University of Strathclyde, School of Applied Social Sciences (Sociology)

No Such Thing As Society?
Social Conscience and the Marketisation of Scottish Universities

by Myshele Goldberg

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Sociology)

2010

Declaration of Authenticity & Author's Rights

This thesis is the result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination which has led to the award of a degree. The copyright of this thesis belongs to the author under the terms of the United Kingdom Copyright Acts as qualified by University of Strathclyde Regulation 3.50. Due acknowledgement must always be made of the use of any material contained in, or derived from, this thesis.

Signed: ____ **Date:** _________________

Abstract

From its pre-Enlightenment beginnings, Scotland's higher education system has been rooted in principles of egalitarianism, social relevance, civic responsibility, broad-based knowledge and critical thinking – what Davie (1961) called "the democratic intellect." However, over the past twenty-five years, decreasing government investment in higher education has forced universities to conform to the logic of the market in order to survive financially.

In this context, my aim is to shed light on the ***social*** contributions of universities, beyond their important intellectual and economic roles. In debates about the public funding of higher education, it is often overlooked that universities are sites to develop the critical citizenship necessary for a democracy, along with social conscience, a sense of right and wrong for collective action.

More than two decades after Margaret Thatcher's famous assertion, "there's no such thing as society," what is happening to the values that underpin higher education in Scotland, a country that never voted for her? How is democratic intellectualism responding to the pressures of neoliberalism? For answers, I look to sociology, the discipline most invested in the idea of society. My research is based on in-depth interviews with sociologists across Scotland, a survey of undergraduates and a review of relevant scholarship and other materials.

In this dissertation, I will provide an historical overview of higher education in Scotland, and a theoretical model for understanding social conscience. Through the experiences of interview participants, I will examine sociology as a discipline and academic work more broadly, delving into what makes it an attractive profession, how its core values are expressed, and how those values are threatened by the pressures of marketisation. Throughout, I will maintain a focus on social conscience. Ultimately, while social and civic values are under threat, they are still central to the practices and beliefs of academics.

For Fred & Jean Goldberg

Acknowledgements

It is difficult to express the depth of my gratitude for my supervisors, Colin Clark and Patricia McCafferty. I would not have made it through the PhD process without their unwavering support, lucid guidance and gentle critique, and they have been amazing role models for the kind of academic I want to become.

Marsha Goldberg has given me the greatest gifts any mother can bestow: unquenchable curiosity, a lifelong love of learning, a strong social conscience, perseverance and a willingness to work hard – all built on a steadfast foundation of unconditional love. My brother David Goldberg has been another pillar of support, listening with patience and offering wise advice. I am also grateful to family and 'adopted' family for their continuous encouragement: Gloria Cheyney, Evelyn Rotz, Alicia Grosso and Daniel Rigoletti.

Despite the challenges of completing the PhD, its final year was filled with joy and love thanks to Douglas Haywood. I have lived in happy homes thanks to Remco Knooihuizen, who helped to demystify the Scottish academic system, and Paris O'Donnell, who also turned her keen eye to proofreading the final draft of this dissertation. Irene Jardine was a crucial support throughout, gently helping me cultivate flexibility, resilience and calm.

My time in Edinburgh was enriched by the friendship of Martin Forbes, Sylvan Argo, Claudia Balugani, Jay Radcliffe and Alex Fitzgerald. Friends in Glasgow convinced me to move to the Dear Green Place, and have ensured that my life here has been everything I hoped for: Alex Wayt, Walton Pantland, Kate Shaw, Stephen Dietrich, Sarah Whitehouse and Jason Nicholas. I am also deeply grateful to the dear friends who are oceans away: Erin Cooper, Robert Blackburn, Jonathan Hohl Kennedy, Daniel Solnit, Michelle Brochmann, Ellie Brown, Robert Laughlin, Daniele Contardo, Brad Voytek and Michele Johns. Many thanks to the GGD girls for happy adventures, to Jorge Cham of PhD Comics, and of course to the Phorummers.

Thanks also to David Lee at the Scotsman, for helping me realise that higher education is my passion, and to Nicola Summers at ASK, who helped me navigate some difficult terrain. Other academic encouragement has come from Helen Corr, Mark Duffett and Alastair McIntosh, and of course from supportive colleagues and friends in the Department of Geography & Sociology. I am also grateful for the thorough reading and thoughtful feedback from examiners Richard Collier and Kean Birch, whose comments helped me improve the final version of this text.

Financially, the Administrative and Residual Employees' Union, the Overseas Research Student Awards Scheme and the University Scholarship fund have helped with tuition, and the Department of Geography & Sociology, the Postgraduate Research Office and the British Sociological Association have helped with conferences.

