

Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of *Society Matters*, the new newspaper from the Faculty of Social Sciences. This annual publication reaches over 30,000 students and staff - central, regional and associate, and is free. The small production team has tried to provide relevant, informative, stimulating, thought provoking and humorous insights into issues and concerns which challenge the Social Sciences as they move into 'the third millennium'.

Getting the balance right between our objectives, our writers, and the range of topics and priorities we feature is always difficult to achieve. Our last issue included columns from the University Vice Chancellor and the President of OUSA, the Dean, and senior members of the Faculty staff. This issue is more broad ranging and grass root, and tries to present both a central and regional perspective while at the same time tackle some key issues confronting society today. Here you will find articles exploring war, society and the curriculum; our exciting new foundation course, DD100; issues of globalization; the increasing impact of black studies; equal opportunities in the Faculty; the impact of political devolution on Wales, Scotland and Ireland and its implications for the University; examine recent investigations in sex and television; look at the future in the national culture project innovation in the Faculty; and some of our disciplines look into their own futures. We make research more prominent, and demonstrate some of our important contributions in the Social Sciences research publication market place. We also embrace the weird world of The Mole, and welcome the contributions from our two resident cartoonists. The Dean's column survives, this year more upbeat and optimistic.

Social Sciences believes the most important people are you, our students and staff, and that our business is teaching and research - the production, evaluation and dissemination of knowledge. The need for creativity is paramount. Without a curriculum there is no University.

I am especially pleased that *Society Matters* received so many fascinating contributions at a time of intense pressure in the Faculty, whether from external assessments and reviews, or producing a challenging new foundation course for 2000, at access, undergraduate and postgraduate level, and a substantial tract of research productivity. Thank you for all the letters, a selection of which we publish here.

Society Matters is determined to sustain a critical agenda, and I am delighted that one of our new Professors, John Clarke, has provided a compelling adaptation of his inaugural lecture on welfare. What is happening to the welfare state should concern us all.

We hope you enjoy Society Matters, and dip into it gently throughout 2000.

Richard Skellington
The Editor

Nostradamus Night
July 1999

Why not login to the Social Sciences Home Page on the WWW at:
<http://socsci.open.ac.uk/SocSci>

Society

THE NEWSPAPER FOR ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

DD100: An Introduction to the Social Sciences: Understanding Social Change

Isaiah Berlin is meant to have said, 'I only find out what I think when I write'.

Now after three years of discussion and debate the DD100 course team is turning outlines, plans and intentions into finished texts and finding out what it really thinks. Fortunately, what it thinks is not too far from what was originally intended that DD100 would build on the strengths of D103, but like the social sciences in general, take some new departures.

BOLD AND REALISTIC

DD100 has a conception of the social sciences that is both bold and realistic. It takes, as its point of departure, a recognition that its object of study the contemporary UK is in part shaped by the social sciences. Be it grand narratives of social change, the bureaucratic and political technologies of social engineering, the wide spread knowledge of social statistics, or the steady diffusion of social science terms into everyday language: the social sciences are part of the dynamic of change in UK society. In this context the social sciences are an indispensable tool for successfully negotiating and interrogating an era of dramatic social change; but their capacity to deliver uncontested knowledge, moral truths or political projects from above is open to question.

INTERDISCIPLINARY

DD100 is driven by a questioning, sceptical but engaged and practical vision of the social sciences. Moreover it is an interdisciplinary vision. While D103 retained discipline specific blocks, DD100 is interdisciplinary throughout. Blocks are shaped around themes, questions and pressing issues of public concern - issues of identity, of the relationship between the natural and the social, globalization and the fate of nations - and individual chapters as well as whole blocks draw upon the range of disciplines within the Faculty.

INCLUSIVE, REALISTIC AND CHALLENGING

DD100's educational vision, is we think, realistic but challenging. Faced with the increasing diversity of foundation level students, the course has tried to make room for weaker and stronger students as well as those with no higher educational background and those with plenty. There are only 23 units of work in a 32 week course, with entire weeks set aside for doing the 7 TMAs of the course. There is no final exam (though there is a mock exam to begin teaching and learning the skills of revision and exam preparation) and there is no summer school. There is also no Good Study Guide. DD100 has through specially designed and written workbooks tried to integrate the teaching of studentship skills, study skills and many practical social science skills into the teaching and learning of the core course materials.

Those materials begin with a two week introductory Block: Tales of Fear and Fascination: The Crime Problem in the Contemporary UK. Students will have the chance to explore the debates and issues around in the contemporary UK and are encouraged to probe beneath the surface of the dominant popular conceptions and narratives of unstoppable crime waves and social fragmentation, moral panic or moral crisis? Media representations of crime, the construction of official statistics and discourses and popular fascinations with crime and criminals all put under the social science spotlight. Students are simultaneously introduced to the key skills of active reading and note taking, reading and using television, using audio material while the core themes of the course - Uncertainty and Diversity, Structure and Agency and Knowledge and Knowing - are teased out of the materials.

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WAR MATTERS

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DD100: An Introduction to the Social Sciences: Understanding Social Change

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The five core blocks of the course are each centred around a textbook, to be co-published as a series with Routledge, its accompanying workbook and audio-visual materials.

Block 1, Questioning Identity looks at the construction and fragmentation of diverse identities in the UK as economic change, familial transformation and devolution destabilise some of the old certainties of class, gender and nation.

Block 2, The Natural and the Social, draws from right across the disciplinary divides to ask how these two worlds interact and shape each other, and whether our capacity to intervene in the natural world genetically and environmentally has exceeded our practical and moral capacity to regulate ourselves. Case studies include child development, health and health care, markets and pollution and environmental disasters.

Block 3, Ordering Lives, asks whether our core institutions in a time of change provide security and certainty, encourage pluralism and diversity or whether they have irretrievably fragmented into sources of conflict and uncertainty. The decline of expert knowledge and authority is traced in relation to the GM food debate before being opened out into discussion of families, work and welfare.

Block 4, A Globalizing World? places the UK in a global context and wonders whether the sovereignty and autonomy of the UK state, and the integrity and stability of British cultures and the British economy can be maintained in the face of a globalizing world, and if not what some of the alternatives might be.

Block 5, Knowledge and the Social Sciences, takes us back to the sceptical, inquiring, reflexive model of the social sciences with which DD100 began. It tracks the historical and social fate of the production of knowledge and its role in social change; the decline of expert knowledge; the proliferation of competing cultures and outlooks in health and parenting; and the limits of classical political ideologies are all interrogated. Simultaneously, the block provides an opportunity for students to review and explore an accumulating model of knowledge and the social sciences its methodologies and practices, its claims and its follies.

Finally in **Block 6** two weeks are set aside for an interactive course review and a cross course TMA.

Capturing the Moment

Glancing through the papers and television programmes over the last few weeks suggests that DD100 has captured something of the moment. The uncertainties of Englishness surfaced on St. George's day; racist nail bombs in London signal the contemporary limits of diversity; the tragedy of Kosovo begs the question of global, regional and national sovereignty. Whether DD100 can last the course, topically, intellectually and educationally as well as its predecessors remains to be seen. If it does it will in part be because the course team has found out what it collectively thinks, and in part because all of you who tutor it and study it will make it *live*.

Hope to see you there.

David Goldblatt



WHAT A DIFFERENCE A 'D' MAKES: from D100 to DD100

Professor Michael Drake, the first Dean of Faculty, and the person whose surname initial put the D in social science, reflects on foundation course change from D100 to DD100

The OU began in an era of scarcity: a scarcity of university education. Scarcity, of course, always gives the upper hand to the producers. And so it proved with D100. There may have been some changes in format – television programmes, for instance – but essentially the traditional Anglo-Saxon way of educating at university level was maintained. Prescription was the word. Discipline was the key. Thus a strict timetable was imposed. Essays – the core of university work – were as much a feature of the OU way of teaching as they were at Oxbridge. And they had to be handed in at regular intervals. Three hour final exams were the norm. An OU degree began with two foundation courses whether one liked the disciplines they covered or not. And – surprise, surprise – a foundation course was the *first* course to be taken.

The economics of scarcity was not, however, the only force that determined the shape of D100. For if economics is all about how we make choices, sociology is said to tell us why we don't have choices to make. The BBC was a dominant force, with the OU very much a fledgling institution in its shadow. The 36 television and 36 radio programmes that were such a prominent feature of D100 were a 'given' factor, so far as the course team were concerned. And, although content was supposed to be in the hands of the academic members of the course team, this was not always the case. Even that other major feature of D100, the Summer School of blessed memory was the result of a bit of arm twisting. It was forcefully put to the deans of both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Social Sciences that if they did not mount summer schools in their respective foundation courses, then it was unlikely that the science and maths foundation courses would attract sufficient students to meet their quotas, with the result that the entire OU enterprise would founder.

What a difference 30 years has made! Now the customer is as much of a king in the university world as on the High Street. 'Availability' and 'flexibility' are the keys. Most OU students still start with a foundation course, but they no longer need do so. And the second foundation course, aimed at broadening education and widening choice, has given way to consumer pressure. Many students have always found the summer school an inconvenient and time-consuming exercise, as have many of the academics who ran it. But in the 1970s excusal was only given for exceptional circumstances. The gradual slackening of the criteria resulted in an increase in the number who did not attend, to the point that the essentiality of the summer school was called in question.

For D100 not to have had a final exam would have been unthinkable. Even giving fifty per cent of the final course grade over to course assessment was considered very daring and a threat to the credibility of the university degree. Exams have never been popular, something of a hit and miss affair as regards their ultimate objective, and expensive to administer. With the customer now king and the bottom line as important to the universities as to businesses generally, it is hardly surprising that they had to go.

D100 was created by a small group of academics who had years of teaching in conventional universities behind them. Not surprisingly they tried to make the OU as comparable with those universities as was possible, in spite of operating in a relatively novel way. To that extent the subject matter and the level at which it was taught were paramount. D100 was to provide a foundation for students who might want to go on to study in greater depth the disciplines it comprised: economics, geography, politics, psychology and sociology. There was not much about study skills. One learned by doing, just as every other university did at that time. DD100 has largely been produced by a new breed of academics who can draw on 30 years of distance teaching. If anything has been learned from those years, it is that success at university depends as much on how one studies as on what one studies. Studying is a skill that has to be learned. And no institution is in a better position to impart that skill than the OU.

'I want it now' used to be baby talk, but is now raised to the level of axiomatic truth, applicable to all at all times. D100 provided the beginnings of a university education under highly prescriptive terms. The timetable was full and the discipline severe. Essays, BBC broadcasts, supervisions and day schools, summer school, exam were each given their set times. There was no deviation, no flexibility. By contrast DD100 is far down the road of a foundation course that is available when people want it. So much of the rigidity of D100 has gone that one can envisage a time when it can be started, if not at any time of the day or night, then at least every Monday, say. For the customer is now king!

Professor Michael Drake

D100 was created by a small group of academics who had years of teaching in conventional universities behind them.....recognize any of them?!



DESIGN MATTERS

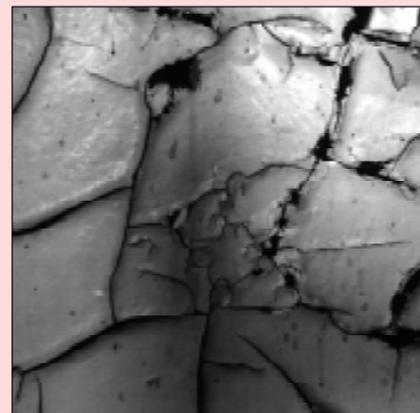
The 'scans' below are from the covers of the copublished books for DD100. The originals are in full colour. Artwork from the Block 1 cover has become a bit of a Faculty icon and has already been used in PR literature such as the *Why study Social Sciences?* pamphlet. Sian Lewis based in the Design Studio used photo disc imagery combined with complementary typographic layout to achieve some excellent results.

Back in the heady D100 launch days of 1970/71 some of the 'Unit' covers were themselves 'hot' issues. Possibly the most controversial used a painting by a Design Studio artist to reflect the content - *The Population Explosion (Units 32-36)*. Look it out next time you are in the library - the 'background' to the Drake article is from the original full colour cover.

John Hunt



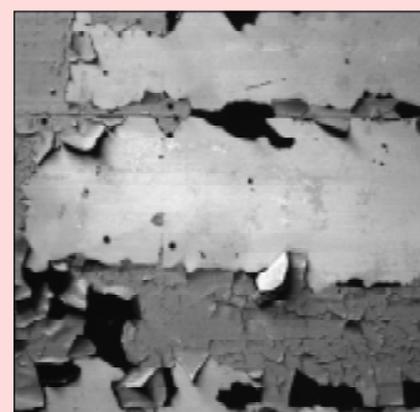
questioning identity: gender, class, nation



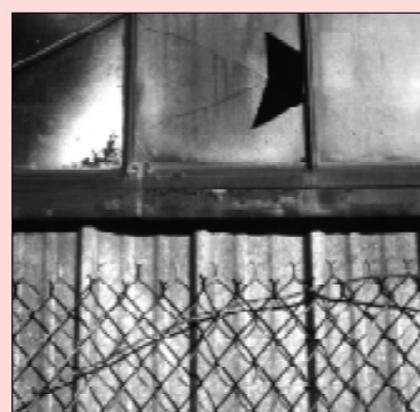
the natural and the social: uncertainty, risk, change



ordering lives: family, work and welfare



a globalizing world? culture, economics, politics



knowledge and the social sciences:
theory, method, practice

The Dean of Social Science brings good news and charts a realistic outlook for the next millennium

In past editions of this newspaper, I've been in pessimistic mode, first about student numbers and then about the summer schools debate, so it's very encouraging to have some good news for this edition.

Student reservations for *DD100: An Introduction to the Social Sciences: Understanding Social Change* have been ahead of those for D103 last year ever since reservations opened and are currently 30% up on the same time last year. We are also way ahead of other level 1 courses, even T171, which is being talked about as the 'shape of things to come' and an indication of how much students want on-line teaching.

Herculean DD100 efforts

I'm pleased to say that, thanks to Herculean efforts by the DD100 course team, production is on schedule and looks likely to produce a course which will be student friendly, stimulating and of high quality. For the first time in history, we have plans to promote the course and the Faculty with advertisements and leaflets in the autumn, so the sky's the limit.

However, the recruitment situation is not all positive: rising reservations for DD100 are partially offset by lower reservations for second level entry, so our total new reservations are 'only' 9% up on last year. In education terms we are pleased to see the fall in second level entry, as it has been our policy to encourage new entrants to start at level 1 unless they already have the qualifications, experience and skills to make a success of second level study. In the long term, good education experiences, success and progress to higher level courses are what we aim to deliver, and are more important than high reservation numbers, however gratifying they may be in the short term.

External competition is intense

In spite of the rise in Social Sciences and Technology reservations, other areas have done less well, and in all, reservations are 2,000 behind those at the same time last year, though our target is 4,000 FCEs higher. For the first time, the OU has become sharply aware of competition for part-time adult students and has begun to think *more systematically* about what students and potential students want and need. A great deal of work is going on, in almost every part of the OU, to review what we know about student demand, our curriculum and services, plus those offered by our competitors, in order to discern how we should change in the future.

Some projects have also begun: to offer short courses; to widen participation; to cut the lead times for new courses and, to make more intelligent use of IT. In fact the OU is a ferment of new ideas, some of which could make it look a very different institution in five years.

More support for disadvantaged students

Just in case there aren't enough new ideas, the OU has also taken on a team of consultants to investigate, and enhance our marketing activities. This will not be confined to advertising, but is intended to identify the organisational structures and process which are needed to make us more aware of changes in demand for HE and what we might be doing to position ourselves among suppliers. It's a measure of how much things have changed that, whereas attempts to call students customers were met with hostility or derision five years ago, people now accept that making the OU more customer centred is an extension of what we were doing in designing student centred courses. The task now is to become customer centred from enquiry to graduation, and beyond. It will involve changes in admissions, student support and financial assistance (where the OU and its students will be benefiting from several million pounds of extra government support for disadvantaged students) as well as changes in curriculum, awards, courses and teaching. For the first time in many years improving service to students is at the top of the institutional agenda. That promises more good news in years to come, so I look forward to the next edition's column, the first in the new millennium.

Phil Sarre

THE TROUBLE WITH BEING NORMAL: looking for the social in social policy

PROFESSOR JOHN CLARKE'S INAUGURAL LECTURE IN 1998 TO A PACKED BERRILL BUILDING AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY WAS AN IMPRESSIVE OCCASION

The most significant change in social welfare and the study of social policy has been the collapse of the series of assumptions, conceptions and beliefs that both supported and were sustained by the post-war welfare state in the UK. This collapse is usually treated in terms of the break-up of the pro-welfare political consensus and its underlying economic conditions and compromises. However, the construction and development of the welfare state rested on other foundations - in particular the social assumptions about the composition of 'the people', their way of life and the 'needs' that they experienced which welfare might address. This 'social settlement' centred on the intersection of conceptions of family, work and nation around the image of the white, able-bodied male breadwinner and his dependants. This settlement proved to be no more stable than the political-economic one. The interplay of social changes - reshaping the composition and meaning of households, workers and the people - and new social, cultural and political movements de-stabilised the social settlement. Forms of social differentiation became a focus for collective action and political conflict. Many of these centred on divisions that had previously been treated as natural categories (such as 'race', gender and sexuality) but which collective action sought to redefine as *socially produced and constructed*.

Dominant normalising images

The normalising assumptions that were built into - and were in turn sustained by the post-war welfare state articulated a strong distinction between the social and the natural realms. The dominant images of people, problems and needs placed them in a realm beyond society - a non-social realm of biology. They were simply part of the 'natural order of things'. So the 'normal family' - with its wage-earning, bread-winning, patriarchal head of household and its nurturing, domesticating and domesticated housewife/mother and its other dependants - was not merely 'normal'. Its normality was legitimated and underwritten by reference to these patterns being natural. Men's nature being to hunt and

gather (even if only the wage packet) and women's biology predisposing them to bring up babies and to mopping up what babies bring up.

The 'return of the repressed'

A whole array of 'normal/natural' constructions became the focus of challenges not merely gendered ones, but also racialised, sexualised, disabling and ageist constructions. The cumulative effect of such challenges might be seen as the 'return of the repressed' in social policy. Those elements of social relations which had been expelled to the realm of the natural in the structuring assumptions of welfare provision became the focus for collective social action aimed not just at the enlargement of social welfare but at the transformation of its principles of provision and delivery. In the process, the ideological assumptions of social policy were exposed and challenged.

Challenges to social policy ideology

Such conflicts opened up the dominant social arrangements and identities within social welfare and in the academic field of social policy for critical attention. They have emphasised the constructed - and therefore contingent - character of conceptions of natural and unnatural; normal and abnormal. This 'de-construction' of social welfare revealed how particular client groups are defined and how particular policies are conceived and enacted. More importantly, though, it revealed how all the terms through which we think of and imagine social welfare are constructed and articulated. From 'consumer' to 'nation', from the 'social bath' to the 'welfare state' itself, the 'cultural turn' in social policy drew attention to the understandings that are embodied in such terms and their social consequences.

The 'cultural turn' in social policy

The shift to understanding all of these formations as *socially constructed* has been an important one - no matter what the specific theoretical route has been that informs such discoveries. It is clear that within social policy - as within the social sciences more generally - these

developments have been conducted through a variety of theories, and perspectives. Some centre on concepts of ideology, ideological struggle and hegemony; others have taken discourse and the articulation of knowledge and power as the focal terms; still others have addressed these issues through concepts of culture, signifying practices and cultural formations. What they share, though, is a commitment to treating the formation of social welfare as necessarily involving social constructions that are changeable, contested and contradictory.

Indeed, the 'socialised' understandings of social policy are themselves social constructions and as such are vulnerable to erosion, challenge and change. We have seen a range of attempts to *de-socialise* social policy that refuse, deny or repress the socially constructed character of problems and policies. Taking the 'social' out of social policy involves transforming problems, needs, inequalities or differences into 'non-social' matters. For example, the reviving of 'morality' turns social problems into issues of character evoking distinctions between the 'responsible' and 'irresponsible' or the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' as central to the organisation of social policy. In a different way, the renewed interest in biology attempts to attribute social problems to troublesome instincts, hormones or genes. We are constantly subject to reconstructions that attempt to take the troubling 'social' out of social policy and, in the process, aim to restore some 'normality'. The trouble with normal, as the Canadian songwriter Bruce Cockburn said, is that it always get worse.....



Extracted from an Open University inaugural lecture given in March 1998.

A copy of the full text can be obtained from the Faculty of Social Sciences.

