring for our own. Vitangeolo's single act of mercy elicited a wave of sympathy not just in Italy, but here in Britain. But sympathy is no substitute for a fully funded and caring system for all the Mara's in this world, and carers like Vitangeolo. He cared too much.

It is time to act before it is too late. We have been meddling with other mistaken ventures while Rome burns.

Between 1995 and 2005 the total number of households in England receiving social care services fell from 513,600 to 354,500, a fall of 31 per cent. Over 160,000 people fell out of the net of social care during this decade as the State cut back on care provision.

Caring for an increasingly elderly population is one of the key responsibilities of any country that likes to boast it is civilized. Ageism, as evinced by government short-sightedness, is as big a threat to our national well-being as global warming, climate change, or even terrorism. Our failure to support and care for our vulnerable elderly, especially those with mental health problems, is the biggest scandal of our age.

Bringing dementia out of the shadows

The number of dementia sufferers in the UK will increase dramatically by 60 per cent to over 1 million people by 2026. The Alzheimer's Society have warned that over 1,750,000 people in the UK will have dementia by 2051, mainly because of demographic factors but also because of life-style-related conditions, such as obesity. An ageing population and its welfare are expensive. The Kings Fund estimate that just to stand still would require raising the £10.1 billion spent in 2002 to £34.8 billion by 2026.

Increased investment of £1.5 billion has been ploughed into mental health provision across England since 1999. Without sustained funding increases, services will come under renewed pressure as the

number of people suffering from mental illness increases in line with an expanding and ageing population. Conditions such as dementia will be a major driver of demand for mental health services. The total cost of mental health care to the economy in England – if population growth, rising costs, lost earnings and informal unpaid care are taken into consideration – could go up by as much as 83 per cent in the next 20 years, to £88.4 billion. The cost of direct services provided through the NHS and social services is expected to rise from £22.5 billion in 2006 to £47.48 billion in 2026, about a third of the total being required for dementia provision.

Europe's demographic winter

Europe is aging, fast. Pensioners now outnumber teenagers across 27 European countries. The total European Union population contains 6 million more over 65s than under 14s. In 1980 children outnumbered pensioners by 36 million. The study, published in May 2008 by the Institute for Family Policy, described the European

birth rate as 'critical', with a fall of a million births compared to 1980. The research also revealed that there were, on average, 1 million divorces in the EU each year, and that the average length of a marriage was 13 years. Marriages fell by 25 per cent between 1908 and 2006.

Dementia postscript

Over the last three years the editor, Richard Skellington, has helped to care for his partner's mother, Joan Dorling, who, among other conditions, suffered from dementia. On 7 April 2008 Joan passed away. Richard kept a moving diary of her last 50 days spent in an inappropriate ward in a Northamptonshire hospital. In May 2008, *The Guardian* ran a double page full feature on Joan. You can read the article at: www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/may/28/health.nhs.

The comment from Alison Benjamin, Deputy Editor of Society Guardian, can be found at: blogs.guardian.co.uk/joepublic/2008/05/the_nhs_is_not_the_only_villai.html.

Richard and Linda, and Linda's family, want to ensure that no-one else's elderly loved one suffers the way Joan did. All proceeds for their campaign are going to Longlands respite centre in Daventry, Northamptonshire. If you would like to know more or have similar concerns or experiences please contact Richard at r.s.skellington@open.ac.uk.

Can we survive in freedom? Thinking about sustainability and democracy

Joe Smith, Senior Lecturer in Environment, argues the world has some hard work ahead to try to join up sustainability with democracy

'Can we survive in freedom?' The relationship between democracy and sustainability was framed in these terms by a prominent political scientist more than 15 years ago. The bluntness of Ralf Dahrendorf's question (and the pessimism of his own answer) invites a hasty response. I think he anticipates that we will all join him in choosing a very human, and mortal, liberalism.

Most people engaged in sustainability debates over the last two decades have shrugged the question off. At most we'll suggest that sustainability and democracy are necessary partners. We will argue that you can't bring the (mostly) staggeringly wealthy and materially cosseted societies of the developed world to address the downsides of their lifestyles without legitimate agreement on the need for action. It is assumed that this agreement will need to be collective – though not necessarily unanimous. However, we are also confident that 'our' issue is urgent. Once you have read the climate science or the latest on biodiversity loss, you look at the phrase 'the art of the possible' in a different light to the squirming 'realists' that fill political office. It is not possible to sustain life as we live it into even the medium-term future. The unsustainability of the western world's development path was the central narrative device that drove the Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future* – published just over twenty years ago – to worldwide attention.

However, sustainability and democracy are not joined at the hip. Democracy can claim to be more successful than any political system in history: in varying degrees of quality it can now claim to be the dominant form of human organization beyond families and businesses. Yet it has also served as the perfect seedbed for a virulently successful system of material production and consumption that just so happens to threaten the human habitability of the planet.

For the evolutionary psychologist there is nothing surprising about McDonald's selling 100 billion burgers and oceans of coke: we have evolved to treasure fat, salt and sugar when we get easy access to it. We have plenty of evidence that scarcity and disaster provoke the opposite of stable, plural, democratic political systems: from this point of view, democracy can nurture unsustainability.

Perhaps those of us that insist on binding together democracy and sustainability are living by Gramsci's dictum: 'pessimism of

the intellect and optimism of the will'. In other words, ecologically sustainable democracies are the most desirable outcome, however unlikely that goal might seem today. However, recognizing that we will not automatically arrive at that point helps us to identify the nature of the work ahead. This work does not resemble the careful design of technologies or techniques of policy change (indicators, toolkits, audits, a carefully calculated social cost of carbon), or a perfectly refined marketing strategy that will deliver behavioural change. These things may all play their part, but they are small parts. We need to recognize that there is hard work ahead as we try to revise the driving motivations of our societies.

In taking on this work we should accept, after two decades of experience, that the language and much of the thinking clustered around sustainability has made almost no impact upon the public imagination. It has all the emotional reach and cultural resonance of a bus timetable. Why, when we have such powerful rhetorical tools in our hands? Who has a bigger boo-phrase than 'the end of the world'? Talk of limits, carbon diets and self-denial flies directly in the face of some of the dominant cultural trends of our time. Contemporary culture thrives on self-experiment and exploration, personal reward, a love of the new and on constant processes of self-reinvention. The green movement has at best had an awkward relationship with these trends, and the rare moments of synchronicity can get a bit repetitive (bamboo bicycle anyone?).

We need to accept that people will only come together in majorities in favour of change (whether as electors, consumers, or as change agents within families, streets or institutions) if they find that the images and language of sustainability sit happily with other values, experiences and ambitions. We need to play with new ways of framing the relationships between environmental change and private and public life.