Thank you all for believing in me.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

.... 9
Research Questions 10
Neoliberalism & Marketisation 11
Why Social Conscience? 14
Why Higher Education? 16
Why Sociology? 19
Why Scotland? 20
Overview of Chapters 21

Chapter Two: Context

Overview 24
Theoretical Context: Defining Social Conscience 25
Defining Conscience 25
Defining Social Conscience 27
The Political Neutrality of Social Conscience: Liberal vs. Conservative 30
Intellectual Context: Sociology & Social Conscience 32
Out of the Ivory Tower 32
Critical & Value-Rich Sociology 33
Public and Professional Sociology 38
Conservative and Neoliberal Sociology 41
Morally Passive Sociology 42
Historical & Political Context: Higher Education & Sociology in Scotland 44
The Enlightenment & The Democratic Intellect 44
Post-War Expansion & the Rise of Sociology 49
1979-1997: Conservative Government 51
1997-2010: New Labour Government 55
2010 Onwards: Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition 57
Key Features of the Marketised University 58
Conclusion 60

Chapter Three: Research Approach and Methods

Overview 63
Site Selection 66
Undergraduate Surveys 67
Interviews: Overview 68
Pre-Interview Process 70
Interview Topics & Technique 71
Interview Participants 74
Ethical Considerations & My Position 81

Chapter Four: Constructing Sociology

.....85
What is sociology and why is it valuable? 87
Understanding the Social World 89
More Than Meets the Eye: Scope, Complexity and Context 91
How is knowledge gathered? Theoretical vs. Empirical & Quantitative vs. Qualitative 96
The Interdisciplinary Discipline & Basic Intellectual Skills 101
Judging & Challenging the Social World 105
Teaching Critical Thinking 107
A Discipline Critical of Power 110
Changing the Social World 114
Social Change and Sociological Research 115
Sociology and Personal Responsibility 119
Who is Knowledge For? Detached vs. Engaged Research & Public Intellectualism 126
Conclusion 130

Chapter Five: Experience in Academia: Pleasures & Motivations

..... 132
A Note on Gratitude 134
Positive Work Relationships 135
Inspiring Teachers & Personal Encouragement 135
The Human Element 138
Supportive Colleagues and Positive Departmental Atmosphere (PhD Students) 141
Intellectual Excitement, Collegiality, and "Tacit Socialisation" (Staff) 145
Enjoyment of the Work and its Context 149
Research & Fieldwork 150
Teaching & Relationship with Students 155
Pragmatic & Lifestyle Motivations 162
Emotional & Moral Motivations 168
Curiosity and Enthusiasm for the Discipline 169
Fascination with a Research Topic 173
Dedication to Social Change 177
Conclusion 182

Chapter Six: Imposing Market Values on Academia

..... 183
Changing Models of Production 184
Consequences of Inadequate Funding 186
The Burdens of Bureaucracy 188
Speeding Up Production: Time Pressures & 'Efficiency' 194
Fragmentation & Short-Term Contracts 200
Competition for All 205
Personal Consequences of Structural Pressures 210

Quantification and Commodification 214
Research Funding & Quantifying 'Impact' 214
Publish or Perish 220
Teaching's Diminishing Role 226
Students as Consumers & Future Workers – Not Learners & Citizens 230
Marketising Public Intellectualism 234
Strategies of Survival & Resistance 239
Conclusion 244

Chapter Seven: Conclusions
.... 246
Dissemination 252
Limitations & Scope for Further Research 253
Recommendations for Policy & Practice 255

-

Bibliography 258
Appendix: Undergraduate Survey Data 279

List of Tables

Table 1: Growth of Higher Education Through the Twentieth Century (p. 50)
Table 2: Interview Participants' Career Details (p. 75)
Table 3: Interview Participants' Demographic Details (p. 76)

We look to Scotland for our idea of civilisation.

–*Voltaire*

(quoted in Herman 2001: 103)

Chapter One
Introduction

Higher education is about more than money. But increasingly, the terms of public debate centre on questions of finance: who pays? Who benefits? Do taxpayers receive good value? Throughout the following chapters I will argue that efforts to quantify what universities 'deliver' in terms of profit and loss have skewed our perception of higher education's fundamental purpose: learning. This argument reflects the views of academics across Scotland, and a growing body of cross-disciplinary scholarship that focuses on the broader benefits of higher education. Universities are sites to develop critical citizenship and independent thinking. There is a contradiction that universities both reproduce and subvert the dominant paradigm, and the interplay between these two forces provides fertile ground for innovative new ideas and cultural evolution. It is a paradox that sits uncomfortably within structures that seek to reduce human existence to rows and columns on a balance sheet.

In the contemporary period, describing everything in business terms seems inevitable. Talk of values has mostly been left to religion, or to moral entrepreneurs with ideologies to sell (Becker 1963, Cohen 1972, Jenkins 1992). And yet values are at the heart of all human behaviour, whether we realise it or not. A particular set of values, honouring the pursuit of private profit above all else and rooted in neoliberal ideas about what 'counts,' is slowly taking hold across nearly all spheres of social life (Harvey 2007: 22). More than twenty years have passed since Margaret Thatcher famously said, "there is no such thing as society" (Keay 1987). This single remark has taken on the tone of prophecy as social contracts have been systematically dismantled and a stark individualism has begun to take their place (Harvey 2007: 23).