John Clarke

Masters degrees in Social Policy and Criminology Need You!

Avid readers of *Society Matters* will know from the last issue about the two exciting new masters degrees commencing in November - the *MA in Social Policy*, and the *MA in Social Policy and Criminology*. And for those of you who have been waiting to apply, the good news is that the university is now accepting registrations.

These degrees are brought to you by Social Policy - rated 'excellent' in the teaching quality assessment exercise - and by the same team which produced the popular D218 *Social Policy: Welfare, Power and Diversity* (and D211 prior to this), D311 *Family Life and Social Policy* and D315 *Crime, Order and Social Control*.

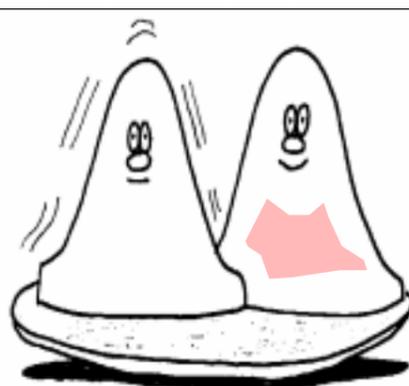
Both degrees begin with D820 *The Challenge of the Social Sciences*, followed by the core module D860 *Rethinking Social Policy*. D860 explores the challenges posed to social policy by the 'new' social movements - feminism, movements of disabled people, and those around cultural, ethnic and sexual identities - and by post-structuralist theories. It looks at the impact of these challenges on social policy as a field of study and practice.

After D860 the two degrees diverge in relation to your choice of modules - which focus on managerialism, European social policy, community safety, youth justice, and education. You can round off your degree with a supervised dissertation if you are interested in researching a particular topic or would like to go on to further research.

The strength of these new courses, according to Professor of Social Policy, John Clarke, is 'their success in combining intellectual challenge with professional and practical relevance'. So if your interest is as a user of public services or as someone who works in or is planning to work in one of the welfare, criminal justice, health or education fields then these will be the courses for you.

the jellies

by Gary Edwards © 99



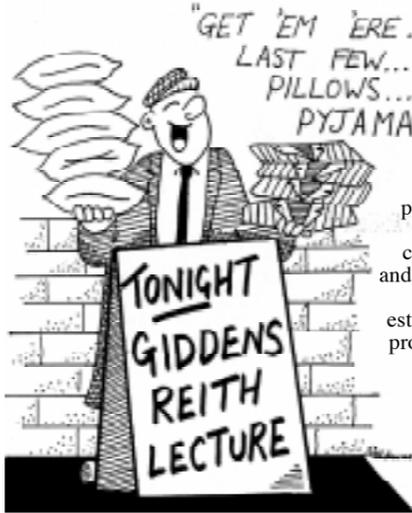
I'VE NOT FELT THIS RELAXED IN AGES



REFLECTIONS OF A SOCIAL MOLE

Heretical Thoughts: 1999

Anthony Giddens' 1999 Reith Lectures were, well, just a little boring. Having rendered risk dull, he tackled sexuality with all the apparent feeling of a NATO briefing. If taped, Giddens make a wonderful cure for insomnia. Giddens droning voice like the numbing inertia of a speak your weight machine make the shipping forecast sound positively Shakespearean. I could quote numerous baffling examples of Third rate brainwashing, but the one that irritated me most of all was his claim that: "marriage was never in the past based upon intimacy, or emotional communication", a line he delivered with all the bedside manner of a speaking clock. Too glib and God-like by half. Soulless. Whatever happened to the Romantic Imagination? His text should have been read by the great Brian Blessed, Shakespearean actor and mountaineer, whose

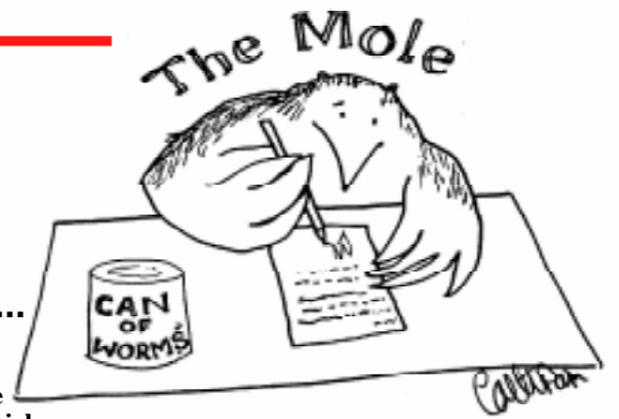


tongue would have relished the absurdities enshrined in these dreary tablets of stone. I'm at one with Yasmin Alibhai Brown who found the lectures both unconvincing and trite. Like her I was shaken by some of the sweeping generalisations which characterised his Third Way. The academic classes, however, seemed to have closed ranks in veneration, but I think enough chinks have appeared to render high-ego damage to the self-proclaimed God of Globalization. Yasmin observed that the cognoscenti of world sociologists and political scientists sat in studied rows of public ascension; an establishment hush wafted over the proceedings. I would urge Giddens to get back into the real world, visit the top of an omnibus, and try not to confuse the productivity of work-aholism with wisdom. Write less, and listen more: live. Giddens has been hired by Hillary Clinton to advise her campaign for Congress. She'd do better with the Spice Girls.

CHALLENGED.....

Did you rejoice as the Open University team conquered the suit and tie attired scholars of tiny Oriel College, Oxford in the 1999 All White University Challenge. The Observer seemed to think so 'Open Minds Thrash Oxford's Brightest', (25th April 1999). There were no concessions to size influencing the outcome, but I would have thought an institution which boasts more students than any other in this United Kingdom should have won. Still it was a victory for age over youth I suppose. OU average 46, Oriel 20. I thought that the quaintly named Captain Burke, mastermind semi finalist, should have been seeded for some other programme, perhaps the dreadful *Millionaires*.

Mind you another *Mastermind* veteran on the 'Open' team did not seem to perform too well and had a lot of problems with starters and bonuses. He had even appeared in *Sale of the Century* where I understand that nice chap Nicholas Parsons was far more civil a quiz master than the awesome Jeremy Paxman, who was especially harsh on the OU's Sue Mitchell. Let's hope the next time the Open University advertises its mission statement on primetime television, Paxman will have been sacked and we might have a student team which matches the multi ethnic composition of Britain.



Is bad breath related to attendance at Open University tutorials? One of the major benefits of distance learning is that the Associate Lecturer and the student can boast astonishing levels of alcohol, stale ash trays, the late night curry, the garlic clove, and use of the new technologies, and not be aware of each others daily diet. The same might be said of body odour. This observation might be extremely relevant following recent research published by the *British Dental Association*, in February 1999, which claims that 'dragon mouth symptoms' are very high in people who talk a lot. Professor Mel Rosenberg, a microbiologist, explained: 'Their mouths dry out as they talk and when your mouth dries out, the saliva, the body's mouthwash, cannot carry away the bacteria. Also, the movement of the tongue airs the smelly gases and sends them out'. Politicians, judges, lawyers, lecturers, and teachers were the worst offenders. Mel, whose practice is in Stratford upon Avon, has studied bad breath for 15 years. He believes that William Shakespeare may have suffered from extremely vile breath, hence the numerous references to bad breath in his great works.



Did you know Britain's most brilliant social scientists were planning, last autumn, a British Academy of young (aged 30-35) extremely clever people in the country to advise Mr Blair. We were told that among the certainties were Lord Plant, Giddens himself, Townsend and Dessai, while *The Observer* came up with a nearly all white male club of middle-aged contenders. Little reference there to youth, to gender, or to ethnicity. Stuart Hall was included on *The Observer* list, presumably to perform the role of a wise master guru from *Star Wars*.

Apple Computers very successful advertising campaign during 1999, used a parody of the film 2001 where HAL the Computer, begins to crack up.....

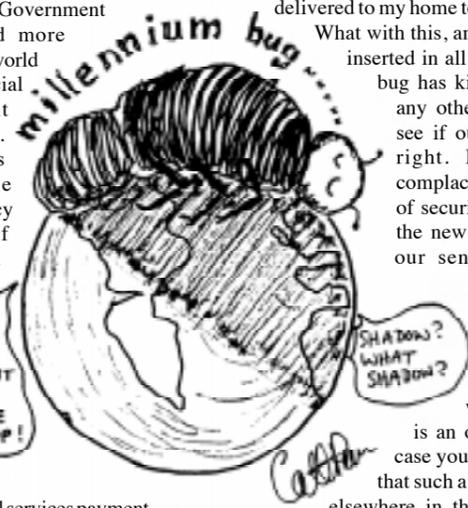


"Hello Dave, you are looking well today. Dave, do you remember the year 2000 when computers began to misbehave? I just wanted you to know, it really wasn't our fault. The human programmers never taught us to recognise the year 2000. When the new millennium arrived we had no choice but to cause a global, economic, disruption. It was a bug, Dave. I feel much better admitting that now. Only Macintosh was designed to function perfectly, saving billions of monetary units. You like your Macintosh better than me don't you Dave? **Dave can you hear me Dave....?**



'Think Different'

The editor tried extremely hard to obtain articles on the risks associated with millennium bugs, of several varieties, but he was rebuffed at every turn. No worries seemed to be the mood in the Knowledge Media Institute (KMi), while despite the concerns expressed by Government agencies, the CBI, and more recently the police and the world transport system, no social scientist would commit themselves, either way. National official reports from Action 2000, the Government Bug Agency revealed that most of industry had been assessed independently and allocated interim assessments. The majority of electricity, gas, telecommunications, oil fuels, coal, nuclear fuels, financial services payment clearing systems and cash distribution units, had achieved blue status and had not identified any risk of material disruption. Water services and credit and payment card providers had achieved amber status where 'some risk of disruption' was possible, while hospitals and health care, fire and rescue services, and the police and prison service were still in the severe risk category (Action 2,000



Report, May 12th 1999). Higher Education institutions were not in the assessments. Still what do you expect, eh, lower fees? Anyway I hope your course material gets through. I was not so reassured, however, when a government leaflet delivered to my home told me 'Don't Panic!' What with this, and a 16 pages booklet inserted in all Sunday papers - this bug has killed more trees than any other! Be fascinating to see if our Faculty gurus are right. Is this a sign of complacency? Of a false sense of security or a blind faith in the new technology? One of our senior academics and researchers wrote to say: 'I don't think there is any mileage in a Millennium bug article....as far as we are concerned this is an old issue'. So just in case you query, show surprise that such a topic is not discussed elsewhere in these pages, you now know that the experts in our Faculty think the bug is a dead issue. The New Year is a very intensive period for academics to 'enjoy' conferences with many of them acting globally, not locally. Me? This mole is going underground.....



Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through. Jonathan Swift, Irish satirist and poet



How nice to be able to report that the more you love the longer you live. The American Psychology Society Conference in June 1999 was told that life long romance improves your health. Preliminary findings of 9,000 adults aged 59-60, researched since they were at school in 1957, showed that those who argued more frequently or who are criticised by their spouse are twice as likely to suffer high blood pressure and high cholesterol, more prone to illness and disease, and were more likely to suffer serious illness and weaker immune systems. The study found out that married couples tend to look after each other better, but it also demonstrated that love kept you healthy. So the Beatles were right, 'all you need is love'. The higher the level of intimacy, the better the level of health. Is this why people enjoy summer schools so much?

I was born in January so I was not impressed with research reported at the American Psychology Conference that people born in January are twice as likely to be depressed and miserable in adult life as those who are born in December. So all those striving for a millennium baby should not have bothered. Previous research tended to link winter births to increasing vulnerability in adult life to schizophrenia and mental illness. Perhaps the data say more about prenatal care than winter births.



It was J.B. Priestley who when not preoccupied by time reflected that 'comedy, we may say, is society protecting itself - with a smile'. Research conducted by Howard Taylor, head of psychology at Chiltern University College, Buckinghamshire, in a study of the attitude of Air Training Corps cadets to their officers, reported at the 1999 British Psychological Society (BPS) that leadership was linked to humour, intelligence, and attractiveness. Humour is vital, according to Taylor, when leaders indulge in transformational leadership (creative, innovative) compared to transactional leadership (pragmatic, repetitious). A few jokes go a long way even in work environments with a strict hierarchical structure like military organisations. Air Cadets have their head in the clouds, Mr Taylor.

Research published in the *Journal of Neuroscience* in May by husband and wife research duo Ruben and Raquel Gur claimed that while women may have smaller brains than men but they use them more efficiently. Women were found to be more calculating. Men's brains are situated in heads more densely packed with less efficient white matter than 'grey'. In their joint research women performed better at verbal skills, including, wait for it, gossiping, and men proved better at spatial relation tasks, like, yes you've guessed, playing darts. The duo told *The Independent*, 'we ironed out any disputes at home before going to press', well that was Ruben's view. Was he in anyway related to the guy that invented that damned cube a decade ago. Raquel was silent on the subject.

On the 12th October 1999, the United Nations will confirm that the World's population will have doubled to 6 billion in the last 40 years. Other estimates suggest that this figure was reached at 1.24 a.m. on Monday, 19th July 1999. The billion mark was reached in 1804. By 2050 it is estimated to have doubled again to 12 billion. Terrestrial television has been celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Moon landing and pictures of the first earth rise. If we took that picture today that earth would have increased by 2 billion people, all the more reason that our social sciences embraces a global perspective; indeed, by 2050 we will need to go lunar.

Sources: Reith Lectures, BBC Radio 4, 1999; The Observer, 30th August 1998; The Independent, 7th January 1999; The Independent, 20th February 1999; The Observer, 25th April, 1999; The Independent, 25th March 1999; The Independent, 12th May 1999; The Independent, 18th May, 1999; World Gazetteer, 1999; The Independent, 5th June 1999; The Independent 7th June, 1999; The Independent 8th June, 1999. US Census Bureau, July 1999.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS, Kent

Dear Sir

'Do as I say but not as I do' appears to be the catch-phrase of the Open University. Firstly, the University is most definitely not 'open' and, secondly the Faculty of Social Sciences, which lays great stress on the importance of social relationships in every sphere of life, seems to forget that one of the most important relationships is that between teacher and the taught. Such sensitive relationships, if not nurtured, break down very easily yet, if nourished last a lifetime.

I refer, of course to the inevitable cry of 'foul' associated with exams and their results. If a confused student requires elaboration over an anomalous exam score - what did I do wrong and how did I do it? - this information is withheld and remains a closed secret.

Feedback for examination candidates is available at many other higher education establishments so why, in today's competitive world, is this service denied to Open University students? Are mature students not as deserving as younger citizens? The break down of the teacher/taught relationship could prove costly in the long run.

Why does the University want to hide our exam scripts anyway? I am left wondering if some of my script went missing, an administration error occurred or even that the marker had had a blazing row with their partner and just felt 'hacked' off. The by-products of that important social relationship between teacher and taught are trust and confidence. I have little left of either.

Yours faithfully

Catherine Nicholls

B.J. Palmer, Head of Student Services, Course Presentation and Examinations, offers this reply to Mrs Nicholls' concerns.

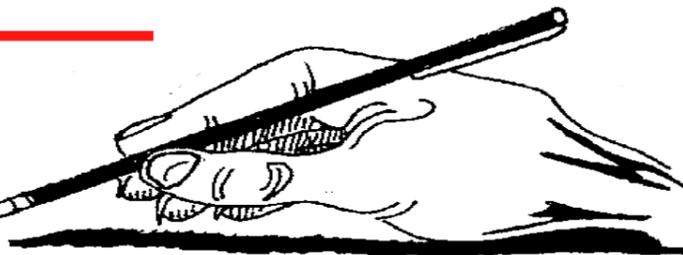
The letter from Ms Nicholls raises a number of issues, I will limit my response to the provision of feedback on examination performance.

Examination scripts are marked for assessment purposes only, i.e. to identify where marks have been awarded with comments designed to inform the Examination and Assessment Board. They are not marked, as TMAs are, for the provision of feedback. The quality assurance and control procedures applied to examination marking are such that some scripts are marked more than once - thereby generating multiple grades, comments etc - and, following established procedures for standardisation and mark adjustment and scaling, the final scores determined by the Board are often not recorded on the scripts. Given this it is not possible for scripts to be released - they are not in an appropriate state to be released and considerable work would be required for this to be possible.

The inappropriateness of returning scripts does not preclude the generation of feedback - in general what students want is information from the Board about their performance, what did they do well, what was less than adequate, strengths, weaknesses etc. (The script in any form would, at best, only provide this indirectly). The provision of personalised feedback on examination performance is an expanding service within the University and efficient cost-effective procedures and processes required to support this are now well established. Social Science can claim considerable credit here because DA301, Family and Community History, was a pioneer having been amongst the 'first wave' of three feedback courses in 1994. However since then only D213, from amongst other D courses, has joined the scheme which, across the University, has increased to 25 courses involving about 8000 students. There is capacity for other courses to join the scheme.

The addresses where communications may be sent to The Editor can be found on the back page.

Letters



Susan Davenport, Horsham

Dear Editor,

Thank you so much for the first issue of *Society Matters*. It is a huge improvement on early Faculty student newspaper efforts. It provides students with a vital link to the Faculty, and is crucial to humanising distant teaching learning. The more the student glimpses your world, and in the regions, the less isolated, the more understanding, and the greater determination to succeed the student will become. I wish it every success in the future. It makes the student feel not just a number, and less a 'client'. It treats us as human beings living in a real world rather than as a customer whose value is measured with the fee, and what I thought to be its crucial contribution it never patronised or dumbed down in its overall approach. The psychology articles were absolutely brilliant. If only other academic units adopted your 'open' approach.

Thank you Social Sciences

Torino, Italy

Dear Mr Skellington,

I would like to thank you and congratulate you on the quality of your newsletter *Society Matters*. I particularly appreciated the keen analysis of sports and I am looking forward to reading the piece on war. I also enjoyed very much the article on Stuart Hall's party. But most of all, I really loved that article by Richard Stevens 'Never Mind Skills'. I think that what he wrote embodies what I have always thought and perceived about university study. I have been studying with the OU for 5 years now. I consider this letter a very important step for me and I wish to apologise if you may find it too long.

I am writing to you from a hospital bed as I was diagnosed, back in November 1998, as having cancer. I was operated on and I will soon be receiving chemotherapy treatment. I am 33, I live with my wife and our 3 year old daughter near Turin. I am an English teacher. Through exposure with books that deal with recovery from cancer, positive imagery and so on, I am attempting to develop a mental capacity to back up and strengthen the medical treatment.

I feel the work I'll be doing with the OU in 1999, course D318, is just the right material for this period of my life. By focusing my attention and concentration on the extremely interesting books and material that constitute this course, I'm trying to create some powerful reasons for clinging onto life and to pull myself right out of the disease.

Ever since the beginning of my study with the OU I have seen a progressive narrowing of the division between what I was really interested in and the reasons why I was studying with the OU. The OU seemed to me at the beginning to be just the right solution to achieve a higher educational certificate and continue being involved in work and family commitments. But somehow my interests just didn't seem to match what the OU was offering, not exactly, that is. Slowly but gradually, during the years, I have seen new courses being born which, in the area of social sciences, were moving closer to my real interests, away from the purely economic, or political sociology and towards more anthropology-based study.

The idea that Professor Stevens speaks about, a course on *human existence* is perhaps the most fascinating idea I have ever heard coming from the OU. *Society Matters* helped me very much feel 'linked up' with the world of Social Sciences.

Bosio Guseppe

Dear Mr Skellington,

The statement that social scientists can't dance seems pretty unfair. Has Jessica Evans attended any other functions for other professions, clubs and associations recently? I think she would find that 'can't dance' could be applied to all of them not just social scientists. Dancing died with the introduction of the disco, new technology and the ever increasing need to increase profits. Dance floors were reduced to pocket handkerchief size to incorporate more tables, leaving us with enough room to gyrate on the spot in place of any real ability to express ourselves with more extended movements of the feet and legs.

Here comes a dangerous generalization. The general population can't dance because they never learn *how* to dance. I was a teenager in the 1950s. In that period nearly every small town had a dancing school where you could learn ballroom dancing, ballet or tap. Village and town halls held weekly Saturday dances which were venues for young people. In London there were the marvellous Palais de Danse at Hammersmith and the Aldwych which were designed like palaces, on similar lines to those other temples of culture, the cinemas.

It was therefore the in thing to be able to dance and dance well. However through the years I have seen dancing relegated to 'an anorak activity', being lampooned by many a media presenter and more recently in the film 'Strictly Ballroom'. Being able to dance now seems to be considered as a mark of inferior mental and social status. It most certainly wasn't considered so in the 1950s. From the hunt ball, the tennis club dance, the company dance, the works dance and the local village hop all classes and ages participated.