Consider our ecological, social, cultural and economic interdependence. Recalling the Americans who revised the boundaries of politics in the late eighteenth century to such extraordinary effect, 'we hold it as self-evident' that we need to take a new lens to the world now that we have arrived at Interdependence Day. We have to redraw the boundaries of politics. Climate change binds us into

relations of responsibility and obligation with other humans distant in both space and time. Climate change and biodiversity loss throw us into novel ethical relationships with the non-human natural world. Furthermore, global media and communications make it not just possible but unavoidable that we have to, at the very least, acknowledge the experiences of distant others.

One possible route to ecologically sustainable democracies is through a quest for quality in some key aspects of twenty-first-century daily lives. Health, relationships, pleasures, the things we use, see, places we inhabit – what quality do they have? (And what is the quality of our political system?) What quality has been achieved by the last 50 years of fossil-fuelled economic growth? Since 1960 the divorce rate in the USA has doubled, the teenage suicide rate has tripled; recorded violent crime has quadrupled, and the prison population has quintupled. After decades of silence on the topic, a number of leading economists and psychologists have started to research the relationship between contemporary societies and levels of happiness, and their findings all point in the same direction. We are mortgaging the planet's capacity to sustain human society with no evidence of gains in terms of human happiness.

Some of us have been working on these questions through the Interdependence Day project, including a recent book, *Do Good Lives Have to Cost the Earth?* We think the answer to Dahrendorf's question is an emphatic and democratic 'no'. However, this is a question that many more people will have to engage with if we are going to 'survive in freedom'.

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For a copy of the report, 'Our Common Future' see:
www.worldinbalance.net/agreements/1987-brundtland.html

Do Good Lives Have to Cost the Earth? edited by Andrew Simms and Joe Smith, was published by Constable and Robinson in January 2008. To buy a copy of what the BBC Environment Analyst Roger Harrabin described as 'one of the finest essays I have seen on the predicament we are in', and author Philip Pullman said was 'full of good things', visit Amazon and all good bookshops.

The Interdependence Day website can be found at:
www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/interdependenceday/index.shtml

Terrorism: the war of words

Who gets to decide which groups are terrorists and which are not is defined by the fickle hand of international power, argues OU student Paul O'Brien

Words can be powerful tools in certain hands as the much used adage 'the pen is mightier than the sword' attests. Few words this century are as emotionally charged as 'terrorism', which has been used more than any other in recent times to justify political and military actions. The ongoing 'war on terror' is the most obvious example.

There are various definitions of the word 'terrorism', but one thing they all agree on is that it involves the use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims. Whatever the definitive definition, it universally carries strong negative connotations. No group happily accepts the label of 'terrorists', preferring other euphemisms such as liberator, revolutionary or freedom fighter.

Who gets to decide which groups are terrorists, and what exactly are the criteria? For example, what differences are there between Hezbollah (party of God), the Lebanese Shi'a Islamic political and paramilitary organization, and the French Resistance, the collective name for the resistance movements that formed during the Second World War to fight against the Nazi occupation of France? For some people there would appear to be no comparison between the two, but if you look more closely there is little to explain why one is officially listed as a terrorist organization by six countries and the other is regarded in a heroic and romantic light by those same countries.

Both groups are, or were, national movements defending their sovereign territory from foreign occupation. Both used similar tactics with the exception of suicide attacks, a concept quite alien to European and American culture although they themselves have histories of human sacrifice for national causes. Both groups engaged in assassinations and bombings, which are considered terrorist tactics of 'unlawful violence', as opposed to 'lawful acts of war' according to those who attempt to define it.

Maybe it is not so much what you do as who you know. Hezbollah is a sworn enemy of Israel, who in turn is a close ally of the USA and who in turn is a close ally of the UK. These countries account for three of the six that have listed Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

Hezbollah is also supported by Iran and Syria; neither are likely to be invited to a White House garden party any time soon. Dare it be suggested that this, more than anything else, helped Hezbollah achieve terrorist group status.

Before the attack on the World Trade Centre, the Taliban government of Afghanistan was an ally of the USA, with full diplomatic relations and discussions taking place for a partnership for an oil pipeline. After the Taliban rejected an ultimatum to turn over Al-Qaida operatives, it was quickly pronounced a terrorist group and attacked. The resulting war is continuing to this day. The



fact that Al-Qaida has evolved from the mujahedeen, who were once supported by the USA to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, shows the fickleness of international friendship.

Labelling a group or organization as terrorists undermines the legitimacy of their cause, and depicts them as immoral or unjustified. Whoever uses the term is aligning themselves to a particular side. In its modern day usage, anyone who uses violence against you is a terrorist, whatever their purpose or ideology. The Palestinians fire rockets or launch a suicide attack against Israel and are denounced by the Israelis as terrorists. The Israelis respond by bulldozing refugee's homes and killing civilians in military attacks and, in return, are denounced as terrorists by the Palestinians.

All acts of violence are intended to terrorise and intimidate people, so surely anyone who engages in violence is a terrorist. At one time, terrorism was seen as an attack on governments and society but now we have state-sponsored terrorism and entire countries are condemned as terrorists. Where is the dividing line between 'unlawful violence' and 'legitimate acts of war' when civilians are killed in order to liberate them and governments indulge in kidnapping and torture – now re-branded as extraordinary rendition – and detain people for years without trial?

Has a word that is used liberally to conduct wars and violate international law now lost all its meaning since it was first coined to describe the nineteenth-century anarchists who embraced its label? It is easy to understand why the notion of a war on terror

or terrorism is highly controversial to some people; even if you ignore the fact that it appears to have done nothing but increase the levels of violence and intimidation in the world. Does anyone feel safer from the perceived threat in the last six years? There is no tangible enemy in a war on terrorism, when anyone who is an enemy is also a terrorist. It gives governments a license to attack anyone for any reason and to use terrorism as an excuse to hide their truer motives.

The war on terror is itself an act of terrorism that is being used by governments to achieve long-standing policy objectives through war and intimidation, to reduce civil liberties and infringe upon human rights. As an opponent of the war on terror, should I now consider myself to be a terrorist?

Paul is half-way through an OU degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. He is taking a year out to do a Foundation Course in News Reporting

Sobering facts

The income of the world's 500 richest billionaires exceeds that of the poorest 416 million people.

170 million people were killed by their own governments in the 20th century, four times the number killed in wars between states.

In 2007, Wal-Mart's sales came to \$345 billion, greater than the GDP of the 49 least developed countries in the world.

World military expenditure is estimated to have been \$1300 billion in 2007; a third of this – \$360 billion – would be enough to lift everyone in the world out of extreme poverty.

2.6 billion people in the world still do not have access to a WC.