The marketisation of higher education represents one such dismantling – but it has not been without resistance. What follows is an investigation into what has been happening to social conscience, which I will define below, in higher education. Geographically, my focus is

Scotland, a country with a rich educational tradition, which consistently voted against Thatcher but was nonetheless bound by her policies (Brown *et al.* 1998). Intellectually, my focus is sociology, a discipline critical of power and domination, yet still bound by it. Ultimately, I hope to contribute to our understanding of higher education's benefits beyond the balance sheet.

Research Questions

The core concern driving this process is to investigate ***what is happening to the values that underpin higher education in Scotland.*** While there have been studies of the structural changes within higher education and morale among UK academics (which I will draw upon below), my research specifically deals with the changing core *values* of higher education and what such change means for academics, students, and wider society. In order to examine the core concern above, in the context of sociology in Scotland, my research will investigate the following questions – which also implicitly address Mills's (1959) concern with structure, meaning, history, and the kinds of human nature developed within social spheres:

- How can we understand social conscience and its expression by individuals?
- Through the academic life cycle, what values do academics express in their understanding and practice of their work?
- What are the structural and cultural barriers to academics' expression of these values?
- How have academics responded to these barriers?
- Are the structural and cultural conditions of higher education changing the kinds of values that can be expressed through academic work?

The foundations of this research comprise a number of interconnected elements, and it is important to briefly examine each element in turn, in order to explain why each is relevant. The next chapter will go into more depth on the context surrounding this research, and my aim here is to sketch boundaries around the project, before moving to explore the terrain beyond those boundaries.

Neoliberalism & Marketisation

There is no doubt that neoliberalism is the dominant political and economic philosophy of our time. It forms the root of marketisation; its proponents seek "to bring all human action into the domain of the market" (Harvey 2005: 2). Established as an ideological project in the 1930s by Hayek, Mises and others in the Austrian School, and later allied with Friedman's Chicago School of free-market economics, neoliberalism was originally developed as an alternative to both totalitarian socialism and Keynesian centralised planning (Birch and Mykhnenko 2010: 2-5). Where interventionist, welfare-state "embedded liberalism" was the dominant political and economic force during the post-war period, neoliberalism has been gaining power since the 1970s (Blyth 2002, Harvey 2005: 9-12). Of course, as with any political philosophy, neoliberalism is fraught with contradictions between ideology and practice, along with internal conflicts and inconsistencies (Plehwe *et al.* 2006: 2). However, Harvey (2005: 3) provides a concise definition:

> Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.

Similarly, Mudge (2008), identifies "three interconnected faces" of neoliberalism: intellectual, bureaucratic and political. These "share a common and distinctive ideological core: the elevation of the market – understood as a non-political, non-cultural, machinelike entity – over all other modes of organization" (*ibid.* 705). This core is the same whether we examine neoliberalism as an ideology, process, set of policies or institutions, or set of values. As a set of practices, Birch and Mykhnenko (2010: 5) identify a number of "core principles" that characterise the neoliberal project:

> *privatisation* of state-run assets [...] *liberalization* of trade in goods and capital investment; *monetarist* focus on inflation control and supply-side dynamics; *deregulation* of labour and product markets to reduce 'impediments' to business; and the *marketization* of society through public-private partnerships and other forms of commodification. [original emphasis]

Broadly speaking, neoliberalism is based on "the twin claim that first, markets are more efficient at resource allocation than centralised government planning, and second, that central planning leads to infringements on the freedom of individuals" (Hull 2006: 141). So while neoliberal policies have facilitated human suffering and environmental destruction across the planet (Davidson *et al.* 2010: 2), they also bring 'freedom' for the privileged to become even more privileged (von Werlhof 2008, Harvey 2005). Meanwhile, part of neoliberalism's strength rests on the notion that it is unquestionable and inevitable (Bourdieu 1998: 29), which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when enforced by an authoritarian state: "a strong state is necessary to police the free market" (Rutherford and Shah 2006: 17). In this sense, the state plays a central role, creating and defending the space in which markets may operate (Blyth 2002).

Rutherford and Shah (2006: 16-17) explain that the rise of neoliberalism and its focus on narrow individualism has severed social ties and solidarities, replacing them with bare economic relationships. For Bourdieu (1998: 6-7), this process is "destroy[ing] the philosophical foundations of the welfare state and in particular the notion of collective responsibility." The resulting "social recession" of fragmented communities and rising inequality has in turn facilitated the institutionalisation of market-based values:

> The point about Thatcherite neo-liberalism lies not so much in Margaret Thatcher's denial of the existence of society as in her radical and bleak re-imagining of civil society. This rests upon a re-vivified competitive individualism and a new kind of consumer-citizen [...] The disciplines and effects of the market are rooted in a social psychology of self interest. (Ball 2006: 122)