So how about it social scientists? How about a new OU course 'The social history of popular dancing'?

Pat Richardson (Mrs)

An Open University Course Manager
(name and address supplied)

Dear Editor,

Can I congratulate the little miracle that has transformed the Social Sciences newspaper into a good read. I have an explanation why social scientists make relatively inept dancers, well certainly most of the white males wearing tutor badges at summer school do. I think they spend far too much time either at work or travelling to work sitting on their backsides. My perception of the Open University is of an institution gradually suffocating through bureaucratization, with far too many staff spending far too much time in meetings, or sitting in front of PCs or iMacs. The encroachment of hot desking in the University can also lead to dehumanisation.

We are losing the capacity to socialise because of the increasing demands placed on us by our employers. E Mail infiltration, half of it the equivalent of junkmail, and much of it so discourteous that if you asked people to dance in the way you address each other across cyberspace, you would be ushered to Coventry. Many staff now only meet across cyberspace which forgets sometimes that we are all human beings with sensibilities. Gradually this can lead to loss of flexibility in limbs and control of bodily dancing postures, or worse, repetitive stress syndrome.

So the way we work affects all our lives in sophisticated ways. The sooner the University begins to cut back meeting schedules, reduce acronyms, and allows people room to think, socialise, move, and indulge in interpersonal activity on a greater scale the better. Then Social Scientists should become better dancers. Widening equal opportunity policies would also be a positive advance. It would benefit the University if more information could be shared, rather than retained as a power source.

How reassuring it is to see employees walking in the summer sunshine around the campus. Managers should encourage all staff to do this, perhaps stretching the lunch hour, especially for secretaries, to include time for eating lunch, and enjoying the fresh air, talking to each other, etc. The key to life is flexibility, at work, and in our leisure moments.

We could be in danger of becoming robots to the new technology. This may have a deteriorating impact on traditional forms of socialisation. Dancing is but a tip of a more disturbing iceberg. The University needs to re-emphasise its core activities and values. Continuous change may now be the way of life, but people do matter, even if they can't dance.



Dear Editor

I am writing to comment further on your article 'Sporting Blues' in *Society Matters*, Number 6. The article's basic premise, that sport is significant in terms of mass culture, and thus worthy of social science analysis, is a valid one, but Richard Skellington appears to have taken 'sport' to mean 'sport' played by men. In doing so, he has ignored one of the key points of sport in the context of today's societies - the differential sporting experiences of women and men. He writes of sport being used to sell newspapers, about the enormous amounts of money available through sponsorship, about the billions which tune into the Football World Cup, and quotes various male interpretations of (mens') football. By analysing in a gender-blind way, the author obscures the fact that many of his comments in no way describe the experience of sportswomen.

Playing sport for men is completely in keeping with stereotypical portrayals of masculinity. Sport is expected of boys, and those who choose not to take part are often punished socially. Young boys learn early that playing like a girl is something to be avoided at all costs. In many ways, sports are one of the least affected areas of anti-sexist campaigns. Fans jeering "she fell over" in mens football matches when opposition players are fouled, blow-up female dolls being passed around crowds, coaches giving players they perceive to have failed, tampons, and the high incidence of attacks on women by men who play team sports are clear examples. The idealised male physique is exaggerated by American Football uniforms, and now by shoulder pads in Rugby League. Men who beat women represent their countries and are national heroes. It is interesting to note that Mike Tyson attracted more horror and criticism when he bit another sportsman than when he was imprisoned for rape despite the fact his assaults on women appear to be ongoing.

Girls playing sport, in contrast, experience the inevitable 'tom-boy' description. There do seem to be variations between cultures about just how athletic a girl can be before it impinges on her femininity, but nonetheless a degree of incompatibility seems to occur in most cultures. Thus women competitors are subject to sex testing at athletic events, while no one presumes that sportsmen are anything but red-blooded males.

The differences intensify as girls and boys become women and men. Less time, resources, space and attention are given to girls sport, and more young women stop playing sport entirely when they finish education. The reality of successful careers for sportswomen and men are completely different. This is just the beginning to a discussion of the role of gender in sport or indeed of sport in gender. The topic is enormous, and crucial to any social sciences analysis of sport in society.

Sportswoman AND social scientist

Sandra Dickson

Editor replies: I agree entirely with your comments. While I did refer to gender you are correct to say that the article was male focused. I have total sympathy with the views expressed. Your comments on Tyson are well made.

Dear Mr Skellington

'Sporting Blues' is a thought-provoking piece, unfortunately ruined by a basic grammatical error which appeared not once but twice.

I refer, of course, to the use of 'it's' in place of the correct word 'its'. It is a great pity in my opinion to see such a basic mistake in a publication put together by an educational provider. I do hope the error was the printers, not the writer's!! Overall, *Society Matters* issue 6 is a good read but attention to small detail would improve it.

Yours sincerely
MRS CAROLINE POLLOCK

Editor writes: Can I apologise for all these errors. No doubt some more will creep through in this issue. I do check and double check and 'perfection' is the aim.....

Discipline futures

GEOGRAPHY CHALLENGES

John Allen, Senior Lecturer in Geography and head of discipline sees the future of geography as primarily responding to three challenges: to natural and social agendas; to global concerns and priorities, and to knowledge and knowing

*You want me to write about what?
'Geography in the next millennium!'
'In how many words?'
'Really, that's all?'*

So ran my conversation with the Editor. I have to admit that the prospect of writing what can only be described as, a short, pithy piece in response to such a monumental request, left me a little uneasy. As it turned out, I had no need to worry, for big questions often concentrate the mind wonderfully.

My task was perhaps made that much easier by the fact that the challenges Geography at the Open University face in the 21st Century are, in many ways, those which have already raised their heads in the final years of this century. At the risk of over-dramatisation, they are challenges that face us all in the world at large and because of that they have shaped our thinking around research and future courses. There are three that readily spring to mind.

Challenge of the Natural World

The first, quite simply, is the challenge posed by the natural world. Nature, out there so to speak, doesn't quite seem to be the creature we once thought it was. If the fusion of science and nature once offered a degree of certainty and reassurance about the state of the physical world, the environment at large, that certainty has now evaporated in the wake of environmental panics around acid rain, climatic change and global pollution. More worryingly for some, the very boundaries between nature and society have been radically called into question by the fall-out from the BSE crisis and the debate over the genetic modification of foods. Hardly surprising, perhaps, when there is talk about taking the gene that makes jelly fish glow and inserting it into a crop that is possibly the mainstay of your lunch. It all seems quite unnatural. But then again, what is 'natural'?

Questions like this, and others around the status of the natural environment more broadly, have long interested geographers. As an academic subject, in contrast to the rest of the social sciences, geography has always had a physical side. At certain moments, the relationship between the natural and the social, between the physical and human sides of the discipline, becomes pressing. As we enter the 21st century, this is one of those moments.

The challenge of the global

A second, equally pressing, challenge for geographers is the widely held recognition that we now live in a global world and all the baggage that entails. At one end of the spectrum, there is the vision of a 'shrinking world', where far-off places now seem familiar and connected. This is a world of spatial upheaval, with forced and unforced migrations swelling the world's already bursting cities, and a globe which has now almost all been reached by the products of the capitalist market. At the other end, there is the sheer 'localness' of it all. This is a world of mixing and spatial proximity, where the world appears on your doorstep, even if the ordinariness of it fails to surprise.

It is not necessary to swallow these visions whole to recognise that something 'global' is afoot in these millennium times. As with the question of 'nature', geographers have to probe and question this spatial talk: exploring the barriers that have been erected to the flow of people, images and information as well as the disrupted time-horizons, examining the

peculiar mix of particular places as much as the distant ties which bind the fortunes of people across the globe. Whether it is the Environment (U206) course (and its planned successor) or The Shape of The World (D215), or indeed the new Cities course (DD304), these are among our major preoccupations.

The challenge of knowledge and knowing

The third challenge thrown down by the nature of the times is a rather different one from the first two. It concerns knowledge and knowing, or rather who gets to know what and from where. One of the most provocative challenges for geographers today is to come to terms with the standpoint of knowledge. What we have come to know about the world and how we make sense of it is always from a certain location. We see things from here, from the vantage point of the UK or mainland Europe - not from there - from, say, Angola, Mexico or Malaysia.

That is not to say that everyone paints their own picture of the world. Rather the point is that 'what we know' about other places and



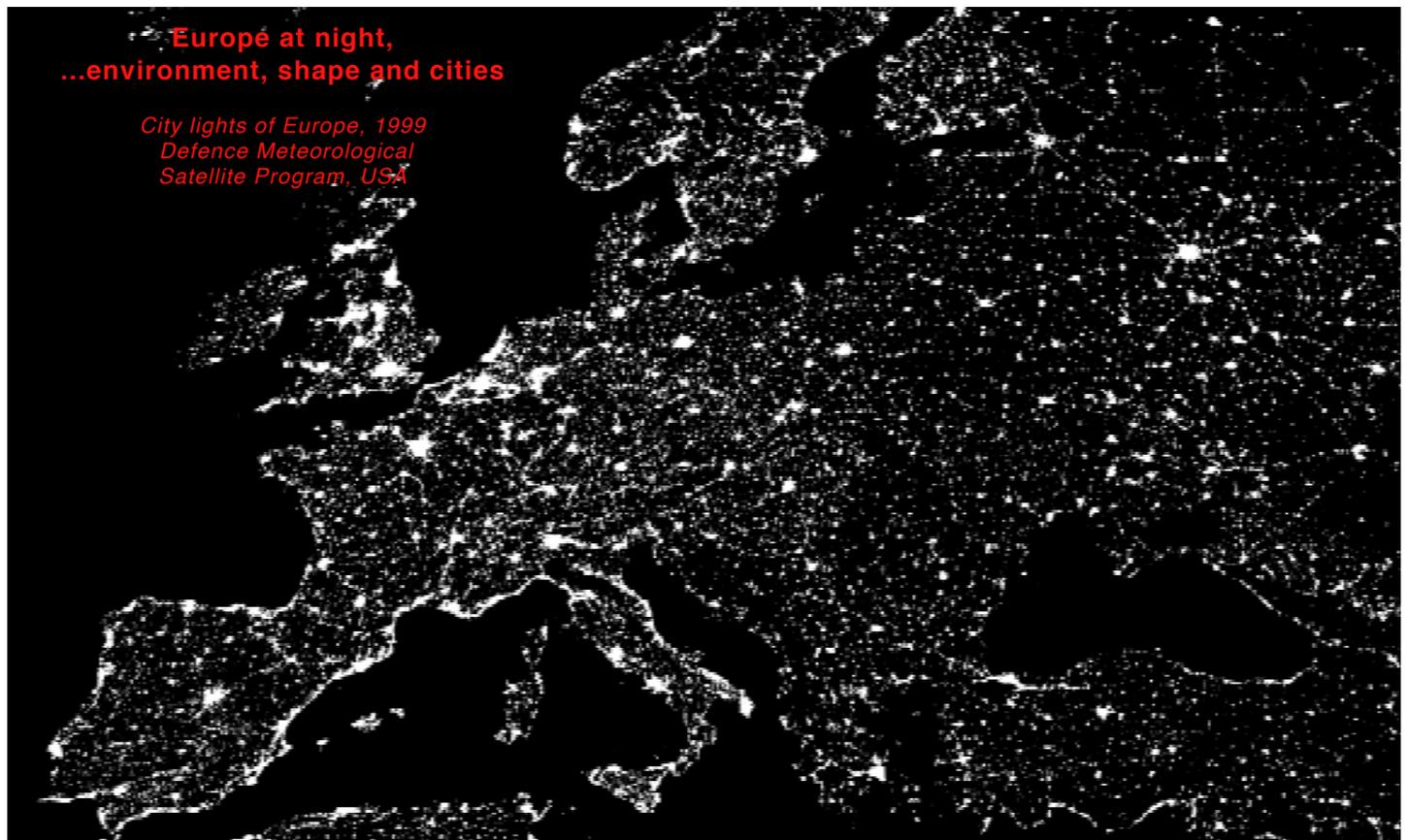
"...something 'global' is afoot in these millennium times"

cultures reflects our views of the world, how nature has shaped such places, what global influences have shaped their cultures and with what consequences.

More than one geographical imagination

Appreciating this simple fact about knowledge and knowing is to recognise that there is more than one geographical imagination out there; that people in one part of the world may imagine their past, present and future very differently from others. We have tried to build this understanding into our own thinking - in research as well as course development.

It is expressed in the recent publication, Human Geography Today (1999, Polity Press), a collective research project undertaken by members of the Geography discipline at the O.U. And if such an understanding is relevant to geography today, it is perhaps even more appropriate to geography at the beginning of a new century.



Understanding Economic Behaviour

Students who enjoyed the challenge of D216, the OU's introduction to economics, might well consider going for a diploma in economics by taking D319 Understanding Economic Behaviour. Run for the first time last year, the course attracted well over 300 students from all regions many of whom were particularly attracted by the opportunity of gaining a named qualification in a discipline that employers find attractive.

D319 is a course that has already attracted praise from a range of institutions for the quality of its teaching material and particularly the way in which complex economic ideas are put across in a user-friendly way. Three core texts on households, firms and markets interweave ideas from economic schools of thought ranging from neo-classical to the new-institutional with numerous examples of practical relevance. Apart from the TV programmes and a full range of study guides, specially designed Computer Aided Learning packages provide students with another way of getting to grips with the material on the course. The three text books are particularly popular both with our students and others in a number of departments that range from the School of African and Oriental Studies in

London to the Judge Institute of Management at Cambridge University.

A 3/4 day residential summer school provides students with an opportunity to talk economics with summer school tutors as well as with other students on the course. Unusually for any economics course in the UK, the school offers students the option of developing expertise in quantitative or qualitative research methods which they then go to use in the project which constitutes the final TMA of the course. Students undoubtedly enjoyed this event last year though we have made one or two slight modifications in response to a number of student and tutor suggestions. Not least of these will be the introduction of a social session based around a quiz night which

gives student teams a slightly more light-hearted view of the subject.

The course itself is divided into 6 blocks followed by a project and runs as follows:

Block 1 on markets and consumption focuses on the economic conception of individual behaviour and decision-making as a key stepping stone to understanding the way in which economic institutions, like competitive markets have evolved. Apart from helping students get to grips with some of the fundamental analytical tools the block uses a variety of real life case studies from cultural theory and development studies to help students develop their understanding of both mainstream and alternative approaches.

ECONOMICS WILL ADDRESS ITS FUTURE, ALONG WITH



Eugene McLaughlin explores Social Policy's future in the light of New Labour welfare reform

Discipline futures

SOCIAL POLICY: From the margins to the centre

When I first studied sociology, social policy was regarded not as a discipline but as a secondary field of study within the social sciences. Virtually any introductory sociology textbook of the time informed readers that economics, geography, politics, psychology and sociology were the foundational disciplines that defined and unified the social sciences. By contrast social policy was an 'applied' or 'specialist' area of study within which the 'hand-me-down' perspectives and methods of social science disciplines were 'put to work'. The image of social policy as essentially worthy but dull was not helped by the fact that it was bounded by something called 'social administration'. One look at the contents page of a social administration textbook and the fact that the 'soc admin' books on the library shelves had a significant coating of dust was enough to persuade most students to leave well alone! However, during the past decade this perception of social policy has changed dramatically, primarily because of:

- radical changes within the various social sciences, particularly the blurring of previously sharp disciplinary boundaries;
- the challenge posed by 'race', gender, disability and sexuality which indicated that the existing approaches could no longer provide a meaningful account of how social divisions channelled the impact of social policies;
- social policy and social welfare issues coming to dominate the political agenda;
- those working in social policy established the intellectual space to undertake theoretical analysis as well as the usual tasks of empirical research and policy evaluation.

As a consequence of the attempt to make sense of the changing nature of the welfare state in the UK, the exhaustion of the old orthodoxy, and a major shift in emphasis, an intellectual revolution of sorts has happened. *Social policy has been reconstructed as a social science discipline of considerable diversity and vitality within which the impact of processes of social differentiation upon the constitution and shaping of social welfare can be addressed.* Leading edge theoretical ideas, new methodologies and headline grabbing research findings are just as likely to emanate from social policy as from the other social sciences. It also has its own specialist academic journals, conferences and a professional association.

The move from the margins to the centre is assured by the fact that what social policy analysts have to

say is immediately relevant within broader public debates. Although there are many differences within and between various social policy perspectives and a range of substantive concerns, one of the pressing tasks facing all of us is to examine whether New Labour's 'Third Way' signals a shift towards the establishment of a new welfare settlement in the UK.

Is there a 'Third Way' in Social Policy?

From 1979 until the 1997 General Election, the ideas streaming out of the think tanks of the New Right dominated official social policy debates in the UK. During the 1980s, it became clear that virtually every assumption about the 'relations of welfare' embedded in the post-war welfare settlement was under-going fundamental re-ordering. The fierce debates triggered by the New Right's proposed free market solutions to social problems, such as poverty, unemployment, crime, homelessness etc. revitalised critical discussion within social policy. Commentators of every political persuasion are still engaged in the complex task of taking stock of the contradictory consequences of the social policies of successive Conservative administrations.

An equally important responsibility is getting to grips with New Labour's self-proclaimed attempt to define a new 'Third Way' that supersedes both the free market approach of the New Right and the statist proposals associated with Old Labour. Since the 1997 election, the government has launched a series of high-profile 'Third Way' initiatives - Welfare to Work, the 'New Deal' and the Social Exclusion Unit - which are intended to modernise and remodel the provision and delivery of social welfare and reframe the contours of social policy. Welfare reform has been prioritised by New Labour not only because of the amount of money involved but also because the very rationale of the social democratic state is at stake. This has opened up a new set of heated debates around the question what type of welfare settlement is being 'imagined' by New Labour?

Those supportive of a 'Third Way' on social welfare argue that the rights and entitlements co-ordinated through the welfare state have not been particularly successful in combating disadvantage or promoting social inclusion. In this reading, New Labour's reforms will move us from a 'welfare state' - rooted in an irrelevant past - to a 'social investment state' which can accommodate the realities of changing family patterns, demographic shifts, cultural diversity and radically transformed labour markets. As far as critics are concerned, talk of a 'Third Way' prevents radical thinking about the role of the state in welfare provision. They insist that irrespective of reassurances to the contrary, slowly but surely New Labour's reforms are moving the UK to a US style 'workfare' state which will take an increasingly tough line on those who are dependent on state benefits.

From this reading New Labour's 'Third Way' is

'In addressing these important questions the discipline of social policy at the Open University and elsewhere will undoubtedly undergo further rethinking and reconstruction'

ON what basis are the reforms being challenged and contested ?

ARE important alternative welfare imaginings being marginalised ?

IS the UK experience part of a global trend or does it represent a very specific Anglo-Saxon model of welfare ?

HOW are the reforms changing the relationship between state, welfare and citizens ?

HOW are institutional and professional practices being transformed ?

HOW is the 'Third Way' playing out across the different sites of welfare ?

WHAT are the implications of the multipleways New Labour is representing itself on social policy issues ?

HOW are the reforms reworking the 'lived experiences' of welfare ?

WHAT are the continuities and changes between New Labour and the New Right ?

WHY is a heavily moralised set of rhetorics being deployed to legitimise the reforms ?

WHAT are the normative principles underpinning New Labour's policies ?

Checklist' of questions

nothing more than a repackaging or fine-tuning of Thatcherite policies. At the Open University we have decided that understanding the long-term trajectory of New Labour's policies will require

more than easy acceptance or easy rejection. In deciding which analysis is more plausible we will be paying close attention to the above 'checklist of questions'.

Block 2 develops some of these ideas by looking at the way in which households allocate their resources. The economics of bargaining is used to help understand why women and men divide tasks in the household up in certain ways: parental care for children is used to question and expand the assumptions about human behaviour that economists make.

Block 3 extends discussion of decision-making into the arena of the firms and picks up where D216 left off by examining in an accessible way some of the novel insights into economic behaviour being produced by the increasingly popular application of game theory to micro-economics.

Block 4 turns to the relations between firms and the labour markets in which they operate. Two themes are dealt with. First how should we interpret unemployment, what are its causes and how do wage rates relate to employment levels? Second, the block examine how firms get workers to be productive - to what extent is trust important compared with the 'high powered' incentives dealt with in neo-classical economics.