The new politics of food

At a time of political disengagement, food has become a site for understanding the nature of contemporary globalization, economic inequality and environmental crisis argues Geoff Andrews, Staff Tutor in Politics, and author of a new book on the political and pleasurable impacts of the slow food movement

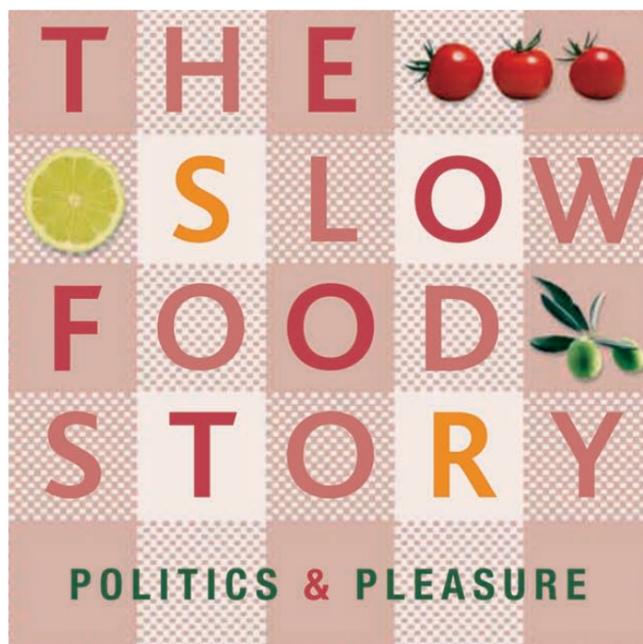
Food now dominates the political agendas of many western countries. Government policies on curbing obesity, concern over factory farming, the rise in food prices, mounting 'food miles', as well as a rising number of alternative consumption movements, have combined to tax the minds of politicians and activists. Food has become one of the most contested sites in contemporary politics, offering a distinctive 'way in' to critical discussions over the nature of globalization and the burning human questions of our time.

This growing breadth of food issues has precipitated a variety of responses, from governments, NGOs, celebrity gourmets, health experts, scientists and environmentalists. There has been a bewildering variety of explanations, studies and policy initiatives, many of which have contradictory findings and proposals. Food has become the archetypal example of that 'postmodern ambivalence' where our attitudes to living are no longer governed by the same certainties about health and quality of life because many of the scientific frameworks have broken down. Experts have lost authority – in the cases of BSE, GM food and nutrition – while, on the other hand, more 'reflexive' individuals exercise greater autonomy in making choices on how to live.

The social and political movements that have grown around food in recent years resonate with the earlier decisive moments of the 1960s and 1970s when the 'personal' became 'political' and social movements asserted alternatives to political parties. Indeed, the new politics of food has brought forward new political subjects; those critical or 'ethical' consumers whose increasing interrogation of governments, businesses and corporations over the origins of the contents of their shopping baskets, now present a formidable challenge to policy makers.

Perhaps we should also talk now of the gastronome as a political subject. Jamie Oliver's interventions over school dinners and factory-farmed chickens provoked wide public debate and, in the first case, had a direct influence on government policy. Of course, there are many contradictions with Oliver's position, given that he is a spokesperson for one of the large supermarket chains. However, the force of his argument reflected more discerning and critical views on the origin and quality of food. This and other public controversies over food miles, fair trade and sustainability have helped to illustrate some important questions.

First, any discussion of what we eat now has to confront the way food was produced, notably the environmental context, food miles and the treatment of animals. Second, and more contentious, is the focus on pleasure. This is a more unsettling, but also very creative, aspect of the new politics of food, particularly in a place like Britain



where, as Bill Bryson once put it, the idea of a good time is a cup of tea and a chocolate digestive. This uneasy mixture of aspirations for a higher quality of life, responsibility to the environment and awareness of global inequality has cut across ideological boundaries with some unlikely political allies.

This politics of pleasure has driven movements like Slow Food to argue that pleasure is a 'universal right', denied us by the nature of contemporary 'fast' ways of living, working and eating. Researching my book, I met many self-taught 'gastromes', including Marxist wine producers, conservative organic farmers, as well as psychologists, chemists, chefs, journalists and brokers, who run the one thousand or so Slow Food convivia (local groups) across the globe. As political leaders they perform the usual role of chairing meetings, with the unusual added function of promoting 'moments of conviviality' in the pursuit of an 'educated pleasure', derived from a greater awareness of the diversity of tastes and flavours, and the knowledge and expertise of local producers, the 'intellectuals of the earth'.

It is the convergence of these concerns over health, impending

environmental crisis and the desires of the palate that have given gastronomes a new political status and distinguishes them from the more trivial and limited outlook of the gourmet and the glutton. Carlo Petrini, Slow Food's founder and president, has argued that the gastronome who ignores environmental questions is stupid, while the environmentalist who pays no attention to gastronomic pleasure is sad.

The rise of food to the top of government agendas has been accompanied by new developments in the academy. Firstly, there is the interest in gastronomy itself. The new University of Gastronomic Sciences (www.unisg.it), set up in Italy in 2004, offers students a mixture of options including food science, gastronomic literature and the sociology of consumption. It has a wine bank, restaurant and hotel on campus. This has given gastronomy the status of an academic discipline in its own right and has allowed it to escape from its elitist origins in 18th-century bourgeois France to concern all matters associated with the production, cultivation, presentation and consumption of food, many of which have deep historical and cultural associations.

New food courses in social science specifically are an exciting prospect. Food has long been of interest to anthropologists, sociologists and economists amongst others. The links between food, culture and social stratification have a long history in academic study. However, we can detect some new fields. In addition to the new consumption movements, these might include the relationship between food, place and identity in the era of globalization, where local places, in the words of Doreen Massey, 'are not only the recipients of global forces, they are the origin and propagator of them'. In the case of food, this becomes apparent in the new tensions between local traditions at risk of global monocultures and the expansion of corporate business, with implications not only for questions of famine and inequality but cultural diversity and biodiversity. Food gives local places a sense of history and identity, but these links have been a neglected area of research.

Food has become an exemplary site for understanding the nature of contemporary globalization, economic inequality and environmental crisis. Debates about class and social status are now often seen through diet and consumption patterns. These, together with the links between cultural and media representations of food, and the changes in food policy, are likely to be fascinating areas of study for social scientists in future years.

Geoff Andrews is the author of *The Slow Food Story: politics and pleasure*, recently published by Pluto Press www.plutobooks.com
Geoff has his own website: www.geoffandrews.net

Ethical consumption in a demanding world

The consumer is not the key agent of change. Dr Clive Barnett, Reader in Human Geography, explains how a new OU survey shows that collective behaviour is a more effective driver of fair trade and global trade justice than individual behaviour

In debates about climate change, human rights, sustainability and public health, patterns of everyday consumption are identified as a problem. People, we are told, should change their individual behaviour by exercising consumer choice in ways that are more responsible. However, the findings of a recent research project based at the OU suggest that the most effective campaigns to transform consumption practices are those that take place through collective action, such as the creation of Fairtrade schools or towns and cities, rather than those that target individual behaviour.