> instead of seeking to ensure the flourishing of individuals through democratic and therefore responsive collective means, [neoliberal ideology] promotes only a narrow and selfish individualism. The idea of a public good or common interest is dismissed. If what holds people together are economic forces, then they need to be extended into all areas of life. Thus price – and proxies of price such as targets and performance indicators – came to displace values of association and solidarity as the means of governing and serving the people. (Rutherford and Shah 2006: 16-17)

This turn of events is problematic precisely because market-based values are not good at "governing and serving the people" (*e.g.* Polanyi 1944). Proponents of neoliberalism believe

that unregulated free markets are morally "superior to other forms of human organisation" (Williams 2004: 51, also see Mudge 2008) – the best (or only) possible vehicle for human prosperity, freedom and happiness (O'Keeffe 2004, Seldon 2007). According to Klein (2007: 278), proponents of neoliberalism ignore – or are unconcerned with – the unintended consequences of their interventions, focusing on narrow ideological goals rather than social and environmental 'collateral damage.' Jacobs (1991: 22) calls this the "invisible elbow" connected to Adam Smith's "invisible hand" of capitalism. However, Smith's writings also emphasise the importance of social interconnection, "moral imagination" and institutional restrictions on the human capacity for selfishness (Griswold 1991: 57-58). It is easy to blame capitalism itself for much of the injustice in today's world, but those who first envisaged capitalism as an economic system never intended markets to be completely divorced from human judgement and regulation (*ibid.* 59).

In this sense, proponents of neoliberalism seek free reign not only for capitalism, but for its most damaging aspects. The benefits of prudent regulation are often forgotten or ignored by neoliberal scholars, who favour speculative theorising and seem to base their understanding of human behaviour and social structure on extrapolations from anecdote, with empirical evidence in short supply (*e.g.* Glautier 2007, Murray 1990; for a critique of this see Harvey 2007: 34). Their work is also often based on selective memory: O'Keeffe (2004: 25) introduces a series of essays on markets and morality by explaining that "private property and the relatively free play of supply and demand" are the fundamental elements that make markets effective in meeting human needs. But as I will discuss below, a key part of Thatcher's agenda was to undermine the 'free play' of labour markets in order to force British workers to accept lower wages and poorer conditions (Harvey 2005: 59-62).

However, I am not an economist, and my aim is not to critique neoliberalism on economic grounds.[1] My aim is to examine some of the non-financial consequences when neoliberal values become dominant in shaping institutions, including consequences to the expression of social conscience. Mills (1959: 178) encourages social scientists to practice "the politics of

[1] Harvey (2007) provides an excellent critique of neoliberal policies on economic and social grounds.

truth" by examining issues relevant to human affairs, particularly those that threaten reason and freedom. One of my core reasons for embarking on this research was not only to examine issues relevant to human affairs, but to question the extent to which other social scientists are able to study issues and teach in ways *they* consider relevant to human affairs. Neoliberalism touches both of these concerns. Its increasingly pervasive hold on our economic, political and social lives makes it one of the most relevant issues today, and as I will argue below, its pervasive hold on academia has restricted the potential scope of academic work. Proponents of neoliberalism actively seek to redefine both reason and freedom, and neoliberal policies enforce the kind of alienation and conformity that Mills warns about (*ibid.* 171). Bourdieu (1998: 29) insists that researchers and intellectuals must not only challenge neoliberalism, but study the ways it perpetuates its myth of inevitability, which is fast becoming 'truth.'

Why Social Conscience?

In terms of the non-financial consequences of neoliberalism, a scholar is spoiled for choice; its social and political 'fallout' has been profoundly widespread. As Davidson writes, the "people who have suffered under neoliberalism […] includes the majority of humanity" (Davidson *et al.* 2010: 2). A few key issues come to mind here: the poverty arising out of vast 'structural adjustment' programmes, the violence of military coups and resource wars, the injustice of mass-privatisation and the dismantling of social welfare programmes, the intimate brutality of insisting that marginalised individuals have no one to blame but themselves (Harvey 2007, hooks 2000, Jensen 2000, Jurik 2004, Klein 2002, 2007, McIntosh 2001). Disparate as these issues seem, one thread that weaves them together is morality. How can inflicting suffering on others be seen as acceptable? How can the consequences of actions – even unintended consequences – be ignored? A psychological perspective might suggest that some individuals lack empathy, and more broadly, that our entire society has taken on the pathological character of a sociopath (*e.g.* Bakan 2004). While I agree with Bakan's argument that the structures of many of our institutions limit the expression of empathy, I am not convinced that our entire society has lost its capacity for caring. Most people have some sense of morality, and most seek to live in accord with it (Hitlin 2008). When morally-

charged questions arise about social issues, debate is often too intense to invoke the cold calculations of a sociopath.

Experiencing a sense of morality about the social world is what I would describe as social conscience: a sense of right and wrong when it comes to social conventions and institutions, and concern with the social consequences of personal actions – including unintended consequences. Social conscience deals with moral questions that reach beyond individual action: What kinds of institutions are morally sound? Which values are reflected in our social structures? What are the outcomes of my personal choices for others?