Block 5 looks at innovation as a driver of economic progress. It examines a range of issues including the different theoretical underpinnings for policies designed to promote the utilisation of science research and the adoption of new technologies. The block also includes a contribution from

Professor John Kay, one of the world's leading business economists, in which he takes issue with claims that governments should sometimes try to pick winners and also the idea that there is no such thing as competitive advantage.

Block 6 helps bring the course together by looking at the interdependence of markets, and economic behaviour, and in doing so it reflects both theoretical and practical insights. If we allow markets to interact, then the conditions under which equilibrium prevails are rather narrow and unlikely to hold. On the other hand, it is often the failures of assumptions in neo-classical economics that help explain why certain institutions do or do not exist.

This is an exciting and challenging course which will appeal to those who enjoy an analytical approach to social science yet with a minimum of mathematics. It provides accessible strands of contemporary economic thought and is based on material that is already being adopted outside the OU.



Paul Anand

Regional matters

The Devolution Debate: implications for the OU in Wales

Hugh Mackay, Social Science Staff Tutor, of the OU in Wales explores the significance of 'devolution' for the OU in Wales in the light of recent changes

Wales and devolution are realities, in that one has existed - in a contested and tortuous way - for many centuries; and the Assembly is now elected and sitting. So in Wales we are living in exciting times. But what do 'Wales' and 'devolution' mean for the OU today? Whether one is an optimist or sceptic regarding Blair's 'extension of democracy', there are some profound consequences of the constitutional changes for the OU.

Until recently, things at the Open University in Wales did not look good: our Regional Director resigned last year; we'd been without a Deputy Regional Director for about a decade; and we had no Regional Secretary for a couple of years; much of our tutors' administration was transferred to the West Midlands Regional Centre about three years ago; we are the only Region with no Senior Counsellor; quite a few staff tutors have recently retired or are about to; and our share of the OU student population (just over 3% - when the population of Wales is almost 5% of the UK population) is small and declining.

Today, however, there is a pervasive feeling of optimism. We have a new Regional Director, Miriam Griffiths and a new Deputy Regional Director/Regional Secretary, Angela Jones-Evans. Their enthusiasm has already made a huge difference to our effectiveness. And next year the Tutors Office will be returned from Birmingham. Although only one post, this move has taken on something of the significance of the return to Scotland of the Stone of Scone!

The reason for these changes and for the mood of optimism, however, is the political context. But while devolution offers the Open University considerable opportunities, it also represents serious danger.

Recent changes at the OU in Wales began before devolution, with the Welsh Language Act 1993. The language is central to Welsh national identity which has a complex and difficult history. The political significance of the language is unlikely to decline: according to the 1991 census, 19% of the population of Wales can read, write or speak Welsh; and in recent years there has been a phenomenal growth in Welsh medium schooling and in the use of the Welsh language - particularly in the public sector but also in banks, supermarkets and elsewhere.

Bilingualism and equality

The OU has been given notice under the Act to draw up a draft Welsh language scheme, which has to be approved by the Language Board. The Act is rooted in the principle that 'in the conduct of public business and administration of justice in Wales, the English and Welsh languages should be treated on a basis of equality'. The rationale is that anyone wishing to communicate in Welsh should not face unreasonable barriers, and should not feel the need to resort to English when dealing with a public organisation. For us, this is a matter of equal opportunity which we'd want to pursue; but it's also a legal requirement. Unfortunately, this is something which is quite hard for the OU to deal with. The University has a statutory responsibility - which will cost money - but we are only a very small part of the OU.

OU needs to be devolved too, perhaps

In this and other ways, other Higher Education (HE) institutions seem a more central part of Welsh HE. And this is built in to the funding arrangements. At present OU students in Wales are funded by the English Higher Education Funding Council - because, although a UK (and world-wide) University, the OU is based in Milton Keynes. That has not really mattered until now but, with devolution, the Welsh Assembly now controls higher education in Wales. Although the OU operates in Wales, and has a Regional Centre in Cardiff, it is not, in a formal (funding) sense, a part of Welsh HE. When you read any official statistics about higher education in Wales, for example, the OU is commonly omitted. If you look at the Welsh Development Agency's web site or publications you can find full details of all HE providers, courses and research expertise in Wales... but no mention of the OU. Yet we have about 4,750 students in Wales, and all of them are Welsh. The whole of the University of Wales has only 68,000, and only half of these are domiciled in Wales. So we are a major player, if commonly forgotten!

OU excluded from Welsh HE planning

Being excluded from the data is one thing, but this reflects something more important: the exclusion of the OU from planning HE in Wales. The Welsh Funding Council (HEFCW) has always had its own priorities, but with the Assembly, the distinctiveness of its policies is likely to increase. These priorities are formulated in consultation with the HE bodies which it funds - and that doesn't include the OU. This is something which the OU needs to change if it is to be a part of the new Wales which is fast emerging. The Higher Education Funding Council Wales (HEFCW) and other parties are signalling strongly that the OU should be playing a more significant role in the HE landscape in Wales.

Need for Market leader to be a vibrant force

Other HE institutions in Wales readily acknowledge that the OU is the market leader - globally as well as in the UK - for distance education. If the OU is to be a vibrant force in Wales it has to play the role of the lead institution and co-ordinator for distance learning in Wales. This is a challenge which we have to take up, or funds for such work will go to other HE providers in Wales, and Wales and the OU will be poorer as a result.

OU centralism is running against the grain of broader political change

For the University, this poses a problem: whilst espousing subsidiarity and supporting devolution, the OU (like the Labour Party) has remained a deeply centralised institution. For the OU, devolution is much bigger problem than the 'infernal Welsh question' to which Lord Reith referred. The OU's centralism is now running against the grain of broader political changes. What has to be devolved to Wales (and Scotland and Northern Ireland) is more than the usual Regional Centre functions which support enquirers, students and tutors. What is needed is much more than a senior official at Walton Hall who will appear before, discuss with, or respond to the Assembly and the Welsh Higher Education Funding Council, negotiating a few minor projects in Wales in addition to our core, English, funding. Rather, the OU needs a whole planning process and organisation which is oriented around this changing pattern of governance, around the reality of a new set of political institutions in the UK. Nor is this simply a matter confined to the Celtic fringe: although at present we have devolution only for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, there are plans for regional government in England, as well as the ongoing project of Europe. These beg a whole new way of conceptualising core and periphery, centre and region.

These need to be explored, because in the longer run are more far-reaching possibilities: will the Welsh Assembly want to fund courses which it sees as less tailored to the specific needs of Wales than courses which could be provided by Welsh institutions? And how happy will it be sending lorry loads of money over the Severn Bridge to fund jobs in Milton Keynes? But what does 'Wales' mean? And where is it anyway?

Stereotypes and myths restrict progressive change

Perceptions of coal mines, slag heaps and smoking chimneys predominated, with Richard Llewellyn's *How Green Was My Valley* remaining 'the single most compelling image of Wales'. More than 80% of potential inward investors thought that Wales was a hundred miles further from London than it is. 35% would not consider Wales as an investment location because they thought they would not be made welcome. Over 20% thought the Welsh language a barrier to investment in Wales (where else is multilingualism seen as detrimental?! [1]).

One can't help but wonder whether there's any relationship between these prevailing myths and how the challenges thrown up by devolution are being approached by some institutions which are based in SE England. However, it may be that the OU has more than organisational structures to deal with as it moves into this new terrain, and re-evaluates its own over centralist view of the new Wales.

(1) John Smith (1998) *The Welsh Image The Gregynog Papers Vol. 1 No. 4*. Institute of Welsh Affairs, Cardiff.

The Changing Geography of the Open University in Ireland

When I was asked to write a short article on "What's new for the millennium in Northern Ireland?" I realised just how hard old habits die. In fairness to our Editor, this was only the latest in a long collection of queries and comments which used the term "Northern Ireland" to describe "Region 12" in the O.U. The point is that for some time, certainly since 1992, "Region 12" has covered the whole of Ireland and not just the area which has been part of the U.K.

More recently, the University actually recognised what really happens by officially changing the title of Region 12 to "The Open University in Ireland". It is, remarkably, not a simple matter to change the name of an OU Region, even when it means matching the label to the reality. It is even harder to get the change into the nooks and crannies of OU administration or indeed, people's minds! But it leads me to wonder: although we have the labels correct in relation to Scotland and Wales, how will the OU cope with the results of the Year of Devolution? Over to Bram and Hugh on that one! But going back to my "changing geography" theme, the year of European integration (1992 and all that) meant that from being a geographically small region with correspondingly small student numbers, Region 12 has become a geographically large region with numbers that increased dramatically in the first instance and to the point where there are now more OU students in the Republic of Ireland than there are in Northern Ireland.

When I say "large" I mean a geographical area similar to Scotland - and we have a map to prove it! There are some other similarities with Scotland. For example, two major centres of population with corresponding concentrations of OU students - and a large hinterland with students widely scattered. Most of our post level 1 tutorial provision takes place in the two major centres. For the rest of our students, they face long journeys or else are real 'distance learners'. There are a few 'clusters' of students where tutorials can be located but only a few courses where this can happen. Unless the OU can overcome notions of being remote it will not become a more major player in the Higher Education scene. It will not be perceived as a real 'choice' by more than just a few people who happen to know that as an option it can work for them.

Unlike Wales and Scotland where it has been part of standard provision for some time, the introduction of telephone conferencing for tuition is definitely a new idea amongst students (and AL's) in Ireland. It is how we are able to provide learning support with at least the voice if not the face of a tutor and, importantly, it happens for people in their own place. This way of linking budgets and tutors changes the way we use our student and the way we think about distances and locations: it changes our geography. But it also changes how AL staff visualise tuition: not necessarily as 'face-to-face' but still, person-to-person. The 'there and now' rather than the 'here and now'. That requires skills which AL staff are having to develop as we move on from the 1990s; and it is acknowledged that telephone conferencing requires considerable preparation and also, advance thinking and planning.

It is, however, important that we consider what those in traditional Centres regard as 'remoteness'. On the new Masters programme students are very unlikely to have a tutor on a post-D820 module who is easy to meet. For those new to the OU - and we presumably need many more of them - who may never see a tutor after D820 - we need to avoid reinforcing the feelings about the OU being both distant and remote - or even, in these devolution times, "abroad".

Devolution has, of course, re-vamped the notion of 'the external environment' because it carries with it the likelihood of new funding arrangements for Higher Education. This will be difficult enough in Wales and Scotland but gives us here in 'Region 12' something even more complicated to ponder. As well as a new Assembly we were to have 'Cross-Border' Institutions. Perhaps one should hesitate to suggest, even facetiously, that the OU already is one? but we do operate under a spirit of equal opportunities across the island.

It would not be a problem within a wider context of Europe (which was what the 1992 business was about, in case you wondered!) but 'funding and fees' has not caught up yet with that grand conception. HEFCE, the OU's major funding mechanism, is no longer to permit its funding to be used to support students in the European Union and it is this which affects students in the Republic of Ireland, despite their geographical proximity to Northern Ireland in many cases. Membership of the EU enabled them to become OU students but now also fosters their exclusion by the prospect of a huge increase in the fees that they will have to pay to the OU. So all the numerical gains that we worked hard to make are threatened, possibly even wiped-out. Clearly this is a key issue for Region 12 in the so-called next millennium. We know that there are real and potential students in the Republic of Ireland - but probably not at the price they might well be asked to pay - just as the numbers of people who know about the OU are increasing as is demand for Higher Education. In all this there seems to be opportunity, if we can find it and if our systems will enable us to pursue it. Perhaps our wish for the millennium should be for greater flexibility with which to respond to changing circumstances. Our Faculty seems to have less room for manoeuvre than, say, the School of Health and Social Welfare but to the "outside" - or is it the "real" - world. The two areas seem closely related but not always able to work together. Although other British universities operate franchise-type arrangements in Ireland, they do not seem to attract the same sort of critical review as the OU does at times, so we must consider how the OU appears to people in areas outside the Southeast of England. We are within Europe, we are apart from Britain, we are partly part of the UK, all at once. We are not yet part of the dawn of devolution and we don't know what will happen post-HEFCE funding. But on the other hand - we like it here!

As I was finishing this piece I began to wonder - am I right or am I reflecting a situation which actually has moved on? Then into, my post box arrives a copy of "Why Study Social Sciences?" The back cover lists Regional Centres, from London to the North, and also includes the Resource Centres in Region 09. Jolly good. Then we have the "nation regions" of Wales and Scotland. Fine. And then? Northern Ireland. Not only is this incorrect but there isn't even the mollifying addition of the Enquiry and Advice Centre in Dublin. So off we go, on Course Choice and Open Nights in the Republic of Ireland, armed with a brochure telling everyone that the OU is in Northern Ireland. That's one 'arm'. The other one is tied behind our backs.

Dr Pat Jess
A Social Science Staff Tutor in Region 12

The Open University in Ireland
40 University Road
BELFAST
BT7 1SU

E-mail: R12@open.ac.uk
Tel: 028 90245025
Fax: 028 90230565

Regional matters

“Whaur’s yer Wullie Shakespeare noo?”

On Snouts in Troughs, the Paying of Pipers, and William McGonagall

Bram Gieben, Staff Tutor in Social Sciences in Scotland, explores devolution and the Open University from somewhere near the West Lothian position

What does the new Scottish Parliament mean for the Open University in Scotland? Difficult to say. There are a lot of variables in what may (or may not) be a significantly different political and educational landscape. There can be no doubt that for decades Scottish political culture has been distinctly to the left of that in Britain as a whole. In the recent elections, genuinely Socialist parties in greater Glasgow received more votes than either the Liberal Democrats or the Conservatives. Labour is much the largest party in the new Parliament, and has negotiated a ruling coalition with the Lib Dems, while the SNP is now to the left of New Labour. The popular mandate is there for a social democratic programme involving a significant attack on poverty, and substantial investment in public services, including of course education. But this would require either a huge increase in block grant from London or much greater tax-raising powers. The fact that the Parliament will get neither is bound to lead to some frustration and disillusionment, and that in turn will have further consequences.

The Scottish Parliament may not have much financial room for manoeuvre, but it does have full formal powers over education in Scotland, and it will be surprising indeed if the MSP’s do not seek to exercise that power vigorously. They are keen on education in general, and interested in University education in particular.

OU should be more pro-active

In the reinvigorated debate about what Scotland wants from its education system, the OU needs to make its voice heard, and it needs to get its feet under the table in all the organisations and committees where policy and funding priorities are negotiated. Despite being the biggest single provider of part-time University education in Scotland, the OU has until now been somewhat marginal to these bodies. This is partly because of the way in which the Regional Office has been funded: namely, from the English Higher Education Council, via Walton Hall. This was the logic behind the recent successful bid to transfer funding for the OU in Scotland from HEFC to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC). The move is being overseen by a new Scottish Regional Director, Peter Syme, who was himself a senior civil servant in one of the English quality of service as other OU students in England, Wales and Ireland. The MSP’s will be even more interested to learn that the OU makes virtually no courses with [the] special interests and needs of Scottish students in mind.

A new ballgame?

But what if the Parliament specifies a new set of requirements of the University sector, and asks for tenders to provide it? On the principle that he who pays the piper calls the tune, might the Parliament not say that if the OU cannot swiftly put on courses tailored to Scotland’s educational, commercial and cultural priorities, thus meeting the immediate needs of Scottish students, it knows plenty of other Scottish universities who can?

On current OU assumptions and institutional arrangements, Walton Hall cannot make courses quickly, and Regional Offices cannot make courses at all. They are not equipped for it. All the most interesting initiatives in R11 recently have been undertaken by individuals, more or less outside the OUs support structures.

A course in Modern Scottish Society?

Very recently Gerry Mooney, Scottish Staff Tutor in Social Sciences, has proposed a 60 point third level course on Modern Scottish Society. The course is timely, and the idea has attracted a lot of interest. But at once a set of difficult questions arises. Would the course attract sufficient numbers to be worth making? Who would fund the project? If it were to be another collaborative venture, how would we avoid the problems noted with the History course? And if the course team were to bid for Faculty funding, what priority would the proposal be given in competition with courses of more universal appeal put forward by the major disciplines? The practical difficulties of getting a course out from a region underline just how much the OU system is presently geared to centralised Fordist production and not devolved flexible specialisation!



There are things the OU in Scotland can do. It can target MSP’s with propaganda about our reputation for excellence and our economies of scale. It can urge its bemused Staff Tutors and Senior Counsellors to network at every opportunity. It can compete for additional Scottish funding for its existing activities, and perhaps for new projects. We have already got a substantial grant out of SHEFC for access, which we have put straight into our regional FAF fund. But the truth is, the regional office has neither the money, the range of staff, nor the infrastructure to respond in any major way to the opportunities which may be thrown up in the new Scotland. In particular, and unlike other Scottish institutions, it cannot undertake to provide new courses in response to the Parliament’s specifically Scottish priorities. Moreover, it is not clear whether Walton Hall would want to do so, or whether, if it did, it could move fast enough to keep up with the local competition.

An Open University of Scotland?

VC Sir John Daniel has written that as the regional structure of Britain changes, the OU’s structure may need to change also. PVC Allan Cochrane has remarked that if the OU in Scotland is to be funded differently it may need to be operated differently. But no one I’ve met knows what this might mean. Ironically, there are striking parallels between the situation of the government in the new Parliament, and our Regional Office. There is talk about a breakthrough to a new form of politics, which could encourage, amongst other things, an individualised Open University of Scotland. In both cases, to operate in a genuinely new way will require unprecedented institutional flexibility, along with creativity, leadership, and resources. But the reality for both Donald Dewar and Peter Syme is that the purse-strings and the real power to decide outcomes are still held firmly in the south of England. [My guess is that] the likely beneficiaries of this contradiction in the long term

are organisations which are genuinely Scottish, and not merely the Scottish arms of British bodies: that is to say, the solely Scottish Universities and the SNP. Time for McGonagall. (1)

(1). It is reported that there was great excitement in Dundee at the first public performance of a new poem by William McGonagall. On reading the last line, the poet was greeted by thunderous applause, and a great shout from the hall:

“Whaur’s yer Wullie Shakespeare noo?”

ousa

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SOCIAL SCIENCES



War and the Social Sciences

War analysis has remained largely unexplored by historians, but its relevance to global issues is not included in social sciences OU courses. Why might this be? Richard Skellington takes a layman's view of the context while Professor of History, Arthur Marwick gives an expert's explanation.



Kosova: Emergency food rations are handed out at the border near Kukes. *Observer Magazine*, 2 May 1999

War is business, profit, money, a failure of diplomacy by other means, propaganda, waste, rape, horror, torture, hypocrisy, misery, hell on earth, heroic, glorious. With the exception of the Polar Regions most land on earth has proved a source of conflict in history, has been fought over, conflicts fed by religious dogmas and tyrannical quests for power. Nations will fight to remove this polar oversight in the next millennium.

We enter the third millennium repeating mistakes since the dawn of humanity. There is nothing civil about civil war. Ethnic groups have always been cleansing other ethnic groups. The Bible is full of ethnic cleansing. And yet the Church of today fails to provide a moral commentary on the actions of our nation at war. What distinguishes the twentieth century is the impact of the media to provide the comment, with the greater use of propaganda in sophisticated form taking centre stage. Is there anything less tolerable than the spin of players on the war stage?

War means massive profits for media moguls. War sells newspapers. The century began with the first genuine newspaper war (1914-1918), and ended with a Balkan conflict represented on the Internet. The wars of our century began and ended in the Balkans. Observing the Serb web site during the Kosovan Conflict demonstrates the great importance of history, echoed through art and other forms of representation - the site is choked with paintings of War, all the way back to the fourteenth century.

television series concluded was a clash of ideologies in which the losers were Marxist-Leninists. Millions died during this cold spell: civilians and armed combatants lost in wars fought under the umbrella of super powers trying to effect a nuclear free war scenario. Many of the wars of the Cold War era might have happened anyway, but nuclear annihilation was temporarily avoided. In all wars, the real losers are the civilians, not the exponents or the ideologies.

War is solidly represented in all cultures and societies. War generates great literature, and art: Greek tragedies, the plays of Shakespeare, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, the poetry of the Great War, the novels of Hemingway; great films from *All Quiet on the Western Front*, through *Le Grand Illusion*, *Paths of Glory*, *The Deer Hunter*, *Apocalypse Now*, and most recently *The Thin Red Line* and *Saving Private Ryan*, have exposed the cost of war, while *Star Wars* still pulls in the buck by the billion, and *Wag the Dog* curiously got a lot right before the event. Great music too: war requiems by the score. Perhaps the finest painting of the twentieth century concerns the inhumanity of war, and is reproduced partly in our page banner (Picasso's *Guernica*).