'Governing the subjects and spaces of ethical consumption', a study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as part of the Cultures of Consumption research programme, found that ethical consumption is best understood as a political phenomenon rather than simply a market response to consumer demand. The study used various qualitative methods to generate empirical materials and analyse data about ethical consumption in and around Bristol.

The research project explored the contemporary problematization of consumption and consumer choice by investigating campaign strategies, policy making and networks of social mobilization. It investigated the institutional, organizational and social dynamics behind the growth in ethical consumption practices in the UK, focusing in particular on a series of initiatives around fair trade and global trade justice. It found that the growth of ethical consumption reflects strategies amongst a diverse range of governmental and non-governmental actors. The growth of ethical consumption is indicative of distinctive forms of political mobilization and representation that adopt 'ethical' registers to enrol supporters. These strategies provide ordinary people with pathways into wider networks of collective action, which link the mundane spaces of everyday life into campaigns for global justice.

People bring a wide range of ethical concerns to their everyday consumption practices, from the personal responsibilities of family life to more public commitments such as membership of a faith community or political affiliation. For people involved in Fairtrade networks, whether buying, selling or actively campaigning, their participation provides ways of responding to publicly circulating

demands to take responsibility for all sorts of global issues. Fair-trade practices are just one way of 'living in a globalized world', the title of DD205, a new Level 2 course in Social Sciences that draws on some of the findings of this research project.

The research found that many campaigns aimed at getting people to change what they buy worked on the assumption that individuals lack the necessary information to make educated decisions about the consequences of what they buy and where they buy it. However, our findings suggest that people do not necessarily lack information about Fairtrade, organic food, environmental sustainability, or third world sweatshops. However, they often lack effective pathways to acting on their concerns over these issues.

Research in different social areas in Bristol found that people's ability to adopt ethical consumption practices is affected by different levels of material resources, in terms of their income, and access to shops that sell ethically sourced goods. However, it is also affected by the social networks people are entangled in, which may provide information or access that helps in adopting new consumption practices.

People are well aware of all sorts of 'ethical' issues pertaining to their consumption habits, but often do not feel that they have the opportunities or resources to be able to buy Fairtrade products or ethically sourced goods. It is not as simple as the consumer making a choice to buy an item that is ethically sound. Much consumption is embedded in relationships of obligation where people are acting as parents, caring partners, football fans or good friends. On the one hand, some consumption is to sustain these relationships: giving gifts, buying school lunches, getting hold of this season's new strip. On the other hand, quite a lot of consumption is done as the background to these activities, embedded in various infrastructures (e.g. transport, energy, water) over which people have little or no direct influence as individual 'consumers'.

The research team found that in order to successfully encourage people to adopt new consumption practices, it is important to call on their specific identities, for example as a member of the local community or faith group, rather than just targeting them as 'faceless' and 'placeless' consumers. The most successful initiatives

are those that find ways of making changes to the practical routines of consumption; for example, by changing how and what people buy and from where through establishing initiatives such as Fairtrade networks or achieving the status of a Fairtrade city or school. Bristol became a Fairtrade city in 2005, after a year-long campaign by the City Council to raise awareness amongst local communities and businesses. The research team found that Fairtrade town and Fairtrade city initiatives are means of raising awareness around issues of global inequality and trade justice. Collective infrastructures of provisioning can be transformed so that everyone, irrespective of their 'choice', becomes an 'ethical consumer'.

The research has implications for how critical social scientists approach the phenomena of ethical consumption, whether around Fairtrade, organic food or climate change. The finding that the 'consumer' is not the key agent of change points to two sets of critical issues.

Firstly, ethical consumption campaigning is most effective in transforming policies and infrastructures of collective provision, rather than changing individual behaviour through the provision of information. This raises interesting questions about the accountability of those actors – whether they are NGOs, local authority procurement professionals, or businesses – who are the key players in transforming collective infrastructures of provisioning to more 'ethical', 'responsible' or 'sustainable' objectives. Secondly, ethical consumption campaigns do not seek to engage 'consumers', understood as abstract, self-interested utility maximizers. They engage members of communities of practice, for example, members of faith groups, schoolchildren, or residents of distinctive localities. This raises interesting questions about the sorts of social relations – of class, gender, or ethnicity for example – that such campaigns draw on and help to reproduce or transform.

Useful websites

Governing the subjects and spaces of ethical consumption:
www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/research/spaces-of-ethical-consumption.php

ESRC/AHRC Cultures of Consumption Programme:
www.consume.bbk.ac.uk/

Translating Bob Marley into rock

How Bob Marley rose from the margins to become a rock superstar was not just the journey of a powerful spirit creating politically engaged songs of protest and revolution but one where the structural conditions of the rock industry played a vital role. Jason Toynbee, Senior Lecturer in Media Studies, explains why Bob remains the only third world superstar

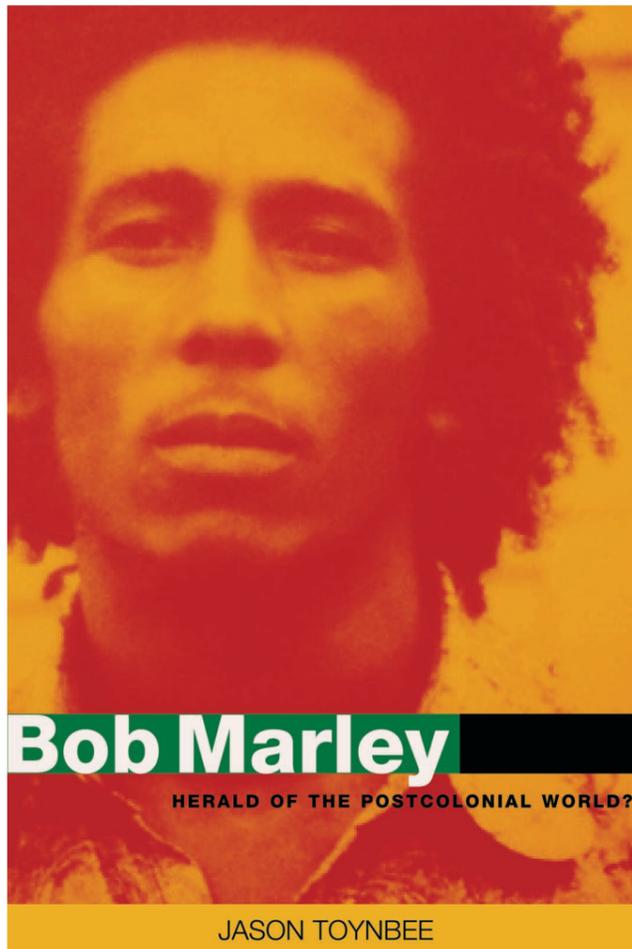
More than a quarter of a century after his death, Bob Marley is still the only music superstar from the periphery of the world system. Moreover, in the wake of his success, reggae music continues to be the only music from the margins to be sold in the global mass market. Why, then, have Marley and this genre been admitted by the culture industry when others – poor, black and from the global south – have been kept out, or tucked away in that niche market for exotica called ‘world music’?