Neafsey (2007: 29) argues that social conscience, experienced as "appropriate human feeling for social suffering," is a core element of what it means to be human, and I believe it is a crucial area for inquiry in the face of neoliberalism, which redefines much of human experience in terms of financial transactions. Broadly speaking, social conscience is rooted in our understanding of the social world. As with individual conscience, our values and beliefs determine who is worthy of compassion or scorn, what actions constitute virtue or vice, and where our personal responsibilities lie – all in the context of our broader social relationships. While I will specifically discuss social conscience in more depth below, on a fundamental level I believe the study of values and morality is relevant and important for its own sake:

> The lower priority of the study of morality impoverishes academic understanding of social life and hinders our ability to speak to a wider, interested audience. […] Doing what is right and being a good person are paramount concerns in real people's lives, but too little of our research directly addresses these issues. (Hitlin 2008: 13)

A focus on values also helps to illuminate the broader social issues we seek to understand. As Mills (1959: 11) explains, to understand personal troubles and public issues, "we must ask what values are cherished yet threatened, and what values are cherished and supported, by the characterizing trends of our period. In the case of both threat and of support we must ask what salient contradictions of structure may be involved." By seeking the connections and contradictions between values and social structures, we can gain a clearer understanding of both. As I will discuss below, social conscience is the emotional 'bridge' between the two,

providing the emotional motivation to act in accordance with one's values on a personal level and to shape social institutions in accordance with those values on a collective level – though neither is unproblematic.

In the case of neoliberalism, attention to values is especially relevant as the *intellectual* logic of neoliberalism has largely become embedded in our collective 'common sense' (Bourdieu 1998: 27-44, Harvey 2007: 24-28). However, the moral values of neoliberalism have not become quite so deeply entrenched – generally speaking, most people still perceive inherent value in some things that cannot be easily marketised, even as proponents of neoliberalism seek to set a price for everything (Rutherford and Shah 2006: 17). As I will discuss throughout the chapters below, it is clear that academics value a range of things that are difficult to quantify and commodify: critical citizenship, civic engagement, work for the public interest, intellectual freedom, professional autonomy, pursuit of knowledge, and meaningful relationships with students and colleagues, just to name a few (also see Paterson 2003a, Paterson and Bond 2005).

Why Higher Education?

> If the university is not in ruins just yet, simply a little confused as to its purpose and role, its internal dynamics are nonetheless contested and its cultures complex. (Deem *et al.* 2007: 84)

Unsurprisingly, higher education has been a key part of the neoliberal programme to marketise all spheres of social life, leading to the "confusion" described by Deem *et al.* Not only does higher education represent a major sector of the economy – especially during its rapid expansion over the past half-century – it also contributes significantly to social production and reproduction (Ball 2006). As I will discuss below, the marketisation of higher education has been a long and laborious process, taking place in fits and starts, in part because universities must continue to function and continue to expand, even as they are being radically restructured. While some periods have seen rapid and dramatically visible changes in higher education – massive cuts, bursts of fast expansion, the introduction of

tuition fees – many of the changes have arisen gradually, alongside and interdependently with other political and economic processes like privatisation, globalisation and deregulation.

Of course, marketisation is by no means a new process; by some accounts (*e.g.* Thornton 2009: 382-383), the logic of the market has been seeping into higher education for over a century, and concerns about marketisation have been expressed at least since the 1970s (*e.g.* Eggins 1988, Halsey and Trow 1971, Jacques and Richardson 1985). However, in recent decades, the speed and intensity of this process has increased. The structures of higher education, and academics themselves, have been pushed to unsustainable extremes: staff-student ratios continue to increase as budgets are reduced, record numbers of academics work on part-time and fixed-term contracts, and an increasing volume of publications and paperwork is expected from already-overworked individuals (Ashley 2007, Attwood 2009a, Coughlan 2007, Harrison 2010, Levin 2006, Scott 2003, UCU 2007b). All of this is subsidised in large part by academics' dedication to their work, but there are growing consequences for their mental health and family lives (Corbyn 2010, Fisher 1994, Morgan 2010).

Since the global financial crisis that started in 2007, questions of funding higher education in the UK have gained particular prominence, with a major focus on the financial benefits of university degrees for graduates and the economy (*e.g.* HEFCE 2009a, Lambert and Smith 2009). Some commentators have questioned the value of university degrees because their financial 'returns' do not necessarily measure up to expectations (*e.g.* Cassidy 2008, Gregg 2009, Grayling 2009, Shepherd 2009c), especially with rising levels of student debt (Hill 2005). Less prominent in the debate, however, has been discussion of the crucial *social* benefits of higher education, for example developing citizenship, promoting critical questioning and creative thinking, offering space for intellectual inquiry and academic freedom, facilitating social mobility, and preserving cultural traditions that are valuable in their own right (*e.g.* Grafton 2010, Scott 2010, Sharpe 2009). Wolf (2002: 98) argues that "there is very little to suggest that business knows best about what the education system should provide," and Brown (2009) makes a similar point, arguing that "even Lord Mandelson [former Secretary for Business, Innovation and Skills] can't see into the future."