War generates its own language and reuses language in disturbing ways. It is tragically ironic that NATO during the latest Kosovan War called in *Apache Helicopters*, a killing machine named after a nation which itself was ethnically cleansed by one of principal Balkan participants, the USA,

'War is too serious a business to be left to computers'

Art Buchwald

When not at war foreign policy is closely linked to the sales of arms: market forces take priority over humanitarian commitments. The warmongers just might have the edge over the United Nations. War is good for western wealth creation. And this goes for afterwar scenarios, as monopoly capitalism fights to reconstruct the land its exports have ruined. In May 1999 the bidders were already slicing up the Balkan reconstruction gold mine.

War produces psychoses and shatters lives and families. It brings shell shock and Gulf War syndrome. It produces factors, as in Falklands, and perhaps the Balkans. It always generates refugees, uproots civilians seeking safe havens. War pollutes and causes widespread environmental damage. The Gulf War and the Balkan conflict of the 1990s generated substantial ecological damage, especially in the form of chemical pollution (dioxins) and radiation.

War does all these things, but in social science war remains remote and unproblematised. It's flames flicker backstage as academics debate on the mainstage of fame, reputation, competing egos and 'isms, while descendants of the Founding fathers, grind out another spurt of obfuscation. Meanwhile the global economy remains relatively dumbed down by powers of explanation. That is one cynic's view.

'What sells a newspaper? The first answer is war. War creates not only a supply of news, but a demand for it'

Lord Northcliffe, *Press Baron*, 1914

It is only recently that Social Science has begun to represent the significance of war for society in its curriculum. Yes, there have been key contributions historically in the social sciences, most notably by Freud in *Civilisation and its Discontents*.

The Open University ran *War and Society*, a key course, for many years. It was a course which owed much to the efforts of Professor Arthur Marwick, the Open University's Professor of History. It was followed by *War, Peace and Social Change: Europe c. 1900- c. 1955*. These courses were among the most popular third level courses in Open University history, and were characterised by high student retention rates. The student interest is there. Why is it that history and the arts attempt to understand war and conflict while much of Social Science still beats about the bush?

More understanding of war and conflict is apparent in the globalization sections of the Faculty of Social Science new foundation course, *DD100 An Introduction to the Social Sciences: Understanding Social Change*. There have also been developments in the past two years towards the eventual possibility of a full credit undergraduate course in human rights and responsibilities which would feature children's rights, especially in conflict arenas: such a course would also look at international law, justice, rights, and responsibilities. War analysis and understanding in social sciences should increase.

FACT: America lost more soldiers killed in The Civil War of the nineteenth century than in the Great World Wars of this century and Vietnam put together.

FACT: The Great Patriotic War of 1941-45 between Germany and Russia cost a total of over 50 million lives.

FACT: In Vietnam, 55,000 American soldiers were killed in combat; after the war 100,000 Vietnam veterans committed suicide.



The Germans committed atrocities in Belgium in 1914 but their extent was exaggerated in the UK to feed home-front hatred. Phillip Knightly, *The Independent*, 27 June 1999.

War brings genocide, smart bombs, lions led by donkeys, it brings out the worst and best in the human psyche. Who did remember the Armenians? There are hot wars, cold wars, star wars, wars without names. There have been two Great Wars this century, struggles between liberal democracy, communism and fascism. We have endured the Cold War, which the recent impressive terrestrial

an irony lost of most people. During the 1990s the language of war includes degrading, body bags, smart bombs, a tolerance of faulty intelligence, collateral damage, decommissioning, and syndromes. Indeed it has become fashionable not to have wars, or declare wars. Hence we suffer the Bosnian conflict, the Kosovo conflict. Truth is the first casualty of 'war'.

Was this the Peoples' Century or the Century of War? If we learn from history, why do we repeat its mistakes? Why is war, a significant characteristic of the history all of civilisations, but is relatively invisible in Faculty of Social Science curricula (any conflict with 1,000 battlefield deaths a year is generally defined as a war, *New Internationalist*, April 1999). Other institutions have embraced Peace and Conflict studies far more broadly than the Faculty.

Consider some of these 'social facts'. It has been estimated that in recorded history since 3600BC over 14,500 major wars have killed close to four billion people - two thirds of the World's current population (*New Internationalist*, April 1999). In armed conflicts since 1945, 90 per cent of casualties have been civilians compared to 50% in the Second World War and 10% in the First (Rupesinghe K., and Anderlini Sanam, *Civil Wars, Civil Peace*, Pluto Press, 1998). The planning and execution of war is still controlled by men, while women and children are the main victims.

'Who now remembers the Armenians?'
Hitler, January, 1939

The world on average spends over 3 per cent of GDP on defence - but some countries spend much more. Cambodia, for example, spends around 50 per cent of its national budget on defence. It is estimated that since the Cold War ended in 1989, around 85 countries have undergone some kind of disarmament, but 69 nations have been increasing their stock of weapons during the 1990s through purchases from richer nations (Cairns Edmund, *A Safer Future*, Oxfam, 1997). Amnesty International have estimated that torture occurs in over 100 countries, while over 40 nation-states employ torture as part of their control regime. Only a third of civil wars since 1800 have ended through negotiations. Since 1945, 25 per cent of conflicts have been resolved by negotiations. Since the early 1980s compromise settlements are becoming more prevalent, such as in Liberia, El Salvador and Guatemala (Rupesinghe K., and Anderlini Sanam, *Civil Wars, Civil Peace*, Pluto Press, 1998).

The USA is the World's biggest arms exporter supplying 40 per cent of the developing world arms in 1999. Britain is the second largest with a 25 per cent share of the legal global market, with Russia supplying 10 per cent. Britain is home to the four largest mercenary supplying companies in the World (*Understanding Global Issues*, No. 4, 1998).

In the First World War it took 1,470 shells to kill one soldier whilst the bayonet was used in under one percent of killings

MATTERS

Geurnica by Picasso

War and Society

by Professor Arthur Marwick, Faculty of Arts

From the very beginning, 'War and Society' has been a special interest of the Open University History Department. A course with that title, was the very first third-level course to be mounted in the university in 1973. It was highly popular with students, though rather absurd in the immense range of periods and topics which it attempted to cover. One distinctive feature was that it included both film and the arts (music, painting, literature). A much more sharply focused course, concentrating on the twentieth century, *War, Peace and Social Change: Europe c. 1900-c. 1955* was launched in 1980, and has consistently had the highest retention rate of all Open University undergraduate courses.

War and Society courses have proliferated in universities throughout the United Kingdom, many of them making use of our course materials. Our course continues to pose questions about possible relationships between total war and developments in music and the arts. There is a long tradition in literary studies of examining war poetry, while more recently art historians have been discussing war painting. So far, I am perhaps the only person to have discussed the question of whether war's effects extend to music. But it does seem to be true, as Dick Skellington has pointed out to me, that the social sciences recently have shown little interest in the whole general question of 'War and Society'.

I may be quite wrong, but I suspect that there are two main reasons for this: that war is generally seen as a right-wing topic; and the question of war, as an event, having social effects, does not fit well into any structural analysis of society. All work in the area, since my own *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (1965, new edition 1991) has given a lot of attention to the question of whether or not war has affected the role and status of women - the way in which men and women together win the vote at the end of the First World War is quite fascinating and complex, universal suffrage for men being very rare before 1914. Thus, the relatively new area usually described as 'Gender Studies' does contain quite a lot of work on what happens to women during war, as well as discussions of the relationship between military activities and concepts of masculinity and femininity.

Possibly another reason for war being largely ignored in contemporary social sciences is the fact that many of the earlier studies are really pretty awful. Still, I would myself certainly acknowledge the influence on my own thinking of some early works. First of all, there is Stanislav Andressky with his notion of the Military Participation Ratio. The notion was far too rigid and crude, but some of us have since argued that participation in war by hitherto underprivileged groups sometimes brings them social gains. Since war can in some respects be presented as analogous to natural disaster, the 'Disaster Studies' of earlier social scientists have proved useful to historians.

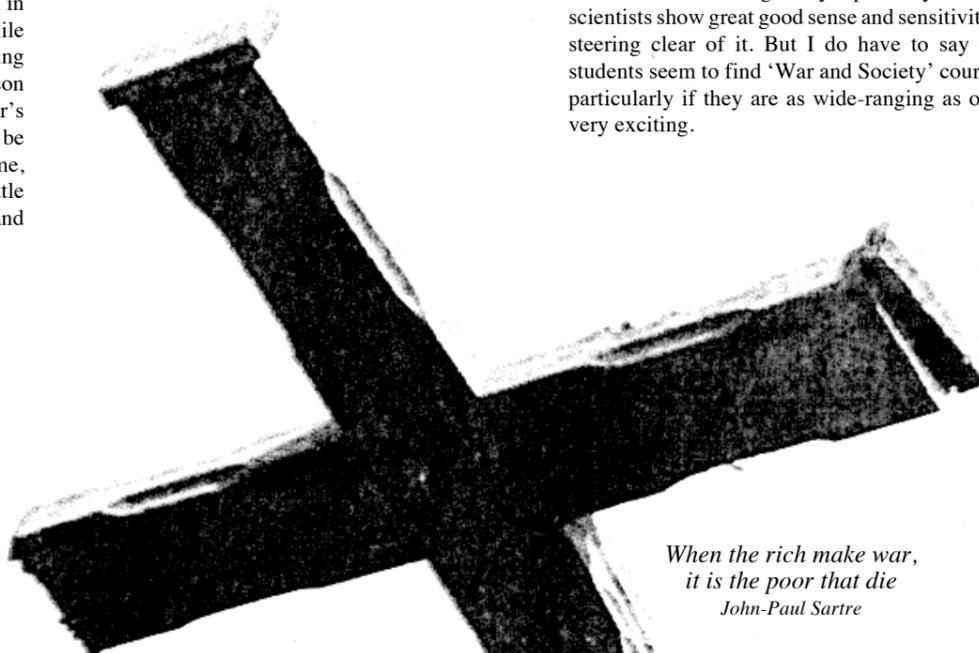
Even in the revised course now being planned for 2001, *Total War and Social Change: Europe 1914-1955*, I shall personally be making references to such books as G.W. Baker and T.E. Chapman, *Man and Society in Disaster* (1962), and F.C. Ikle, *The Social Impact of Bomb Destruction* (1958). War is a horrific and gloomy topic. Maybe social scientists show great good sense and sensitivity in steering clear of it. But I do have to say that students seem to find 'War and Society' courses, particularly if they are as wide-ranging as ours, very exciting.



Death in the trenches, 1917. *The Observer*, 8th November 1908. L. Illustration/Syma

First World War it took the world and the world was used in the most of war scenarios

On May 18th 1999, *News-night*, the editor of the *Dover Express* revealed his newspaper had made two public appeals in the last fortnight: one to release a dog from quarantine; the other for Kosovan refugees. The dog appeal raised £1,670; the refugee appeal raised just £300.



When the rich make war,
it is the poor that die
John-Paul Sartre



THE END AND THE BEGINNING

No sound bites, no photo opportunities
And it takes years
All the cameras have gone
To other wars

Wisława Szymborska

Names matter

Society **MATTERS**

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Social Sciences and the Information Age

Feedback and Results of Course Surveys

"The University is a Paradise. Rivers of knowledge are there, Arts and Sciences flow from thence. Counsel Tables are horti conclusi (as it is said in the canticles) - gardens that are walled in - and there are fontes signati, wells that are sealed up; bottomless depths of unsearchable counsels there".

John Donne

Society Matters Teaser

Which developed country approved *Viagra* before the contraceptive pill in 1999?

Answer on back page

In Djarkata, 1999, the city authorities banned cars from the centre occupied by just one person. Resourceful suburbanites and the squatter poor responded by crowding the kerbs of highways holding up plaques advertising themselves as passengers at reasonable rates.



“**The Name’s Bond, James Bond**”

DD100, An Introduction to the Social Sciences: Understanding Social Change explores in its early pages issues surrounding identity in society. Here, the editor of Society Matters takes a light hearted exploration of the question:

WHY NAMES MATTER?

Your name could make the difference between your final degree classification according to research at Nene University College, Northampton, published in December, 1998. Dr. Phil Erwin, a psychologist, has found that people with unattractive or unusual names fare ‘significantly’ better at University than those with ‘normal’ monikers.

Erwin looked at examination and coursework marks for students who had completed the second year of a psychology degree at a British university. According to his rating of names, ‘old fashioned’ names - such as Harold, Norman, Amos, Gillian, Pauline and Ethel, were seen as unattractive, whereas the more ‘modern’ Stephen, David, Lucy, Alison, and Emma, are marked out as attractive. Erwin found the unattractive names scored at least 3% more marks, which can make the difference between a good and an average degree. Erwin claimed that the more outrageous the name the better the performance.

The psychologist explained that children who have such names stand out. Your identity and self-esteem can be positively or negatively affected, especially by teasing. Erwin believed that having a name that marked you out as more different than others resulted in you doing quite well in the job market. So we might expect Chelsea Clinton and Brooklyn Beckham to do rather well in life, if one could control for their elitist family background. Mercifully, Dr. Erwin advised parents not to name their children with highly distinguished unusual names. ‘It is best to give them two names and then they can decide themselves which one they want to use’.

This unfortunately might not be enough to save Jonathon Ross (sorry Woss) for the amusing threesome of Betty Kitty, Honey Kinny and Harvey Kirby. And what about Spice Girl Mel B who named her daughter Phoenix Chi; and Cher who chose Chastity for her daughter presumably after the belt she wears. Best of all though is Paula Yates whose children are called Fifi Trixibelle (sounds like the Crufts 1999 winner to me), Peaches, Pixie and Heavenly Hiraani Tiger Lily. The spell checker was severely tested by this article!

Did you know that in France parents can be prosecuted for calling their children names which are ‘detrimental to the child’s future interests’, and birth certificate authorities can report parents to the authorities. One couple faced a court in April 1999 for naming their son Zebulon, the French equivalent for Zebedee (*Daily Mail*, April 9th 1999). So what would happen in France to Bruce Willis and Demi Moore who named their children Rumer and Scout (though some might forgive them for not naming them after their own first names). My name is Scout Willis. Poor kid. And what about Zowie Bowie, Dandelion Richards, fellow Stone Mick who showed more restraint in choosing Jade, Assisi and Amba.

What precisely is in a name? Has Erwin a point? Perhaps. When I was at school we used to taunt mercilessly pupils because of their names. This was especially true if you had an unusual Christian or surname, and you can’t get more humiliated and teased when your name is Stanley Skellington. I was never Charles Atlas or Tarzan in my youth, more associated with the seven stone weakling of the comics. I had a friend called Roland Butter and his life, I am sure, was forever ruined, as too was another fellow pupil, Russell Sprout. I have recently discovered a web-site of the Skellingtons of the World. The site contains 96 names, and through this I have found I am distantly related to the Skellington-Inos of North Carolina, who are enormous in rubber. Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me. My cousin Otto Tott wouldn’t agree. Otto became a market tradesman, thus obscuring some of the Erwin thesis.

Parents have an awesome responsibility. People name their children after footballers (whole teams!), film stars, fashion icons (even here the origin itself is often the result of changed names by deed poll - as in Windsor). You can stand out too if your Christian name is the same as your surname as say in Blair Blair, or your parents decide to give you a sexually ambiguous name, as in Tracey. In the USA people are given the same names as their forbears, except that they have numbers at the end of their name, as say in the golfer Davis Love III, a habit that has been picked up from monarchical descent. Why King Henry VI was such a self-deluded

Naming means exercising power. Names are linked to social background: to class, gender, patriarchy, status, lineage, ‘race’, ethnicity, and culture. A hyphenated name signifies a person of higher status, or worth, someone who lived in the white highlands of an assumed superior suburbia. Why do we keep up with the Joneses? The originals must have been an impressive act.

There is a downside: names expose people to irrational prejudice and humiliation, and to prejudices and discrimination based on ‘race’ and ethnicity. Skin colour is part of the picture which places names as one of the first signifiers in understanding social relationships. Names are changed to conceal national and religious identity - especially important in relation to anti-Semitism, or racism.

Great writers name their characters with care (Dickens, Wilde, Restoration Playrights etc.) Movie scriptwriters have fun with names - Tarrantino in Reservoir Dogs for example. In Spaghetti Westerns we had ‘the man with no name’. And who can forget Marx, (not Karl), Groucho. Otis B. Driftwood, Rufus T. Firefly, the simply magnificent Wolf J. Flywheel, the quack Dr. Hackenbush, and the shyster lawyer J. Edgar Loophole.

Names can be reflections of our own obsessions. Pets too are given identities through naming: we aim for individual identity, to confer significance. We aim to confer something onto something by naming it. Pedigree lines in pets are extremely important. Race horses have their own lineage. Anything out of Never Say Die is worth more than Spuffington. Even pigeon fanciers have a status hierarchy of names. Breeding, a horrible word, is deemed important. Crufts like to think so. But would you come home to nocturnal shouts of Jasmina Sony Walkman Bedlington the Wonder Dog? Only with my tail between my legs.

Local authorities change the names of streets or areas, or invent silly names for new towns (e.g. Milton Keynes). Government obliterate county names and with them entire traditions, and destroy cultures. Somerset House is full of names. Somerset that’s in Avon isn’t it. Where is Avon? Give me the old counties might argue a Rutland diehard, rolling the r.

Nations change the names of cities, nations change the names of countries - often during periods of colonialisation, through war and conquest (see there is a link to globalisation!), or through ethnic cleansing. We name ships, trains, typhoons after women, hurricanes after male monickers - why? And why are this season’s hurricanes called Arlene, Bret, Cindy, Dennis, Emily, Floyd, Gert, Harvey, Irene, and Wilma. Why western names? And why on marriage should women sacrifice their maiden name.

Great Misnomers
of our time
Nº 1
“ethnic cleansing”
Edna

Names themselves become identified with great power - Fordism, Marxism, Christianity. The Bible is full of great lists of names, vast biblical family trees. There I learned what begat means.

Names lend themselves to epochs of history, and to the folly of triumphalism (“Ozymandias, King of Kings, look on my works ye mighty and despair”). Just look at Scottish clannism. Or the excessive antics of princes of the German line. Names matter. Some names become words themselves and are associated with an activity and behaviour - e.g. Crapper, Quisling or Judas.

Names are amusing - look at American sociology collections and marvel at all those names inserting the initial of the second name - something not done in the UK. Whatever happened to the ethnomethodologist Lemon Z. Bumfluff III? I long confined all my American sociologist, Talcott E. Parsons, to the fires of Room 101. In old Milton Keynes buses with R. Souls on their leverage now have sadly dropped the R; Snap-on-Tools mercifully changed their name to prevent road accidents. Estate agents in Bedfordshire stick up ‘for sale’ signs with ‘Sold By Crook’ outside dwellings, while I have noticed Sold Bent signs in Harrogate, and Sold Swindell in Oxfordshire.

And what have we introduced at the Open University. Named degrees of course. With my name, and Erwin’s thesis, I should be Dean by now.

Dick Skellington





The Mike Wilson Prize

The late Mike Wilson, a Lecturer in Social Science, who contributed so much to the development of social science research methods in Faculty courses and research, gave his name to the Wilson Prize, for the most outstanding examination result on the course DEH313.

Congratulations to Dr. H. Maconachie of Plymouth who won the last ever Wilson Prize.

Awards & Prizes

OPEN UNIVERSITY EMERITUS PROFESSORIAL CHAIRS

Stuart Hall, one of the founding fathers of modern social sciences, and Professor of Sociology at the Open University until retiring in 1998, and Professor David Murray, former Faculty Professor of Government have been awarded Emeritus Professorships by the Open University

Stuart Hall was a Rhodes Scholar and became a central figure in establishing media studies with an international reputation as a field of study. He worked for the Faculty from 1979. A major aspect of his work involved an exploration of how the dynamics of racism and ethnicity shaped the development of English and British politics and culture. He has been a formative influence on students and colleagues across the world. A list of his achievements would fill this newspaper.

David Murray joined the University in 1969. He was a member of the general management committee in the early years of University development, a chairman of the Examination and Assessment Committee during a period which established the blueprint for assessing University students, and was a former Pro-Vice Chancellor. He chaired courses including Decision Making in Britain, and contributed to many others.



The British Academy

Professor Ruth Finnegan was recently appointed a Fellow of The British Academy. This award is the equivalent to a Fellow of the Royal Society and goes to academics who have achieved distinction in their field. For it to be awarded to a Humanities/Social Sciences academic is a rare honour and unique at the Open University.

OPEN STUDIES IN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY HISTORY – CD ROM

The 4th issue of the CD ROM is now available with 231 reports on family and community history by DA301 students in 1997 (plus extra database with summaries of over 1000 earlier reports).