To address this problem, I think we need some notion of translation – not the conversion of one language into another, but the various kinds of movement across cultures that have resulted not only in the transformation of symbolic forms like music, but also systems of production and audience making. With this in mind, we can re-frame our initial question: how were Bob Marley and his music translated into rock? For rock was, and remains, the dominant institution of global popular music. To reach the world you have to go via rock. The key event here was the deal struck by Marley with Chris Blackwell of Island Records in September 1972. Part of the explanation for it is simple luck. Returning from Sweden in a failed attempt to break into the international music market, Marley called on Blackwell, a white Jamaican who ran a rock record label and was now looking to sign up a reggae artist.

Both Marley and Blackwell were translators by inclination and training. Marley’s career had begun with the emergence of ska in Kingston at the beginning of the 1960s. Ska itself was a translation of the African-American rhythm and blues favoured in Kingston dancehalls. During the 1960s, Jamaican musicians began to adapt soul music, the national folk style of mento, film soundtracks from Hollywood to Pinewood, not to mention nyabinghi – Rastafari drum music based on African musical forms that had survived from the days of slavery. Bob Marley and the Wailers were in the thick of these translations. So, at a distance and in his own sphere as record producer and label owner, was Blackwell. He had taken a leading role in bringing Jamaican music across to the UK through his Island label. Towards the end of the 1960s, he re-launched Island as the home of eclectic British rock.

As musician and cultural broker respectively, both men had some facility as translators. However, to understand how the music of Marley and the Wailers could be presented to a British rock audience we have to understand not just these actors’ competence, but also the structural conditions under which they would have to operate. Most importantly, the emerging British rock music industry was at a stage when it was still open enough to admit a mixed-race Rasta and speaker of Patois from Jamaica.

The key ‘gatekeepers’ in British rock were the weekly music papers, the so-called ‘inkies’. Coverage by the ‘inkies’ of the Wailers’ first album and UK tour in 1973 was therefore crucial for setting the terms under which the band might gain access to the British rock market. Significantly, the main way the music press represented the Wailers was through a discourse of the primitive. As Steve Lake



put it, writing in the *Melody Maker* in 1973, ‘[b]asically they do everything wrong and it works beautifully... goddam it, the Wailers aren’t even musicians in the technical sense at all’. In a similar vein, Martin Hayman for *Sounds* suggested that the Wailers ‘direct the essentially simple message through from the feet to the body to the brain’. These are classic primitivist moves, posing reggae music not only as radically other, but also as emanating from the body rather than the mind.

Important though the music press was in presenting Marley and the Wailers to a rock audience, it would be wrong to treat the translation of the Wailers into rock simply as domination, the exertion of brute power by cultural neo-colonialists in the shape of the music journalists. Particularly after he ditched the original Wailers in 1974, Bob Marley himself took the leading role in developing a durable

model for what reggae might look and sound like in a rock context. Above all, Marley was a reflexive cultural worker – he understood the conditions of possibility and constraint afforded by the rock system of musical production. In addition, through appropriating the performance conventions of rock he was able to translate Jamaican reggae on his own terms, or at least to some extent.

As a music maker, Marley was a naturalist. The grain of his voice was his grain. Even the unworldly yodel he used was his own yodel, something that did not reveal his singing style, so much as the powerful spirit within that compelled him to utter. Significantly, as the Wailers began to make albums for Island, he did not have to make many adjustments to this mode of performance because rock itself favoured naturalism. Rather, the significant new factor that Marley confronted was rock’s code of authorship. According to this, expression should originate in the emotional core of one’s being, yet at the same time be moulded by intellectual work. In a sense, the early response by the British music press was based on a judgment that the group conformed to the first part of the formula, that is they ‘did emotion’, but not to the second part; in other words there was no intellection in their music making.

Several factors led to a change in perception, the most significant of which was Bob’s repackaging as a solo artist on *Natty Dread*, the third Island album. The new billing of ‘Bob Marley and the Wailers’ was important in signalling that one creative mind was now responsible for the songs and sounds. By continuing to make and release albums, Marley was building up a reputation as a serious rock artist, someone whose work could be examined over a continuous period of stylistic evolution. By the time of *Natty Dread*, Bob Marley had effectively assumed the mantle of rock auteur, producing ‘original’ material under his own control.

This has led some commentators to suggest that he was a ‘sell-out’, and that his work declined in aesthetic value and political force after he signed to Island and developed a solo career. This is surely a mistake. Firstly, he did carry on making politically engaged songs of protest and revolution up to his death in 1981. Secondly, he knew that the only way to reach an ‘outer national’ audience – workers and peasants as much as middle-class youth – was by developing a rock translation of reggae music. This he did with dedication and aplomb. Of course, Marley’s practice as a musician involved compromise. However, cultural work that does not include compromise is surely suspect, for it suggests that there is nothing autonomous in it, nothing that might be lost through the embrace of the culture industry.

As for the question of why Bob Marley is still the only third world superstar, the answer is that the institution of rock quickly put the shutters down. With the ‘disco sucks’ campaign of the late 1970s (co-ordinated by the major record companies), rock turned its back on black popular music. The music industry had abandoned its search for a universal music that might ‘crossover’. Niche marketing and segregation had returned with a vengeance.

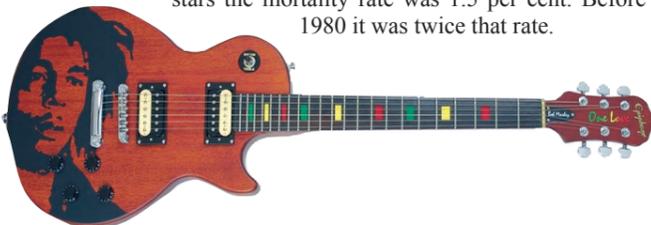
Rock stardom can shorten your life

It is hardly a revelation to shock the most avid *Society Matters*’ reader, especially if you have read Jason Toynbee’s article on Bob Marley in this issue but, according to research published last autumn in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, rock and roll can seriously damage your health.