Arguments from proponents of business-led higher education policy tend to rely not on evidence, but on the assumption that unfettered competition necessarily solves all problems (*e.g.* Marsland 2004: 114, O'Keeffe 2004: 22). However, they also tend to rely on financial measures of success, reinforcing Wolf's (2002: 145) assertion that neoliberal marketisation "progressively narrows and devalues our whole conception of education."

For those who recognise the social benefits of higher education, it is an institution rooted in values that are broadly incompatible with those of neoliberal capitalist markets – for example professional autonomy, intellectual freedom, long-term commitment and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake (Bourdieu 1988, Scott 2003, Ylijoki 2003). My argument is not that neoliberalism *erodes* these values, but rather that the marketisation of institutions limits the ways in which these values may be expressed. In addition to being significant in their own right, intellectual and civic values give academia the potential to resist and challenge the worst elements of neoliberalism, both by producing critical research and encouraging students to become critical citizens (*e.g.* Brennan 2008, Lottes and Kuriloff 1994, Schöller and Groh-Samberg 2006: 174-175). As Wolf (2002: 244) writes, higher education "matters more than ever before in history." But while higher education holds enormous potential to challenge neoliberalism, it is equally well-placed to support and further the neoliberal cause: by mimicking the logic of the market, higher education can acclimate both students and academic workers to the point where they take that logic for granted, and discrepancies in educational attainment can serve to justify social inequalities (Harvey 2007: 22, Schöller and Groh-Samberg 2006: 174).

In many ways, higher education is a microcosm of the changes wrought by neoliberalism in many other areas, particularly the rest of the public sector (*e.g.* Mooney and Law 2007). Despite the normalisation of neoliberal policies, workers in higher education have struggled to adapt to the paradigm of flexible and insecure employment, high competition, accountability to bureaucratic central management,[2] intensification of work more broadly, and the need to justify academic endeavour based on its profitability and instrumental

[2] Of course, bureaucracy is not unique to neoliberalism.

usefulness (Ball 2006, 2007, Deem *et al.* 2007, Law and Work 2007). Ball (2006: 115, 73) contends that a move to impose market values on education has led to an "ethical re-tooling" that "involves not only changes in organisational practices and methods but also the adoption of new social relationships, values and ethical principles." It is these areas on which I will focus – the structural, procedural, relational and above all moral changes which marketisation has wrought on higher education.

Why Sociology?

In order to examine these issues, I have conducted a case study of sociology. With a history of critical and even radical thinking, which I will discuss in greater depth below, the social sciences can be seen as "exercises in moral philosophy" (Wolfe 1989: 33). The keystone discipline of the social sciences (Babbie 2004, Benton and Craib 2001), sociology is explicitly concerned with matters of social conscience:[3]

> Morality was once central to [...] sociology. Weber, Durkheim, Mead, and other [pioneers] were centrally concerned with how individuals developed moral codes and how those codes contributed to harmony and conflict in groups and society. The general topic has become marginalized, however, as the social sciences get increasingly specialized. (Hitlin 2008: 15)

Mills (1959) was especially interested in questions of values, explaining that one of sociology's key roles is to examine cherished values and threats to values in the social settings we study. Of course, sociology itself is not exempt from experiencing values and threats, and even in the late 1950s, he identified a "widespread uneasiness, both intellectual and moral" about the direction of the discipline (*ibid.* 19). If anything, this uneasiness has intensified, and as Bourdieu (1992: 68) asserts, sociological study of the discipline is not only desirable but necessary: "the sociology of sociology is a fundamental dimension of sociological epistemology. Far from being a specialty among others, it is the necessary prerequisite of any

[3] Of course, sociology is not the only discipline concerned with social conscience and marketisation – but because it shares 'borders' with so many other disciplines, sociology is a relevant site for examining trends within higher education. A growing body of scholarship has addressed the effects of marketisation on a range of other disciplines, for example law (*e.g.* Cownie 2004, Kelsey 1998) and education (*e.g.* Chitty 1997, Hartley 2008, Maitles 2007, McNess *et al.* 2003). Broadly speaking, scholars in other disciplines have addressed similar issues to those raised in the sociology literature.

rigorous sociological practice." While excessive inward-looking study would further alienate sociology from the 'outside world,' there is a balance to be found. In a discipline based on critical questioning, we must turn the sociological gaze on our own practices from time to time in order to ensure that they reflect our values, and even more importantly, to ensure that they meet the needs of the publics we serve:

> If human reason is to play a larger and more explicit role in the making of history, social scientists must surely be among its major carriers. For in their work they represent the use of reason in the understanding of human affairs; that is what they are about. If they wish to work and thus to act in a consciously chosen way, they must first locate themselves within the intellectual life and the social-historical structures of their times. (Mills 1959: 179)

Gouldner (1979: 44) criticises intellectuals for being too complacent with those in power, arguing that "academicization often withdraws concern for the major crises of society, sublimating it into obsessive puzzle-solving. [...] Obsequious professors may teach the advanced course in cowardice." In order to challenge the paradox of being both emancipatory and elitist, Gouldner urges intellectuals to ally with working class people, to be aware of alternative points of view, and wherever possible to subvert the tyranny of university bureaucracy (*ibid.* 17, 84, 49-59). As I will discuss in Chapter Six, this is becoming ever more difficult for academics – though many continue to try.