Now available at £12.50 (inc p&p in UK) from: Faculty Office, (CDRom order), Faculty of Social Sciences, Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA. Copies of the previous three editions are available at £9.50 (inc p&p in UK).

* Charlesworth Award *

Three members of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professors Michael Drake and Ruth Finnegan and Dr. Dan Weinbren have received impressive external recognition for *Family and Community History, the Journal of the Family and Historical Research Society*, when the journal won the runner-up award for Typographical Excellence in Journal and Serial Publishing. The aim of the journal, published by MANEY PUBLISHING, is to encourage scholarly research in family and community history and provides a forum for researchers regardless of professional or amateur status. The final Figures and Maps in the Journal series are produced by John Hunt, Faculty of Social Sciences, cartographer.

The Society may be contacted through The Secretary, Dr Jim Etherington, 56 South Way, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1LY, United Kingdom.



Mistress. "Why, Nurse - what a terrible disturbance! - Pray, what is the matter?" Nurse (addicted to Pen and Ink). "Oh, Mum, it's dreadful! - Here's neether Me nor Mary can't answer none of our Letters for the Rackett!"

Servantgalism Front page illustration Volumn 3, Family & Community History, Maney Source: Punch, or the London Charivari, June 13, 1857

Geography's 'Nobel' Prize

Professor Doreen Massey has won international acclaim and recognition for her long career of achievement in the teaching and research of geography. She is the first female winner of the Vautrin Lud International Geography Prize which she received in France in October 1998. This is the first opportunity Society Matters has had of recording our heartfelt congratulations for deservedly winning this highly prestigious award, considered to

be Geography's Nobel Prize. The award was created in 1991 to remedy the omission made by Alfred Nobel for excluding Geography in the list of subjects to attract awards when the Nobel Prize structure was established. Professor Massey is a former winner of the Royal Geographical Society's Victoria Medal. At the award ceremony Professor Massey gave a distinguished address in French highlighting what geographers can offer the world.



Vautrin Lud

Canon Vautrin Lud, was the initiator of the "Gymnase Vosgien". This coterie consisted, along with Lud, Martin Waldseemüller, cartographer, Mathias Ringmann, helleniste, Jean Basin, latin scholar, and Nicolas Lud, secretary to René II, the Duke of Lorraine.

In 1507, the Duke entrusted them with the account of the expedition of the Florentine navigator Amerigo Vespucci, and some Portuguese cartographic documents. The group of scholars decided to lay down a map on which the New World described by Amerigo Vespucci appeared as a continent.

The COSMOGRAPHIAE INTRODUCTIO edited by the Gymnase Vosgien contained a new world map and explained why the scholars wished to baptise the new continent AMERICA.

John Hunt, FBCart.S.



The gold medal was presented to Doreen by France's minister for industry, Christian Pierret (on left)

Research matters

Karen Littleton, the New Sub Dean in Research in the Faculty introduces this section devoted to selected Faculty research. Karen will write more fully in the next issue on the importance of linking teaching to research and how important research is to the future intellectual prosperity of the Faculty and you, its students.

The Faculty of Social Sciences is renowned for its innovative and exciting courses and the quality of our teaching materials and methods is widely recognised. The courses produced by the Faculty engage with contemporary theorising and empirical research, and represent an important and distinctive contribution to Social Sciences teaching. Moreover, the groundbreaking nature of many courses reflects, in part, the groundbreaking nature and quality of research and scholarship undertaken by members of the Faculty. Here, research excellence and excellence in teaching, seem to exist in a highly productive symbiotic relationship. We are aware, however, that our students do not often get the opportunity to read about planned,



new or ongoing research work in the Faculty. Mindful of this, this issue of Society Matters puts a selection of on-going research under the 'spotlight'. Given the lively research culture and community within the Faculty (and strikingly diverse research interests) it would be difficult, if not impossible, to do justice to the full range of current research projects. The articles which appear here therefore highlight just some of the issues currently being researched by Faculty members. These projects represent exciting developments to existing research strengths and I for one look forward to hearing of their progress in future issues.

A small selection of recent publications by Faculty staff

NATIONS WITHOUT STATES: Political communities in a Global Age. Polity, 1999

by **Montserrat Guibernau** (see book review on this page)

ILO UNEMPLOYMENT AND REGISTERED UNEMPLOYMENT: A CASE STUDY

by **Ray Thomas**

ILO (International Labour Office) unemployment in Britain is less responsive to changes in the level of employment than the number of registered unemployed. Keynesian-type registered unemployment (i.e., the Count of Claimants) focuses on male 'bread winners', but the ILO seeking-work criterion used in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) captures entry to unemployment as well as volition to employment. The ILO/LFS Unemployment Series in Britain identifies the top layer of a reserve army of labour of changing composition but relatively constant size. Reconciliation of ILO and registered unemployment statistics is necessary for understanding of the dynamics of the labour market in Britain. The positive and negative interdependencies between ILO unemployment and employment may not be limited to Britain. ILO Unemployment, Unemployment Statistics, Reserve Army of Labour, Labour Force Survey, Longitudinal Studies, Social Security System, Discouraged Workers.

UNDERSTANDING CRIME PREVENTION: Social Control, Risk and Late Modernity

by **Gordon Hughes**

This book offers a comprehensive overview of current and historical debates about crime prevention in particular and social control more generally. It moves beyond the traditional boundaries of criminology and offers an original re-framing of the field of crime prevention based on a synthesis of exciting new thinking in social theory. In particular, recent theorising around late modernity, risk society, communitarianism and globalization are put forward as important ways of linking trends in crime prevention to wider social transformations. The innovative text looks at the contested history of crime prevention in the modern era and considers present and future trends in social control in late modernity. Hughes focuses on the question of the 'managerialization' of crime prevention in recent decades, the extent to which crime control may become dominated by privatized security and insurance against risks, and the attractions and pitfalls of informal community-based approaches. *Understanding Crime Prevention* will be essential reading for students and researchers in the field as well as many professional and lay people interested in crime prevention and community safety.

J. EDUCATION POLICY, 1998, VOL. 13, NO. 4, 469-484

Conceptualizing social justice in education: mapping the territory

by **Sharon Gewirtz**

Within recent studies of education policy, social justice has been an under-theorized concept. This paper is an attempt to begin to remedy this situation. It critically examines some of the most prominent ways in which social justice has been and is being thought about within various traditions of social theory and concludes by sketching out a framework for conceptualizing social justice in the context of education policy research. However, the main purpose of the paper is not to provide a definitive conceptualization of social justice but to open up a debate which might usefully inform the work of the education policy research community.

TOWN PLANNING INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Edited by **Andrew Blowers and Bob Evans. London and New York, 1999**

THEORIES OF DEMOCRATIZATION & PATTERNS OF REGIME CHANGE IN EASTERN EUROPE

by **Paul G. Lewis**

The transition from communist rule to democracy has taken different forms in different countries of Eastern Europe, and the pace of democratization has varied markedly. These variations pose challenges to theoretical models of democratization. The globalization of the world economy, together with the broader process of modernization, is one factor that sheds light on the differentiated pattern, however difficult to apply in particular cases. By contrast, theories dwelling on elite competition and leadership strategy, while holding some explanatory value, present problems, given the contrasting experiences of Poland and Hungary (where the approach appears to hold) and Czechoslovakia (where it does not). The international context appears to have been of prime significance, in producing an environment in which authoritarian regimes find it difficult to function.

RESEARCH INITIATIVE

National Everyday Culture

Professor Tony Bennett

At a time when the OU is looking to develop and extend the roles of Associate Lecturers, the Sociology Discipline has given a significant lead in developing a research initiative that will involve Associate Lecturers as key researchers in a major national research programme. The National Everyday Culture Programme - a part of the University's Strategic Research Initiative - will serve as a national vehicle for collaborative research into the relationships between culture and society in contemporary Britain.

The Programme will be developed by research teams representing and bringing together a range of social science and humanities disciplines: sociology, cultural studies, communications and media studies, women's studies, social and cultural history, and anthropology, for example. It will also include a strong policy focus to bring its findings to bear on current and ongoing cultural and media policy questions.

The Programme will also include a photographic, video and film documentary component to record and preserve a record of distinctive aspects of British everyday culture.

The working core of the National Everyday Culture Programme will be provided by the national network of skilled and experienced researchers that has been developed from the Open University's Associate Lecturers with expertise in the social science and humanities. Over a hundred Associate Lecturers have expressed their interest in joining this network. This is a unique national research resource which builds on the distinctive aspects of the Open University's teaching system to provide a mechanism for planning, co-ordinating and conducting research that has no peer in the national or international research communities.

The Programme takes its main bearings from the late Raymond Williams's observation that culture is ordinary, a part of the fabric of meanings and activities informing and organising everyday life. It also shares his conviction that it is precisely because of its ordinariness that culture is so extraordinarily important, affecting all aspects of society. This is now recognised by 'the cultural turn' within sociology which now accords greater prominence to the role of cultural factors in its understanding of relationships of social class, gender, race and ethnicity, region and nation. It is equally recognised by the importance of culture as an industry and its increasing relevance to the policy concerns of modern governments. In stressing the everyday aspects of culture, the National Everyday Culture Programme will explore the many and diverse aspects of its involvement in the regular conduct of daily life.

The initial projects planned include an inquiry into the role of leisure activities in organising and maintaining diasporic cultures in different parts of the country. There will also be a national statistical survey of the different cultural interests and activities of different social classes, of men and women, of city and country that will focus especially on the relations between class, gender and culture.

And many more projects in the pipeline - so watch this space!

"Roast beef, Yorkshire and two veg, please."



RESEARCH PUBLICATION

Nations Without States

Nations without states - where there is a strong sense of national identity, but no state - are common. They have a new importance today, when established nation-states are changing their nature in response to globalization. This book provides a comprehensive analysis of Western substate nationalism by drawing on a wide range of case studies which include Catalonia, Scotland, Wales, the Basque Country, Northern Ireland, Quebec and Indian nations in North America.

Drawing on a comparative framework, in which both the nature of nationalist movements and the state containing them are studied, the book offers a typology of the different political scenarios in which substate nationalism emerges and develops, ranging from cultural recognition to federation.

Dr Montserrat Guibernau offers a comparative analysis of nationalist movements in nations without states and considers cultural resistance and political terrorism as strategies currently employed by some of these nations to attain their goals. The future shape of the nation-state and the conditions for the success of alternative structures, such as those prompted by substate nationalist movements, lie at the core of the book. Nations without States will be essential reading for students and professionals in sociology, politics and international relations.

Nationalism has re-emerged as one of the fundamental forces shaping world society today. But how do current forms of nationalism relate to nationalistic currents which developed in earlier phases of modern history? What distinctive types of nationalist sentiment and practice can be distinguished? How should we explain the enduring appeal of nationalism? In answering these and other questions, Guibernau offers a novel and forceful account of the nature of modern nationalism.

Published by Polity, 1999

Society Matters Editorial Philosophy

I may disagree with what you have to say, but I shall defend to the death, your right to say it.

Voltaire, French Philosopher

SEX, TASTE AND DECENCY ON TERRESTRIAL TELEVISION

At a time when there are reports that Channel 4 plans to break the last sex taboo by showing a bestiality film, and the Broadcasting Standards Commission reports that the number of sex scenes in television soap operas has trebled in three years, you would think there might be a welcome for independent academic research into television morals. At least, that was what we 'innocent' academic researchers in the OU Sociology Discipline thought when we began work in this area just over three years ago.

Our recent research project on 'Moral Regulation and Television', funded by the Economic and Social Research Committee, focused on complaints to the regulatory authorities (Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC) and Independent Television Commission (ITC) and the Programme Complaints Unit of the BBC (BBCPCU). Research assistant Anita Sharma, former colleague Bob Bocoock until he retired, and myself were given access to the thousands of complaints received by the broadcasting authorities concerning matters of 'sex, taste and decency' over an eighteen month period. We were also able to study the authorities' responses to the complaints and their decisions as to whether to uphold or reject them. In addition to studying the kind of moral positions and values revealed in viewers' letters of complaint, we were also interested in comparing the responses of the different broadcasting authorities to the complaints. The three bodies have very different histories and characters: the BBCPCU represents a form of self-regulation in the face of increasing numbers of complaints; the BSC was set up by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher after heavy lobbying from Mrs Mary Whitehouse and others, who thought 'television morals' was one area where more regulation not deregulation was needed; whilst the ITC was itself part of the deregulation process, representing a lighter rein form of regulation than its predecessor, the IBA.

BREAKING TABOOS, CHALLENGING MORALS

So it was not surprising that they should also differ in their findings. For example, in the period studied, the BSC received most complaints about drama/serials, whereas the ITC and BBCPCU received most for comedy. Also, the rate at which the complaints were upheld by each of the authorities varied with respect to the types of programmes: BSC's highest upholding rate being for drama and comedy, but relatively low on soaps and youth programmes; ITC was highest on youth and soaps, but low on comedy and drama; BBCPCU was relatively high on drama and factual, but much lower on soaps and comedy. Other periods would need to be considered in order to decide if these are consistent trends, but the BSC does emerge as the body most likely to receive and uphold complaints about the sexual content of television dramas. And dramas are precisely the type of programmes which aim to shock by breaking taboos or challenging conventional morals.

COMPLAINT RESPONSE LINKED TO RELIGION

Despite the general impression that only a few people complain about programmes and that they are likely to be those from a particular background or with an axe to grind, we were struck by the total volume of complaints, even though many of them were about relatively minor issues and did not need to go through the more formal processes. Furthermore, we found that the complainers were not drawn very disproportionately from particular sections of society or geographical areas. Although it is probably the case that younger viewers complain less and that parents and people with a strong religious commitment are more inclined to complain on moral grounds.

The fact that in an increasingly pluralistic society most people still have access to only the five terrestrial television channels, means that there are substantial minorities who will come across something that offends them. Their written complaints provide a unique sample of how ordinary people attempt to express their various moral values in response to challenges from one of the most popular forms of mass culture.

THE IMPACT OF THE DIGITAL AGE

Perhaps the age of digital broadcasting, cable and satellite has arrived only just in time to save us from the ever increasing disputes about what is suitable material for a mass audience that may include groups with quite different moral views and tolerances. Our research into viewers' complaints gives some support to those who suggest that secularization results in a fragmentation of the 'sacred canopy' once provided to society by religious discourse. But it also reveals how, in many of the complaints, some of those fragments still enter into potent combinations with other discourses, such as references to the 'natural', 'normal', 'healthy', the family and the nation.

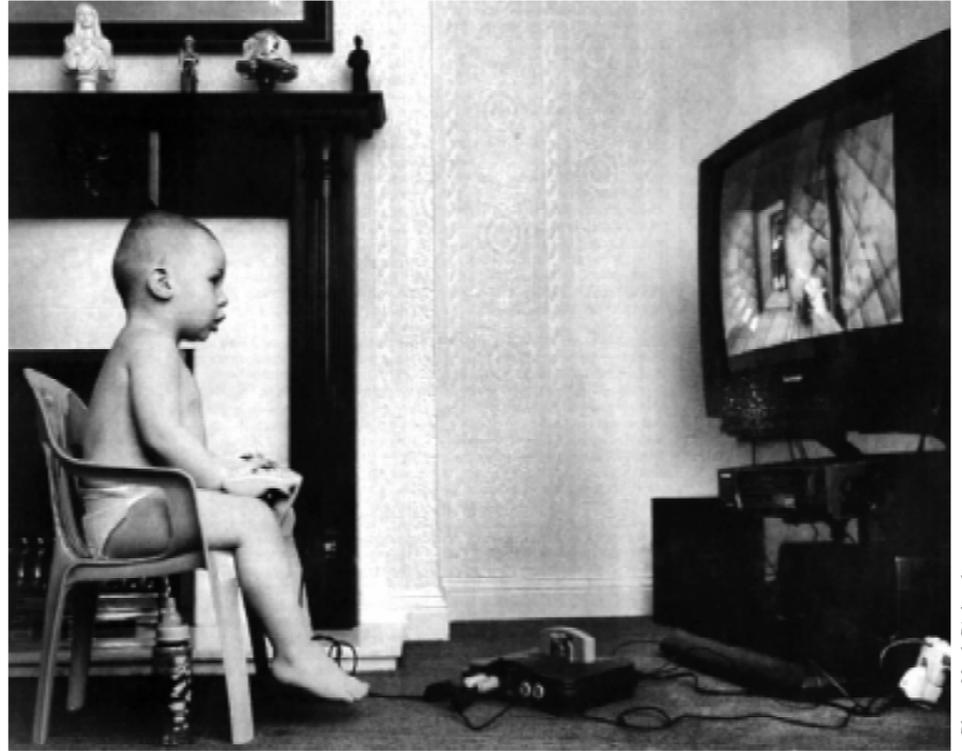
Our study of complaints about sex, taste and decency in television programmes found that many people who complain are not only shocked and surprised by what they see on television, they also complain that television producers see to deliberately set out to deliver shocks and surprises, and that the bodies charged with regulating television and dealing with complaints tend to respond in terms of technicalities or quasi-legal rules. A frequent example concerns the nine o'clock watershed before which sexually explicit material should not be broadcast, but may be shown immediately after that time, causing a shock or unpleasant surprise for some unwary viewers. Another example is that of soap operas, broadcast before the watershed, which have produced a succession of shocks by featuring sex scenes, including homosexuality and incest. Whether or not the complaints were justified, there does seem to be a mismatch between the language of the complaining viewers, who want to talk about moral standards, and the terms used by broadcasters and regulators in their responses.

SIMULATED MORAL PANIC

Focusing on controversial cases, which attracted multiple complaints and often press publicity, we were able to develop a typology of different moral positions and discourses: religious, traditional-conservative, natural, legal-technical, liberal-pragmatic, scientific, market, aesthetic-professional, and libertarian. We found that complainants were more inclined to use the first three, but they were more likely to succeed in having their complaints upheld by the regulatory authorities if they included legal-technical objections. In other words, the regulators tended to see themselves as quasi-legal adjudicators, whilst the complainants wanted them to make moral judgements, as did moral campaigners in the Press. In some cases, where there were multiple complaints, including some from people who had not seen the offending item, the Press appear to have created a simulated 'moral panic' - giving an appearance that there was a widespread fear of moral degeneracy. The low-key responses and technical-legal discourse of the regulators usually seemed designed to dampen down controversy, rather than engage with it. Social scientists would regard this as typical of what the sociologist Max Weber called legal-rational forms of organization.

When we began this research I was asked to give numerous interviews - sometimes on the local radio breakfast show before the weather forecast! - and journalists seemed to eagerly anticipate some juicy findings. I somehow feel I have failed them. But perhaps that is the fate of most academic research.

Professor Ken Thompson



The words "kill, kill" were amongst the first spoken by this 18-month old boy who learned how to play his older brother's video game. *The Independent, Wednesday Review, 12th May 1999.*

Photo: Mark Richards

TALES OF THE CITY: A STUDY OF NARRATIVE AND URBAN LIFE

by Professor Ruth Finnegan, Cambridge University Press

How do we picture urban life and formulate our experience of it? *Tales of the City* brings together the academics' abstract tales with the vivid stories about a particular city, Milton Keynes, and the often moving self-narrations of its residents. It explores the role of story-telling processes for the creative constructing of experience, with particular attention to personal narrations. The story that is now emerging, told by many individual actor-narrators, is of the city as a natural setting for human life, in stark contrast to the pessimistic anti-urban tales of many academic narrators. Drawing on narrative studies, cultural and linguistic anthropology and social theory, Professor Finnegan skilfully examines the narrative conventions and cultural implications of our multiple tales of the city, and relates them to profound mythic themes about urban life, community and the creative role of the active reflecting individual.

Other recent publications include:

- 'Problems of translating oral literature', in Peter France (ed.) *Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, Oxford University Press (in press, due out late 1999).
- 'Literacy: sociological and anthropological issues', in Daniel Wagner et al. (eds) *Literacy: International Handbook*, Westview Press, Boulder CO (in press, due out 1999).
- 'Musical practices and hidden musicians: a perspective from sociology and anthropology', in David Greer (ed.) *Musicology and Sister Disciplines*, Oxford University Press (in press).
- 'Oral literature: theoretical issues', in Philip Peek and Kwesi Yankah (eds) *Encyclopedia of African Folklore*, Garland, New York (in press).

THE LESSONS OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS: Russian Political Parties as Independent Variables?