By comparing the lives and deaths of rock and pop stars with the rest of the population, research by the Liverpool John Moores University found that in the first five years after chart success, the mortality rate of performers rose to three times the average rate.

The researchers analysed the careers of over 1,064 artists who had made it into the catalogue of the 1,000 best albums of all time, as voted in 2000 by a poll of more than 200,000 people across Europe and North America. Of these, 9.6 per cent of the male stars had died before 2005, and 7.6 per cent of the women. Even ten years after their chart success the death rate was twice the average. Of the 100 performers in the sample who died early, the average age was 42 for US stars (the age of Elvis Presley when he died) and 35 for Europeans.

Cancer, drug and/or alcohol abuse and accidents were the top three causes of death, with violence and suicide lower down the list. The results suggest that even a quarter of a century after their peak of fame such stars are more likely than the rest of us to die young. Encouragingly there are signs that music’s drug and booze culture may be changing. When the researchers compared the mortality rate before and after 1980, they found a significant drop. Among recent stars the mortality rate was 1.5 per cent. Before 1980 it was twice that rate.



Actual call centre conversations

Customer: ‘I’ve been ringing 0800 2100 for two days and can’t get through to enquiries, can you help?’

Operator: ‘Where did you get that number from, sir?’

Customer: ‘It was on the door to the Travel Centre.’

Operator: ‘Sir, they are our opening hours.’



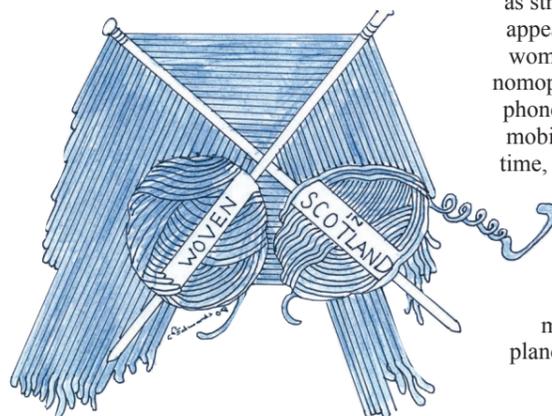
Caller: ‘Can you help me find a knitwear company in Woven?’

Operator: ‘Woven? Are you sure?’

Caller: ‘Yes. That’s what it says on the label, “Woven in Scotland”.’

Nomophobia grips UK

According to the Post Office over 53 per cent of the 45 million mobile phone owners in the UK are suffering from nomophobia. Their researchers found that anxiety is rife. Owners are stressed about running out of battery power or credit, losing handsets and not having network coverage. It seems that simply being out of mobile phone contact is, for many people, almost as stressful as moving house. Men appear to be more vulnerable than women to the condition known as nomophobia. Over a fifth of mobile phone users admitted leaving their mobile phones switched on all the time, while one in ten confessed to feeling stressed out when their mobile phone was switched off. Fortunately, from 2009, British airline passengers will be able to make mobile phone calls from planes, but only above 3,000 feet.



Youth at war

Alcinda Honwana, Professor and Chair in International Development and Director of the University's International Development Centre, sheds some light on the experiences and challenges faced by young people in the contexts of war and post-war in Africa

Marula was 20 years old when I met him in September 1995, in Chibuto Gaza province, Mozambique. Marula mentioned that in the beginning he was very afraid of the war, but he had no other option than to adjust to it and live. With time he learned to live that life.

At the age of ten, Marula was kidnapped by RENAMO insurgents (the Mozambican National Resistance – Resistência Nacional Moçambicana) during an attack on his village in southern Mozambique. Marula, his father, and his younger sister were forced to carry military equipment and looted goods, and to follow the soldiers. They walked for three days, before reaching the RENAMO camp. There, the family was separated. While his father was sent to the men's sector and his sister to the women's sector, Marula was ordered to join a group of young boys.

A few weeks later Marula started military training. He was not allowed to see his father and sister, but they arranged secret meetings on a few occasions. During one of these meetings, they agreed to run away together. However, they were caught attempting to escape. As punishment, and for his own life to be spared, Marula was ordered to kill his father, which he did. Following this first killing, Marula grew into a fierce RENAMO combatant and was active for more than seven years. He does not remember how many people he tortured, how many he killed, how many villages he burnt, and how many food convoys and shops he looted. After the war, he returned to his village. However, his paternal uncle, the only close relative who survived the war, refused to welcome him home. The uncle could not forgive Marula for killing his brother, the boy's own father.

The child soldier is an oxymoron, a hybrid that conflates victim and perpetrator. Child soldiers find themselves in an unsanctioned position between childhood and adulthood. They are still undeniably very young but no longer innocent; they acquire the skills of seasoned soldiers but are not adults yet. The possession of guns and a license to kill removes them from childhood. They are located in a twilight zone, a transition in which the worlds of childhood and adulthood rub uneasily against each other.

It is difficult to regard Marula as simply a victim who was compelled to kill and therefore bears no responsibility for his act of parricide. Yet his responsibility is different from that of a young man who kills his father for some imagined benefit. Civil war and peace engender quite distinct moral environments. Rather than conducting a philosophical inquiry into the degrees of guilt attributable to children and youths coerced into civil wars, the point here is to try to understand the new identities they develop in these interstitial positions.

It is clear from former child soldiers' accounts of their recruitment that coercion predominated. Many boys like Marula were kidnapped or forced into military camps. The context of civil war made detachment from armed conflict impossible, even if enlistment was voluntary. The initiation of young people into violence was a carefully orchestrated process of identity reconfiguration aimed at cutting their links with society. Young boys and girls were initiated into violence through a deliberate process of terror. Terrified themselves, they were prepared to inflict terror on others. As Marula's account shows, these were not two separate phases in which they were first brutalized by soldiers and then forced to brutalize civilians. Rather, the infliction of suffering on others was part of their own initiation into violence.



A child soldier, not Birahima, in Africa

It can be argued that, having started out as victims, many of them became perpetrators of the most violent and atrocious deeds. Yet such a linear progression does not fully represent the complex, intertwined, and mutually reinforcing acts of violence of which they are both victims and perpetrators. Some were most victimized in the very act of murdering others. Marula's act of murder detached him from his immediate family; the violation of fundamental kinship ties was performed by his own hand.

In the aftermath of war how does Marula reconcile with his family? His uncle's reluctance to accept him back into the family shows the moral and emotional dilemmas created by a war that tore apart communities and split entire families. Postwar healing, reconciliation and reintegration are thus fundamental for the survival of these war-affected communities.

My name is Birahima. I could have been a boy like any other... A dirty boy, neither better nor worse than all the other dirty boys of the world... With my Kalashnikov I killed lots of people. It is easy. You press and it goes tra-la-la. I am not sure that I enjoyed it. I know that I suffered a lot because many of my fellow child soldiers have died.