Why Scotland?

The final element of this project is its geographic setting. Not only does Scotland occupy the interesting socio-political status of a "stateless nation" (McCrone 1992), it also has a unique educational history which makes it an ideal site to examine social conscience in higher education. As I will discuss below, Scotland's universities are rooted in traditions of broad-based critical thinking, egalitarianism and social relevance – the "democratic intellect" (Davie 1961). Scotland may be one small country in the context of much larger world players, but the experience of academics here resonates with stories of other academics worldwide who are struggling with the changes wrought by neoliberalism (*e.g.* Bertelsen 1998, Giroux 2007, Jacobs 2004, Milem *et al.* 2000, Scott 2003, Steck 2003, Welch 1998, Yljoki 2003). While I

stand in solidarity with all academics who seek to maintain their integrity, Scotland provides a rich setting to investigate just now deeply neoliberal policies have affected their ability to express social conscience.

Academically speaking, there is a rich base of literature examining higher education in the UK and sociology as a discipline, but much of this scholarship has focused on England, if not exclusively, then with Scotland as a marginal player (*e.g.* Bryson 2004, Cuthbert 1996, Deem *et al.* 2007, Miller 1995, Ryan 2005, Willmott 2003, Wilson 1991). This makes sense, given Scotland's relatively small size compared with England, both in terms of population and number of universities. But several scholars have also focused on higher education in Scotland (*e.g.* Bell 2000, Bond and Paterson 2005, Bryce and Humes 2004, Hartley 1995, Law 2006, Neave and Cowper 1979, Paterson 2003a, 2003b, Paterson and Bond 2005). While this body of work is worth contributing to, I also seek to contribute specific research on sociology as an academic discipline in Scotland, which I have been unable to find any previous research on.

Overview of Chapters

Before presenting the empirical results of this research, I will first lay out its broader theoretical, intellectual, historical and political context in Chapter Two. This will include a thorough definition and discussion of social conscience and its role in the development of sociology as a discipline, providing a foundation on which to understand participants' perspectives. Through this discussion I will show that social conscience has played an important role in the practice of academic sociology from the late nineteenth century onwards. I will also highlight the key scholars on whose work I will draw throughout the rest of this thesis. I will then discuss the development of higher education in Scotland, detailing the broad changes that have occurred, from the Enlightenment through to the post-war period and the rise of neoliberalism, also noting the key features of the marketised university, again to provide context for the experiences of research participants.

In Chapter Three I will detail the approach and methods I have used, including selection of sites, recruitment of participants, interview process and analysis. I will also discuss participants' demographic backgrounds to further contextualise their responses. To give some insight into the process, I will consider some of the problems I encountered over the course of the research and how I dealt with these, along with ethical concerns and my own position as a researcher.

Drawing on the evolution of sociology discussed in Chapter Two, in Chapter Four I will examine the ways that participants understand their discipline and their work within it, which in turn will shed light on the values embedded in that work. Broadly speaking, participants described sociology as consisting of three interconnected elements: understanding, judging or challenging, and changing the social world. I will explore each of these themes in depth, focusing particularly on the ways that each element of sociological practice invites the expression of social conscience. I will also investigate the different perspectives expressed by participants in terms of research methods and topics, teaching roles, and public engagement, highlighting differences and similarities between institutional types and across the 'academic life cycle.'

Building on an understanding of what sociology means to participants, I will turn to their actual experience of working in academia, focusing in Chapter Five on the positive elements of that experience and what motivates their work. This chapter will draw out the practical expressions of the values identified in Chapter Four, along with other moral aspects of sociological work that emerge from reflection on day-to-day practice. In this sense, the discussion of social conscience will be implicit rather than explicit in places. The themes that I will discuss in this chapter include positive relationships with teachers, students and colleagues, enjoyment of academic work and its context, pursuit of enthusiasm and curiosity, and the desire to 'make a difference' through research, teaching and public engagement. I will also examine the 'journeys' of participants into academia and sociology, and the values suggested by those journeys.