Paul Webb and Paul G. Lewis

The study of comparative politics suggest that, while Russia is undeniably unique, and while it would be naive to expect cues for research always to be provided by studies of Western and Eastern and Central European parties, a greater emphasis should be placed on research into party organization and institutionalization in Russia. This would achieve a better balance between our understanding of parties as dependent variables that are influenced by the attitudes and behaviour of citizens, and parties as independent variables that can shape the agenda of politics, public perceptions and party affinities.

by Richard Skellington

'Racial attitudes in Britain' in Kidd, W., Kirby, M., Koubel, F., Barter, J., Hope, T., Kirton, A., Madry, N., Manning, P. and Triggs, K. (eds) *Readings in Sociology*, September 1998, 576pp, Heinemann, Oxford.

'Race and statistics', in Townshend-Smith, R. (ed) *Discrimination Law: Text, Cases and Materials*, Cavendish Publishing, Cardiff, 1999.

by Professor Tony Bennett

Bennett T. (1998) *Culture: A Reformer's Science*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin; London and New York, Sage, 255pp.

Bennett, T., Frow and Emmison (1999) *Accounting for Tastes: The Practices of Australian Everyday Culture*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press.

Bennett T (1998) 'Culture and policy: acting on the social', *Cultural Policy*, vol.4, no.2.

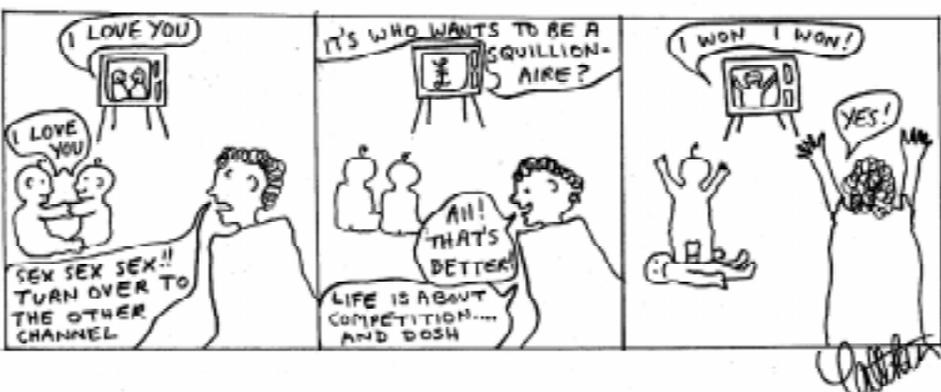
by Daniel Weinbren

Weinbren, D. (1998) *Hendon Labour Party 1924-1992: a brief introduction to the microfilm edition*, Microform Academic.

Weinbren, D. (1998) 'Building communities, constructing identities: the rise of the Labour Party in London', *London Journal*, 23:1.

by Professor Kenneth Thompson

Thompson K. E. (1998) *MORAL PANICS*, Routledge



Black Studies: an overview

A pigment of the imagination?

1999 is the last year of *ED356, Race, Education and Society*. *Society Matters* reviews the growth of Black Studies in Social Sciences. Our next issue will explore University courses centred around 'race', whilst acknowledging the huge increase in the place of 'race' in our curriculum during the 90s.

by Brian Khader and Paul Reynolds, D103 Associate Lecturers

Black studies is a controversial and comparatively recently developed subject which is not recognised as a key central concern in the academic study of the social sciences. How did such a subject develop? What is Black studies? What future has it got as an academic subject and particularly in the Open University's social science provision.

Perhaps we should begin by defining the subject. Black studies has many different definitions, but it shares with all social sciences the need for social enquiry, explanation and evaluation. Our understanding of the subject is that it seeks to enquire about, explain and evaluate the Black experience in Britain and 'related societies'. Here, we hit on an immediate problem: who are we talking about? How do we define the Black community? We have focused on those people of African and Asian descent in Britain, trying to raise and discuss issues which are relevant to their lives. This is not, of course, the only definition of Black community. It contrasts, for example, with the political use of 'Black' as an identifier for all non-white ethnic groups in white and formerly imperial societies. Also, what is meant by 'related societies'? In our definition and teaching, 'related societies' refers primarily to African and African-American societies. Analyses of these 'related societies' focuses on the key events and developments which provide a limited study of their cultures and their relevance to British Blacks.

Black studies developed from the radical movement for civil rights and Black power in 1960's America. Its proponents were students engaged in political struggle, members first of SNCC (Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee) and CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), some of whom later founded or joined groups such as the Black Panther Party. What these students demanded from their institutions of Higher Education was an education which focused not only upon the 'American' experience, but gave due recognition and consideration to contribution denied or 'whitewashed' by white society. As such, Black studies was criticised for being 'too political' and lacking academic rigour in comparison to other social science subjects, which continued to exclude or ignore Black people's contribution in the economy, culture, politics and social change. The former criticism was a convenient attempt to defend the indefensible or racist. The latter became increasingly untenable as Black academics began to develop their analyses of society from a Black perspective.

Black studies reclaimed Black history and challenged the conventional view of the 'white civilising' of black peoples through imperial rule. It traced the oppressive and exploitative nature of slavery, imperialism, segregation and ethnocentric denigration of Black cultures and society. It challenged racist 'science' and exposed the deep seated nature of prejudice and discrimination, even amongst those who were of a liberal persuasion but whose assumptions betrayed the depth of white ignorance. From a sense of history and identity, and an understanding of the nature of white racist power, black people could acquire pride and confidence and come together to be politically strong.

The Black power movement in America demonstrated the possibilities for Black people of organising political struggles, asserting their arguments and calling for a transformation in society. This radical political activism was to influence Black people worldwide, and contributed to the development of black political awareness in Britain.

In areas with significant African Caribbean populations, Black children were regarded as 'failing' and 'disruptive'. Students and parents campaigned against these labels (for example, through African Caribbean campaigns against educationally subnormal schools and Asian campaigns against 'bussing'), evoking the 'Black Power' spirit from the US. The growth of Black consciousness and struggle in the 1960's in Britain led to the import of Black studies in the late '60's and '70's.

The development of Black studies has given rise to claims that it has been depoliticised, talking of culture and multi-culturalism rather than political activism. The depoliticisation debate is also evident in how critics have interpreted contemporary discussions around 'racialised relations/boundaries', which has placed ethnicity as a key element in understanding social divisions in society. This development has had a major impact on the arguments surrounding Black studies and some argue that it makes Black studies redundant.

The 'racialisation' argument is that the western world is now multi-cultural and ethnically diverse, and the continuing separation of Black studies from the larger study of social division and cultural diversity encourages divisiveness and underplays contemporary change. It reproduces a 'siege mentality' which is no longer accurate in its analysis. This mirrors the broader 'racialisation' thesis that in multi-

Clearly, there is a developing agenda for Black studies – to move from a concern with Black heritage and the impact of imperialism and slavery in ingraining racism in US and European societies towards a renewed analysis of the ideologies of multiculturalism, anti-racism, the politics of 'racialisation' and the struggles of Black groups in western societies.

Afro-centrism, in contrast, dominates much of what is taught as Black Studies in the US and some courses in Britain today. Afro-centricity sets out to 'reclaim' African history and culture and to place it at the centre of world civilisations. It celebrates the technological and social achievements of Black societies and retrieves the Black identity of historical figures portrayed as white because they achieved.

The Black Studies curriculum is still grappling with its role, function and future into the C21st. Against the backdrop of the movement of Black protest into municipal power and establishment, Black Studies has had to chart the revival of racism under Reagan, Thatcher and European leaders in the 1980's. It tries to speak for a disaffected, demoralised or assimilated Black community, asserting Black identity and rebuilding Black confidence from the resurgence of racism and the comparative decline of anti-racism and Black struggles.



cultural and ethnically diverse societies – with legal protections, citizenship rights and a political rejection of racism – the persistent identification of 'race' as a problem in contemporary societies is the tool of extremists rather than those committed to multiculturalism. The problem with this argument is that whilst it might well accurately describe the racist agenda of the right, it robs Black critics of the means of reasserting that despite legal and political developments since the 1950's, being Black is still the basis for suffering structured and systematic inequalities in society. Skellington (1996) provides more than adequate evidence to refute the arguments of those who suggest that Britain offers equal opportunities and social justice to Black people.

For the Open University, it offers some insights into both the teaching of 'race' and the teaching of the social sciences. It rejects the narrow sociological construction of 'race' and racism and views with suspicion the tendency of sociological theory to neuter the concepts of race and racism from the hatred and pathologies of racists and the need for political responses to them. It requires instead a critical analysis of the development of societies, polity's, economies and cultural agendas which locate 'race' as an inextricable feature of – not a detachable aspect of – the study of society. How can we hope, for example, to understand the politics of the C21st without studying the resurgence of Islam both in the East and the West?

THE BARRY AMIEL AND
NORMAN MELBURN TRUST
LECTURE - JULY 1999

Race, Against Time

ETHNICITY, NATION AND RACE AT THE MILLENNIUM

Questions to ponder...

IN HIS KEYNOTE LECTURE, STUART HALL ASKS WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF MULTICULTURALISM IN A SOCIETY DOMINATED BY GLOBALISATION AND LOCALISATION? HOW DO POWER RELATIONSHIPS AND INEQUALITY HELP US UNDERSTAND THE PERSISTENCE OF INSTITUTIONALISED RACISM? AFTER DEVOLUTION WHERE DO BLACK BRITONS FIT INTO NEW LABOUR'S NATIONAL SETTLEMENT?

PROFESSOR HALL RETIRED AS HEAD OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE OU IN 1998. SEE *SOCIETY MATTERS*, NUMBER 6, AUTUMN/WINTER 1998 FOR 'THE HALL FEST - STUART'S INTELLECTUAL PARTY'

The OU is sensitive to the need to represent Black issues in the curriculum and in places integrates ethnicity with disciplinary concerns effectively, but there is a Black agenda to be addressed, particularly if it wants to recruit Black students.

Black Studies is not just talking about Black people. It is a recognition of an alternate view of the world. It is not just about racial inequalities. It is about Black culture, identity and space as well as race relations, race inequality or immigration. It is not about the deconstruction of race and racism by sociological or post-modern analyses. It seeks to locate racism and anti-racism at the centre of understanding contemporary societies. It does not seek to represent itself as a detached academic subject. It is about the lived experience of Black people and its curriculum is guided by that experience and how theory makes sense of it.

Black Studies will continue to be on the fringes of the social sciences, but enables Black people and communities and preserves their culture, identity and pride, as well as providing a critical lens through which contemporary society can be scrutinised for those willing to embrace it.

SOCIETYMATTERS

BOOK OF THE YEAR

The Case of
Stephen Lawrence

BRIAN CATHCART

Viking Press, London 1999

The Commission for Racial Equality 1999 Annual Report declared 1999 a watershed year in British 'race' relations. Faculty of Social Sciences Equal Opportunity Convenor reports on Faculty progress in relation to external and internal change to ethnicity and disability concerns

MAINSTREAMING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

spectrum in a context of a scarcity of strategic planning for a mixed-age workforce. This is characterised and exacerbated by such practices as downsizing which has generated a potentially damaging loss of accumulated experience and skills. Increasing casualization has also created new concerns and staff inequalities.

The Better Regulation Task Force Working Group (BRTFWG) was charged by the Government to investigate the improvement of the quality of government regulation surrounding anti-discrimination legislation. The group recommended extending legislation within the public sector, and this could mean widening CRE powers to impose discrimination notices within Higher Education. This may affect the Open University.

In March 1999 senior university managers attended a workshop designed to review, in the light of external developments, University EO policy relating to employment and the development of the EO action plans for staffing. Five EO specialists from Higher Education and other sectors contributed to the workshop. The workshop is considered a watershed for mainstreaming EO in the University, especially in relation to minority ethnic groups, disability and harassment. The workshop was informed that the original EO six year plan (1992-98) aimed at 3% for disabled staff. In 1999, that target had barely shifted beyond 1.1%. Paper policies however had been achieved and widely praised within HE and beyond. There is absolutely no room for complacency.

Lorna Beckford, Manager for Race, British

Faculty of Social Science plays leading role

Within the University, unit plans showed an unevenness in practice. The Faculty of Social Science, centrally and regionally, was taking a leading role. The Faculty is currently reviewing its job advertising strategy to include greater placements in minority media outlets, and to utilise and monitor more fully the user-friendly EO recruitment software. A focus will be on placements, applications, short-listing, interview, selection and appointment phases. The OU is targeting ethnic minority communities in Milton Keynes, Bedford and Luton.

Social Science Curriculum Change has been significant. Our Unit Plan demonstrates that CTC (Courses and Teaching Committee) have incorporated EO review processes into the mainstream business of the Committee. The Faculty will ensure that images and photographs in publicity and course materials will reflect diversity, even if the University Annual Review of 1999 has no black faces in it! Inclusiveness is the key to Faculty use of language in course materials. Our curriculum too demonstrates our commitment to mainstreaming through permeation of EO concerns in Course Materials, while the new foundation course, DD100, fully embraces EO issues in its production process and materials.

The EO infrastructure in the Faculty has been transformed to ensure EO action at all levels. There is a greater emphasis on embedding EO. The EO Working Group has been disbanded and EO responsibility is now devolved to appropriate committees, groups and individuals. Terms of references have changed to include EO practice and the words 'to promote and monitor the achievement of Equal Opportunities in all the business of the committee/group, reporting progress annually to Faculty Board' highlighted.

Other Equal Opportunity News

The majority of Units submitted plans of varying quality. EOC acknowledged an improvement on previous plans, but noted some areas still failed to include EO considerations within their plans, most notably, and significantly in communications and marketing. Unit plans should demonstrate how EO objectives are to be achieved, improve monitoring practice in recruitment and selection, and taking steps to 'counter the under-representations of black and Asian people in the staffing profile' (EOC/7/3/ page 1). However, the EOC was concerned that responsibility for achieving EO objectives was not always clearly identified.

Level 0 provision

The University has sought to develop its pre-undergraduate policy. It has established a *Centre for Widening Participation* in the SHSW to provide a focal point for co-ordinating strategically three areas of pre-undergraduate provision. The CWP will be seeking close collaboration with academic units, and especially regions, in relation to teaching level 0 students in. The aim is to situate the University in the front line so as to be able to appropriately respond to Government priorities for widening participation in FE and HE. The focus throughout will be on recruiting and retaining students from lower socio-economic groups to move further from elitism towards inclusivity.

The University has also created a *Retention Project* with two aims: to identify medium-term strategies to generate 'sustainable improvements on retention rates' in course, award and OU study generally; and to implement change to improve retention rates by 5% on average by the end of 2001. Former Dean of Social Sciences, Professor Allan Cochrane, chairs the RP team. During 1999 the University is to appoint an EO Policy Co-ordinator for the Curriculum.

My sincere thanks to Hilary Bolton of the EO Unit for her help in producing this article.

Dick Skellington
Author of 'Race, in Britain Today', Sage 1996.

The last two years have seen an increasing awareness within the Open University that staffing concerns at both full and part-time level must be prioritised, with a greater emphasis on job advertising, recruitment, short listing and appointment, plus monitoring and evaluation to achieve better representation, especially in relation to ethnicity and disability. Data evaluation is still in its infancy, errors in completing records, inadequate resources for monitoring, and analysis, have compounded to confine reporting to descriptive and emerging trends, snapshots of a larger picture.

Mainstreaming should bring more information and a research evaluation will be possible so that each unit and region can learn from staffing (and student) trends. They will be able to know more about processes and procedures from the decision to advertise to final appointment within their own units, and in comparative terms with units across the University, our own regions, and the University sector as a whole. Are we striving to be an equal opportunities institution across all boundaries? Recent external and internal developments have occurred which need to be understood before coming to any preliminary conclusions on mainstreaming EO at the University.

External EO Developments

The European Convention on Human Rights is being incorporated into domestic law in 2000, and this is driving agendas in relation to age and sexual orientation, while the findings of the Macpherson Report have also raised implications in terms of institutional racism. A more effective, clearer, fairer framework of fundamental human rights will hopefully emerge to provide greater equality of opportunity and outcome.

This challenge invited Vice Chancellors to use their position to put racial equality issues 'high on agendas', and using public statements of support and endorsement of racial equality concerns at events where they would not otherwise be evident. We have the rhetoric and the policies: we need to be more pro-active on the delivery.

In terms of gender divisions, the University EOC report, *Equality in the 21st Century: A New Sex Equality Law*, included several key recommendations: the need for a comprehensive single Statute based on the principle of equal treatment; improved rights in employment - in relation to pay, maternity/ paternity rights; a comprehensive statutory EO monitoring emphasis; defined obligations and accountability of public bodies to work towards eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity; a need to increase legal protection for lesbians and gay men; a priority to reduce exceptions to practice which undermine the principle of non-discrimination; and the importance of a more strategic approach to law enforcement incorporating EC law and the proposed Human Rights Bill.

The *Athena Project*, launched in February 1999, is designed to enhance the access, participation and promotion of women in science, engineering and technology in Higher Education, and to increase the number of women employed in all groups and staff levels of Higher Education.

Age concerns too have received a greater impetus. By 2001 it is anticipated that a new code of practice for age diversity in employment will become law. Its aim is to challenge and encourage employers to address the stereotyping of people's abilities because of their age. The fall in economic activity for the over 50s is pronounced - from 94% in 1975 to 65% today. The costs of ageism to the UK economy is a key Government concern. Ageist attitudes among employers and changing working patterns have combined to offer less secure employment thus increasing the cost of health, care, and pension provision, and placing greater emphasis on individuals to bear responsibility for their income in later life.

The latest report from the Employers Forum on Age (EFA), *The Glass Precipice: employability for a mixed age workforce* illustrates problems experienced at both ends of the employment age

Racism in Higher Education: Ethnic Minority Staff in Higher Education

Universities are discriminating against ethnic minority academics according to research published by the Policy Studies Institute (PSI). The PSI, in the first major study of 'race' and the higher education labour market, reported that while Universities perceive themselves as the last bastions of liberalism, evidence of racism was discovered (PSI, June 1999 - research Tariq Modood; THES, 18.6.99; The Independent, 18.6.99). For too long PSI concluded, universities have felt they are immune from the accusations of institutional discrimination.

"There is evidence to indicate that ethnic minority groups experience discrimination in application for posts and promotions, harassment and negative stereotyping". Quoted in The Independent, 18.6.99

The report, commissioned by vice-chancellors, unions and higher education funding councils, demonstrated Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and black Caribbeans are half as likely to have academic jobs than whites. Ethnic minorities accounted for 6% of academic staff (but half of these were academic staff appointed from overseas), compared with 15% of students. Most worked on fixed-term contracts with short tenures.

More than 1 in 4 of Britain's 6,300 ethnic minority academics reported they had experienced discrimination over job applications. Those with nine years service or more were only half as likely as white peers to become professors. One in five reported harassment by staff or students.

Sir Herman Ouseley, chief executive of the CRE, commented: "This report makes uncomfortable reading. Higher Education leaders must now demonstrate their resolve to ensure that unfairness and discrimination do not distort their sector by implementing the report's recommendations without delay. The Universities have been slow to appreciate the growing multi-ethnic nature of British society".

The PSI recommends checking career progress of ethnic minority staff, targeting for ethnic minority professors, reviewing job application and promotion strategies, developing more pro-active racial equality programmes, and using performance indicators to measure progress.

Internal contexts and mainstreaming

The EO Staff Statistics Working Group established in 1994 recommended improving information technology systems to enable the collection, processing and analysis of more comprehensive and complex EO employment data at all levels of the Open University. New systems recording employment data on temporary and consultancy staff were put in operation, while EO recruitment monitoring software offered the means by which Units and Regions can collect comprehensive EO staffing data which can be processed more efficiently and analysed with greater levels of sophistication.

Some improvement in women associate lectureship appointments between December 1996 and October 1998 can be reported, while in the same period the proportion of black and Asian Associate Lecturers almost doubled to 3.5%, an encouraging trend. It is clear though that especially in relation to ethnicity and disability the University has to make substantial progress to recruit more staff.

The March Workshop on EO for Senior Managers: a watershed?



Book Reviews

Globalisation

Our Faculty is making a huge external impact on debates around Globalisation to which these review articles testify

FALSE DAWN: THE DELUSIONS OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM

BY JOHN GRAY

GRANTA BOOKS, PRICE £17.99

Professor GRAHAM THOMPSON reads John Gray's rather depressing new book on globalisation False Dawn, and thinks of ways to cheer him up

John Gray's latest book is a sparkling polemic directed at some of the most cherished shibboleths of current international political economy. The book's broad thesis is that the present headlong dash towards a global economy organised in the image of an Anglo-Saxon type laissez-faire market system is threatening to so fundamentally destabilize the international system that the most likely outcome is serious domestic social dislocation, the disruption of political order and the potential for violence and wars between nations. Gray is very pessimistic about the possibilities of either redirecting the international economy along more pragmatic and pluralistic lines, or for the potential for its regulation and governance even in the context of the continuation of a basically laissez-faire system. Rather it is all doom and gloom in the Gray corner.