In Mozambique, community-based healing and reconciliation mechanisms dominated the rural areas in the absence of state-led strategies. Cleansing and purification rituals were performed to deal with the emotional and social problems of war-affected populations.

These cleansing rituals resemble what anthropologists call rites of transition. The young person undergoes a symbolic change of status from someone who has existed in a realm of sanctioned norm-violation, to someone who must now live in a realm of peaceful behavioural and social norms, and conform to these. Until the transition is complete (through ritual performance), the subject is considered to be in a dangerous state, a marginal and ambiguous state.

In this way, former child soldiers' transition from war to peace, from soldier to civilian, from perpetrator of violence into active citizenship becomes embedded in local culture with its particular meaning systems. However, while community healing and cleansing rituals offer forgiveness and reacceptance into the community and, thus, help facilitate their psychological and emotional recovery, the fact that former young soldiers have no education and marketable skills, and have no employment or other forms of livelihood makes them vulnerable to a myriad of problems. In these circumstances, programmes for healing war-affected youth must be complemented by job creation and skills training programmes. A general alleviation of poverty is urgently necessary in order to offer these young people some prospect of a better future.

Failures of structural adjustment programmes in Africa and the disruptions caused by globalization have promoted an environment of instability and conflict, exacerbating cultural and generational disconnections and tensions. Large numbers of youth are disenfranchised and operate in the margins of society. The recent violent riots in Mozambique to protest against government price increases were mainly led by youth. In recent post-electoral violence in Kenya, youths were at the forefront. It is estimated that 80 per cent of the dead in these riots were men aged between 15 and 30 years of age.

Like the child soldiers, these youths struggle to integrate themselves into society. No wonder they are often called 'the lost generation'. However, how is society to create spaces to integrate youth and allow them to exercise their citizenship? How can Africa harness the potential of its younger generation? These are the questions informing my current research. The problems are huge and the solutions not easy.

Despite all the difficulties they face, young people in Africa have been engaged in social, economic and political developments. Indeed, over the years, youth have been at the forefront of major social transformations, whether in politics, economics, religion, popular culture or community building. They are indeed at the centre of the many changes that characterize the contemporary African context, often perceived as being afloat between crisis and renewal. African youth today not only constitute the vast majority of the continent's population but also acutely reflect the sharpening contradictions of the contemporary world. Therefore, studying and understanding the multiple dimensions of young people's lives is crucial to understanding African societies today.

Alcinda is returning to Mozambique this summer. Marula will be 33 now. She is hoping to find out what became of him

The devastating cost of Africa's wars

Since the end of the Cold War, in 1990, conflicts in Africa have cost the continent over £150 billion. This is equivalent to the total foreign aid investment Africa has received during the same period according to Africa's Missing Billions, an Oxfam report published in the autumn of 2007.

Over one-half of the countries in Africa were afflicted by war and conflict between 1990 and 2007, from either invasion or civil strife. Such countries have, on average, 50 per cent more infant deaths, 15 per cent more undernourished people and reduced life expectancy by as much as five years. Oxfam found that indirect deaths were 14 times higher in nine African war zones than deaths in combat. Conflict was found to diminish African national economies by 15 per cent on average. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, over 4 million people have died at a cost of over £9 billion, or 29 per cent of the DRC Gross National Product.

The African countries affected have suffered escalating inflation and debt, and high unemployment. They also experience acute levels of ill health from diseases that include HIV, Aids, TB and malaria. Water and medical access is extremely limited.

As a result of the conflicts, economic activity falters or grinds to a halt. Income from valuable natural resources ends up lining individual pockets rather than benefiting the country. More people, especially women and children, die from the fallout of conflict than die in the conflict itself.

Conflicts have contributed to 10 African countries failing to make progress on cutting the number of child deaths and deaths of mothers in childbirth. Child mortality has risen in Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Congo and Zimbabwe, while Sierra Leone has the highest maternal mortality rate – 2,100 women die in every 100,000 live births. In the UK, the maternal mortality rate is 8 in 100,000. In Sierra Leone, the national health budget is £1.80 per person per year.

Oxfam believes that the figures in the report are almost certainly

an underestimation of the true impact of conflict on Africa. The data fail to take fully into account the effect on neighbouring countries, which are often affected by an influx of refugees and political insecurity. Another measure of fallout concerns the huge numbers of small arms throughout the continent, which has resulted in increased levels of violent crime, robberies and gang violence.

Child mortality under age 5 years per 1,000 births, 2006

Sweden	4
Sierra Leone	282
Angola	260
Niger	256
Liberia	235
Somalia	225
Mali	218
Chad	208
Dem. Rep. Congo	205
Equatorial Guinea	205

Female life expectancy in years

Sweden	83
Sierra Leone	42
Equatorial Guinea	42
Liberia	43
Angola	45
Niger	47
Mali	49
Somalia	49

Iraq and Afghanistan wars cost the USA more than the wars in Korea and Vietnam

The total cost of the wars being waged in Iraq and Afghanistan to the American economy is now greater than the Korean and Vietnam wars combined and more than any war since the Second World War, according to a report by the US Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. In the summer of 2008, the budget for the wars topped \$1 trillion. Despite their expense however, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan cost less as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (4.2 per cent compared to 12.2 per cent for Korea and 9.4 per cent for Vietnam). By comparison, the Second World War cost 40 per cent of GDP. In 2007, US expenditure on military spending was the greatest in any year since 2001. The speaker of the House of Congress, commenting on the report in October 2007, said, 'For the cost of less than 40 days in Iraq, we could provide health care coverage to 10 million children in an entire year.'

In 2008, the House of Commons Defence Committee expects the cost to the UK economy of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to almost double to £3.3 billion, despite ongoing falls in troop numbers; a 94 per cent increase on 2007.

Iraq War deadliest ever for the media

Towards Christmas 2007, a landmark was reached in Iraq that largely went unnoticed – the death of the 200th journalist covering the conflict. His death made the Iraq conflict the deadliest for the media in history. Two journalists were killed in the Great War of 1914–18, 68 in the Second World War, 77 in the Vietnam War, and 36 in the Balkan Wars of the late 1990s.

History's top ten actual conspiracies of all time

History abounds with secret plots and deceptions, not always the paranoid fantasies of conspiracy theorists. Andrew Trigg, Head of Economics, reveals his top ten actual conspiracies

☞ *I do not wish to imply that conspiracies never happen. On the contrary, they are typical social phenomena.* ☞

Karl Popper

1 The Gunpowder Plot

In 1605, Provincial Catholics unsuccessfully plotted to blow up King James I of England during the state opening of Parliament. Guy Fawkes prepared the gunpowder, and pretended to be the servant of Thomas Percy. Fawkes was tortured along with his co-conspirators. The population of London celebrated the failure of the plot with bonfires, a tradition that has amazingly endured for 400 years.



2 The Zinoviev Letter

In 1924, Ramsey MacDonald was seeking re-election as the first serving Labour Prime Minister. Establishing his reputation in the country by opposing the First World War, he had managed to push the once great Liberal Party off the front bench of British politics (a legacy that remains to this day). The letter that de-railed his campaign was from Zinoviev, Soviet President of the Communist International, to a representative of the British labour movement. It called, amongst other things, for communist cells to be set up in the British armed forces. We now know that it was compiled by Russian white émigrés, in connivance with members of the Conservative Central Office and the intelligence services.

3 Watergate

Secret funds, wire tapping, illegal break-ins: these were just some of the activities carried out by staff loyal to President Richard Nixon in the early 1970s. They got caught breaking and entering the Democratic Party's Headquarters in the Watergate building, Washington DC. The affair ultimately led to Nixon's resignation in 1974.

4 Scargill's hit list

In Arthur Scargill's first presidential address to the National Union of Mineworkers in 1982, he warned of a secret 'hit list' of pit closures. Twenty years later, he reported, 'I was not plucking statistics from the air when I made that prediction and nor am I a clairvoyant. I based my warning on a leaked National Coal Board document that I had received from the very top of the Board's management.' The list was more than implemented: in 1984 there were 180 pits, in 2008 only 6. Scargill has been proven right that this made no sense as a long-term energy policy. Coal-fired power stations continue to provide 35 per cent of the UK electricity output, which relies on 50 million tonnes of coal imports for two-thirds of its supplies, at a price that has doubled in the past two years. However, don't worry, there is a 'positive story' from the Minister for Energy, Malcolm Wicks: he announced 'ongoing work to re-open three underground mines' in January 2008.



The Alimo miner's picket hut at Cortonwood pit, South Yorkshire, the first of 20 pit closures in 1984/85

5 The Dreyfus Affair

An artillery officer in the French army, Captain Alfred Dreyfus was convicted in 1894 of spying for the Germans, on the basis of evidence fabricated by the French intelligence services. Given that Dreyfus was Jewish, and the prevalence of anti-Semitism on the right of French politics at that time, the affair divided France down the middle. After years of imprisonment on Devil's Island, a campaign led by the great novelist Emile Zola eventually led to the exoneration of Dreyfus. In 1906 he was reinstated to the French army, and served as Lieutenant-Colonel in the First World War. The affair is seen by some as the catalyst for the Zionist movement, which called for the establishment of a Jewish homeland.

6 Suez

On 21 October 1954, Sir Anthony Eden, the British Prime Minister, met his counterparts from France and Israel – Guy Mollet and David Ben-Gurion – at a secret location. They agreed a plan to jointly capture the Suez Canal, which had been nationalized by Nasser's Egypt. On 1 November 1954, in the House of Commons, the Conservative MP, William Yates, said 'I have come to the conclusion that Her Majesty's Government has been involved in an international conspiracy.' The conspirators were subsequently forced to withdraw under American and UN pressure. For Eden and Mollet it was the end of their careers; for Britain it was the end of its superpower status.

7 Guatemalan coup

Why did Che Guevara become a revolutionary? Was it the condition of the poor he observed travelling across the Andes as a young man (as portrayed in the movie *The Motorcycle Diaries*)? In part yes, but the main reason was his experience in Guatemala in 1954. The left-leaning government, led by Jacobo Arbenz, had nationalized properties of the United Fruit Company, which had links to the Dulles brothers: one the US Secretary of State and the other a CIA Director. With covert CIA backing, a successful coup was organized. Che sought asylum in the embassy compound, this moment galvanizing his commitment to armed struggle against American-backed plantation owners.



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8 The Vanunu kidnap

A technician in the Dimona nuclear weapons plant, Mordechai Vanunu took his story in 1986 to the *Sunday Times* in London. Israel was secretly developing nuclear weapons, in blatant transgression of international law. Journalists warned him that he should not travel to Italy with the young woman, Cindy, who caught his eye looking into a Leicester Square shop window. It was an intricate honey trap by Israeli intelligence services, with Vanunu drugged and kidnapped. Vanunu spent the next 18 years in an Israeli prison, mostly in solitary confinement. Cindy, real name Cheryl Bentov, now lives with her husband in Orlando, Florida.

9 William and Mary

In 1688, it was the turn of Protestants to plan a conspiracy – this time successfully. James II tried, in the face of popular discontent, to impose his Catholic faith on the nation. A bloodless coup was arranged, with Parliament inviting William and Mary of Orange to take the throne (bloodless that is apart from three major battles in Ireland, including the Battle of the Boyne). Finally, Parliament was able to exert its authority over the monarchy.

10 Italian match-fixing scandal

In 2006, four Italian clubs – Juventus, AC Milan, Fiorentina and Lazio – were punished for interference with referees. Key evidence included the recording of phone calls between referees and Luciano Moggi, the Juventus general manager. The scandal rocked Italian football. On the field, however, Italians reigned supreme. Following news of the scandal, AC Milan won the Champions League and Italy the World Cup. After demotion to Serie B, Juventus were immediately promoted back to Serie A.

Conspiracies are considered unimportant by some, rarely making much of an impact on the course of history. I beg to differ; my top ten conspiracies changed election results, demoted superpowers, destroyed industries and launched social movements. Let me know if you disagree: A.B.Trigg@open.ac.uk

One conspiracy Andrew missed – Basil Lewis D'Oliveira, CBE: the man who became a cause

The biggest conspiracy in cricket was the D'Oliveira affair in 1968. D'Oliveira rewrote history, contributing to the end of apartheid, one of humanity's most abhorrent systems.

D'Oliveira was dropped from the English national team after the summer's first test against Australia. He was recalled for the final test at the Oval where he scored 158 runs and took the crucial breakthrough wicket to secure an English victory.

After a six-hour selection meeting, the MCC decided to drop D'Oliveira from the South African winter tour. During the preceding months, the British and the South African governments, and the MCC, had conspired to ensure that no matter what D'Oliveira achieved on the field, he would not be selected. The minutes of the selection meeting have long since disappeared from the archive at Lords.

Tom Cartwright, an opponent of apartheid, was selected to take his place. Cartwright withdrew, citing injury, and the cricket establishment reluctantly selected D'Oliveira after a national outcry following his omission.

South Africa, who had made clandestine attempts to bribe D'Oliveira not to tour, would not accept the presence of a 'coloured cricketer' from Cape Town in the English tour party. They refused entry and the tour was cancelled. This signalled the start of South Africa's sporting isolation, which continued until 1991. Never again would they play test cricket with an all-white team against only Australia, England and New Zealand.



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Society Matters Extra

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