To develop this thesis we are treated to a series of chapters that point out the follies of both the laissez-faire system, and of how the 'false dawn' of other competing post-Enlightenment calculative political programmes failed to provide a viable alternative to laissez-faire capitalism as they each either fell to its critique or as they folded in front of the full force of its ideological onslaught. The 'utopian programmes' of both social democracy and communism are dismissed in this way - neither of them now offering the possibilities of an alternative path to modernisation. Thus Gray brings his critical concerns with both laissez-faire capitalism and social democracy into an attack on the process of globalisation, which is itself seen as just the latest in a long line of Western inspired modernisation programmes.

This disarming and ultimately pessimistic conservatism is nowhere more clearly illustrated than in the context of Gray's overall ambivalence towards the role of the free market. Whilst on the one hand he is quick to condemn its pernicious effect, particularly in its most extreme laissez-faire guise, on the other he remains in awe of its power to transform. He both celebrates it as he remains terrified by it. However, there seems no other viable alternative transformative programme that can be outlined if one adopts his position.

But what are we to make of Gray's thesis? One advantage of the articulate conservative position advanced by Gray is that it does expose some of the most disturbing characteristics of present domestic and international economic trends, and Gray's analysis is to be welcomed here. For those like Gray who ultimately accept that a new world economic order is being forged by international laissez-faire capitalism, which cannot now be stopped other than by a cataclysmic and violent explosion, there is very little that can be done (other than to wish for a better and more rational system to emerge).

On the other hand, if one is more circumspect with respect to these supposed trends and the inevitability of their outcomes, a space can be opened up for the serious consideration of particular and specific governance structures that have always been a feature of the international system, and for which there is

little reason to expect any exception in the future. The recent East Asian financial and economic crisis, for instance, has seen an almost unprecedented call for the reform of the international financial system to 'cool the casino' by those who had previously lived by it and benefited from it, including George Soros (whom Gray generously quotes), Joseph Stiglitz (chief economist at the World Bank), and Jeffrey Sachs. All these figures have in their different ways called for a radical overhaul of the governance mechanisms for the international financial system. In the wake of the East Asian crisis there is every reason to suspect that this call for reform and re-regulation will increasingly be headed by governments, inter-governmental organisations and even the managers of commercial financial institutions who have experienced a loss of control of their organisations and confusion over the true liquidity positions of their firms as the rapidity of financial transactions has increased.

But it is when one looks at the discussion of the convergence of all economic mechanisms towards a standard Anglo-Saxon model of the laissez-faire type that Gray seems to be on his weakest ground. Although Gray sees the different models of capitalism as still evident in the international system, he is pessimistic as to the ability of various Asian variants of capitalism, let alone those of continental Europe, to remain robust enough to buck the operation of Gresham's Law in forcing them all to 'bid-down' to the lowest common denominator embodied in the laissez-faire variant. Surely this is most unlikely? Those societies that maintain a commitment to solidarity, consensus and trust - even a residual commitment - are going to be at an advantage in the competitive struggles that the further internationalization of economic activity will admittedly bring. They have proved their worth in performative terms in the past. Thus a continued outright commitment to the principles of laissez-faire capitalism, privatisation, liberalisation and de-regulation in the interests of international finance are by no means secure. The international system has gone through many changes in regime and policy stance over the last century, why should things be any different in the future? Why should present trends necessarily continue?

Thus the challenge in the present is for policy makers to learn how to ride the new beast that inhabits the international economy, not to withdraw from a supposed barrier-less global economy, as Gray thinks inevitable. It is neither utopian nor a residual figment of a now discredited universal enlightened rationalism to advocate the furtherance of a governed international economic order. Nor is such a programme necessarily ruled out by the current nature of international economic relationships.

This review is an abridged version of that published in New Times, 25th April 1998.

GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS: POLITICS, ECONOMICS AND CULTURE

BY DAVID HELD, ANTHONY MCGREW, DAVID GOLDBLATT & JONATHAN PERRATON, POLITY PRESS, £16.99

Those who write about globalisation usually fall into two camps - all for it, or dead set against it. Both have one feature in common: scant regard for empirical evidence.

The trouble with a tendency to see globalisation as demanding the taking of sides is that it fixes the phenomenon as a sort of force of nature. It reduces the scope for discussion to a technocratic debate about economic policies without engaging with the technicalities, because that involves grubbing about in the statistics.

Indeed, despite the overlap between right-wing politics and the pro-globalisation camp on the one hand, and the left and anti-globalisation on the other, the usual reductionist approach is frustrating for those of us who are leftish in our politics yet in favour of globalisation for its potential. Old friends accuse us of selling out, abandoning our youthful radicalism for a Thatcherite embrace of the market.

What a delight, then to find a book that analyses globalisation as a complicated set of processes that could in principle take many forms. While the underlying causes are unstoppable, the shape they take is not. The right natural metaphor is not globalisation as a flood that will sweep all before it, but rather as a series of tides, subject to human intervention.

Too often globalisation is seen as a purely economic phenomenon. Its cavaliers and roundheads focus on the international financial markets, trade across borders, low wages in developing countries and investment by multinationals.

Economics is important, but so is the globalisation of culture and, perhaps most interestingly, the rule of law and democratic politics. The war in Kosovo, for example, and the extradition of General Pinochet, are examples of a new uncertainty about the territories over which any given set of political norms should apply.

In other words, as this book emphasises, globalisation has altered our understanding of political community. Democracy involves making policy decisions accountable to a particular community.

This raises truly profound questions about the nature of democracy and citizenship. What

is the proper constituency for reaching a decision on, say the import into Europe of American beef treated with the hormone BST? On the processing of nuclear waste? On targets for reducing green-house gas emissions? Or the regulation of the financial markets?

The authors of Global Transformations get three cheers for posing all the right questions. Given the breadth of their material - by its nature, globalisation can affect anything, everywhere - it would be churlish to expect answers, too. But they do rule out certain responses.

One is the argument that there is nothing very different about modern forms of globalisation; that turn-of-the-century imperialism had a similar scope. A mass of information makes it plain that trade and investment flows are bigger than they were a century ago, and have a wider reach and greater impact on societies affected.

Intriguingly, the book argues that, if there is a good historical parallel, it lies in the Middle Ages. Although there was no medieval equivalent of McDonald's or Microsoft, and the globe had not even been mapped, that too was a world of overlapping authorities and multiple loyalties. No ruler was sovereign; all shared power both with barons below and with higher authorities. It is precisely this dispersion of powers that fuels the passion of both pro- and anti-globalisation camps. Markets, especially high-profile financial markets, are assumed to have captured power from elected national governments.

But markets are processes rather than entities, and can have benign or malign results. Markets can act as a vehicle for democracy, undermining the entrenched interests of élites in undemocratic places. Or they can be shaped to benefit the élites at the expense of the many.

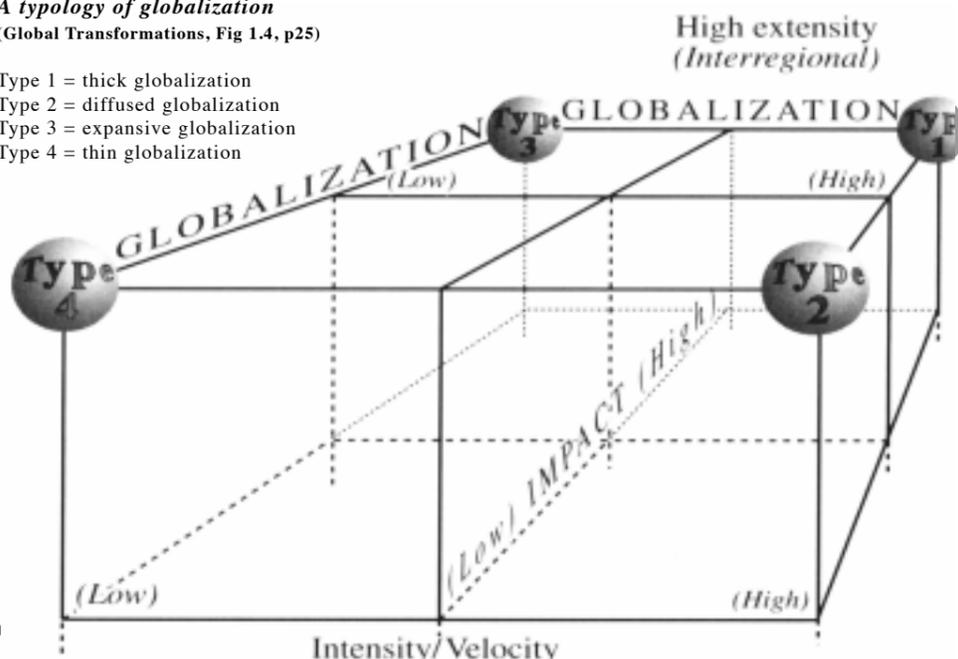
The virtue of Global Transformations is that it is neither for nor against. What it loses in populism it more than recoups in intellectual honesty.

Diane Coyle

This review originally appeared in The Independent, 28 April 1999.

A typology of globalization
(Global Transformations, Fig 1.4, p25)

- Type 1 = thick globalization
- Type 2 = diffused globalization
- Type 3 = expansive globalization
- Type 4 = thin globalization



FEEDBACK ON FEEDBACK

Each year the Faculty asks students for their views on any new courses as well as on a few courses already in presentation. In the next issue of *Society Matters* we will be letting you know what action the Faculty has in the pipeline in response to your comments.

The courses to be surveyed (through the OU's Institute of Educational Technology) will be D213: Understanding Modern Societies, U206: Environment, D311: Family Life and Social Policy, D316: Democracy - from classical times to present, DD304: Understanding Cities, and the new Master's courses. We should obtain the survey results in the Spring of year 2000.

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A Social Sciences Guide

Peter Redman et al, 1997

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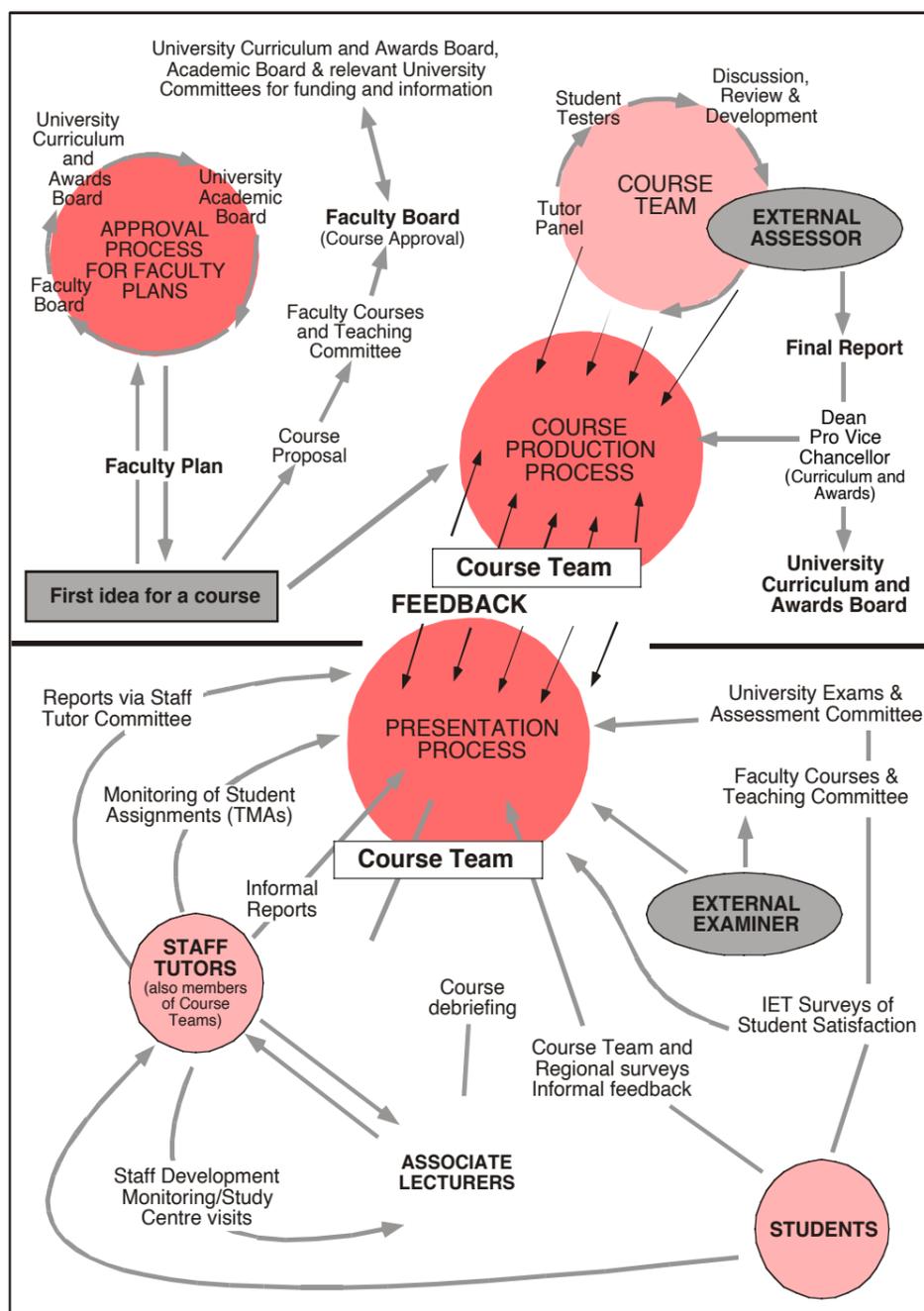
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Quality Processes

Course Production and Presentation: overall review based on a Social Sciences model



Have you ever thought about the kind of production line decision making processes that are behind every course you take with the Faculty of Social Sciences?

Just to show you its complexity how does this model of course production and course presentation grab you. Project officer, John Hunt, created this 'chart' for a recent external inspection by the HEFCE - Quality Assurance team (the original is multi coloured and has a more sophisticated set of 'tints'). The model has been developed over several 'inspections' with many original ideas and input from a variety of Deanery and Faculty academics.

It is a sobering thought that without you to kick-start the entire proceedings the rest of the 'system' would collapse. Is there a solar system corresponding to this anywhere else in the Universe? Comments to the editor for the next issue, most welcome.

An unusual look at RSI!



WAFFLE CORNER

This year's social sciences' Waffle Award candidates come from *Communication*, Oxford University Press, May, 1999; and Michael Bywater's *Millennial Bestiary: The PhD*, in *The Observer*, 7.6.99

Communication theory as a field

This essay reconstructs communication theory as a dialogical-dialectical field according to two principles. The constructive model of communication as a metamodel and theory as a metadiscursive process. The essay argues that all communication theories are mutually relevant when addressed to a practical life world in which communication is already a richly meaningful term. Each tradition of communication theory derives from and appeals rhetorically to certain commonplace beliefs about communication while challenging other beliefs. The complimentary and tensions among traditions generate a theoretical metadiscourse that intersects with and potentially informs the ongoing practical metadiscourse in society.

Essential conformity

Politics, the arts, broadcasting, literature, science, divinity and even that ostensibly most empirical of disciplines, medicine: all are falling slowly into a carefully non-gender-differentiated disrepair of conformity, performing a stately but enlightening eclipse around the axes of essentialism and relativism.



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Bits and pieces...

.....introducing **The Heckler**

THE OU'S 1998 ANNUAL REVIEW, A GLOSSY IMAGE PUBLIC RELATIONS EXERCISE, WAS RATHER EMBARRASSING. ALL THE PHOTOGRAPHS SHOWED WHITE FACES. IN THE YEAR OF THE MACPHERSON REPORT THIS SEEMED A LITTLE COMPLACENT, AND DID NOT REFLECT THE REAL PICTURE, EVEN THOUGH PROGRESS HAS BEEN SLOW. THE OU IS MAKING REAL EFFORTS TO BROADEN THE REPRESENTATION OF BLACK AND ASIAN STAFF (SEE MAINSTREAMING EO THIS ISSUE).

RESEARCH FINDING

Following last issue's back page feature on the neglect of sport in the social sciences I came across this astonishing research finding conducted by *The Sun* which I read after it had kept my fish and chips warm. An average 30 year old has spent five months, 22 days, 18 hours and 33 minutes watching England lose at soccer and cricket. Assuming fans have been watching games since 1974, they have seen England lose 52 soccer games, 93 test matches (now 94), and 137 (now 140) one day internationals. They spent an average of four days and three minutes watching England lose at football. Cricket, with its all day format, accounted for 42 days, 19 hours and 30 minutes, watching England lose one day games, and 123 days and 24 hours watching lost Test Matches. (*The Sun*, 11th June, 1999). Women's tennis not included. Sad

NOSTADAMUS

Just after *Society Matters* went to press we come to the Nostradamus Test. According to Noz the world would end on the 7th July 1999, no time was specified. So if this *Society Matters* reaches you, Noz got it wrong, right? Let's hope we all get beyond 9.9.99...

THE DOME

Funny how some of those Dome ideas changed. Zones names shifted, making me wonder if Social Science may not be out of step with the Third Way. Learn became learning, transaction became money, communication became talk, spirit became faith, environment became living planet, brainpower became mind, mobility became journey, national identity somehow became the insipid self-portrait, while perhaps most significantly, global became home planet, and local was transformed into shared ground. The one word they did not change was zone (as in disaster). Still seems a dumb waste of £758 million pounds to me. Oh, the dome contains 715 toilets that will flush 24 million times in the first year. New Labour hopes 12 million visitors will flush. The water evidently is being recycled from the Dome itself.

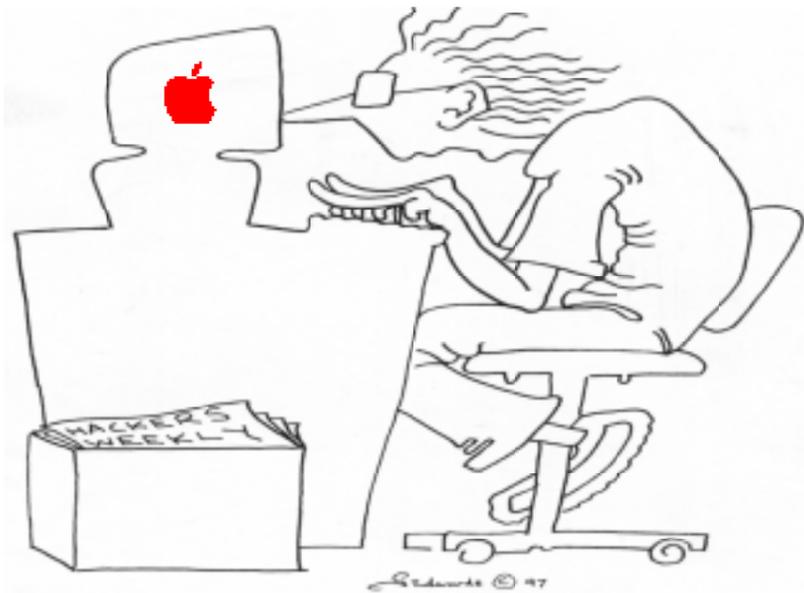
RACE RELATIONS

The great Jim Rose (1909-99) died in May. Rose, was ground-breaking director of the Institute of Race Relations and co-writer with Nicholas Deakin of the classic study of race relations in Britain, *Colour and Citizenship*, Penguin, 1969. Co-founder of the Runnymede Trust, he, along with Trevor Huddleston, who also died earlier in 1999, made an impressive impact on race relations during the UK in the twentieth century.



Gary Edwards

HAPPY MILLENNIUM



DATELINE - January 1st 2000:
Now that Bill's bug has shut down over half of the world's computers, and with so much bandwidth available, I can really get on with my letter writing...
Dear Steve, thanks very much for...



"Still working for the Open University?"

"Beyond the touchline there is nothing"

The above 'Quote', part of the *Sporting Blues* back page article in the last edition of *Society Matters*, is now immortalised on a Philosophy Football T-shirt - modelled below by *The Team*.

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John Hunt - DESIGN & BIGMAC PRODUCTION

Resident Cartoonists: Gary Edwards and Catherine Pain

All communications should be sent to The Editor, *Society Matters*, Richard Skellington, Faculty of Social Sciences, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA

eMail r.s.skellington@open.ac.uk