In Chapter Six, I will turn more specifically to the changes wrought by marketisation, examining the ways that those changes have affected participants' experience of academia, particularly limits to their ability to express the values discussed in the previous two chapters. I will examine the interplay between structural and cultural changes, including how inadequate funding, the centralisation of power, and new pressures change the methods and meanings of academic work. I will also discuss the elements higher education shares with other sectors, including increasing reliance on fragmented and insecure labour, the speeding-up of academic production, and the commodification of intellectual work through the Research Assessment Exercise and increasing dependence on research grants. I will examine the effects of marketisation on the nature of sociological inquiry, the status of undergraduate teaching, and academics' ability to be public intellectuals. To finish the chapter, I will discuss various strategies that participants have employed to survive and resist the changes in higher education.

In the final chapter, I will draw out the key issues developed throughout the other chapters, revisiting the research questions above. I will also reflect on the limitations of this research and potential directions for further research, along with suggestions for policy and practice, and potential modes of dissemination.

As will become clear throughout this thesis, the present moment in higher education is a time of crisis and transition. While undertaking the empirical work for this research, I was often struck with a sense that I was documenting a cultural institution on the brink – or just past the brink – of irreversible changes. I hope that my research will contribute in some small way towards pulling higher education back from the brink. By focusing on the values that underpin higher education and how those values are changing, I hope to remind other scholars, policymakers and interested publics that universities' contribution to Scottish society extend far beyond the balance sheet.

Chapter Two
Context

Overview

There are three areas that form the context of this project: theoretical, intellectual, and historical/political. There are obvious (and not-so-obvious) connections between the three, and I will deal with each in turn while also discussing their connections, in hopes of crafting a comprehensive 'backdrop' for the story of contemporary Scottish sociology. As Mauss (1927: 62) writes, "sociology is there in order to prevent us from forgetting any of the connections," and for Mills (1959), the 'promise' of sociology is its capacity for connecting themes that appear at first to be separate. First I will outline the concepts of conscience and social conscience, which strongly inform all the other elements. I will also discuss the political neutrality of social conscience by giving (simplified) examples from the right and left sides of the political spectrum. My aim is not to craft a comprehensive political history, but rather to give examples of how social conscience can take on different shapes and styles according to political persuasion and life experience.

In the second section, I will discuss a variety of moral roles for sociology. These range from the discipline's nineteenth century foundations of seeking to develop laws of social behaviour, through more critical and politically-engaged strands of sociology, conservative and 'politically-correct' sociology, and recent debates about public sociology. Again, my aim is not to present a comprehensive history of sociology, but rather to give a 'flavour' of the discipline as a whole, along with the scholars who have influenced my own thinking, as specifically related to this research.

Finally, I will focus on the specific context of higher education in Scotland, including the role of the Enlightenment, the rise of the 'democratic intellect,' the development of sociology as a discipline in the second half of the twentieth century, and the key features of the contemporary marketised university. I will also give a timeline of the political forces at work in Scotland from the post-war period to the present, particularly those that have had

influenced higher education and the practice of sociology. To conclude, I will re-iterate the connections between these three different areas – theoretical, intellectual, and historical/political contexts.

Theoretical Context: Defining Social Conscience

Defining Conscience

Conscience can be described as the influence of internalised values: a person's intuitive 'moral compass.' It is the force that translates inner values into moral behaviour, by associating pleasurable feelings of pride and satisfaction with right action, and uncomfortable feelings of guilt and shame with wrong action (Johnson *et al.* 1972: 321-2). According to Selznick (1992: 152-153), conscience is "driven by and responsive to emotional needs," and Hitlin (2008: 14) writes that "Conscience is not a single entity, but a constant interplay between the dimensions of cognition and emotion." The emotions associated with conscience help to motivate desirable behaviour and inhibit undesirable behaviour (*ibid.* 31), as defined by a person's values. In this sense, conscience plays an important role in the maintenance and evolution of social norms. As Hutcheson wrote in the eighteenth century, "from the very frame of our nature, we are determined to perceive pleasure in the practice of virtue, and to approve of it when practiced by ourselves or others." (Herman 2001: 63).

Research in psychology and neuroscience suggests that human beings are biologically 'hard-wired' for moral behaviour, favouring cooperation from infancy, exhibiting a very early sense of justice and fairness, and experiencing stimulation of the reward centres of the brain when we 'do the right thing'[4] (*e.g.* Bloom 2010, Kluger 2007). Scholars back to the ancient Greeks have held that values such as justice, cooperation and the avoidance of harm are universal (*e.g.* Selznick 1992: 148-182). At its most basic level, *immoral* behaviour causes harm to others, while moral behaviour avoids or alleviates harm (Lakoff 1995: 5-6). However, some

[4] Of course, other research has shown that human beings often do not 'do the right thing,' especially when pressed by authority figures to over-ride their own sense of moral judgement, most famously, Milgram's (1963) social psychology experiments.

scholars have argued that what constitutes harm – and who is worthy of moral consideration – reflects the needs and priorities of a community or a society, rather than universal codes of conduct (*e.g.* Hitlin 2008: 33, Mecklin 1920: 132, Teske 1997). Whether the broad strokes of morality are universal or not, the *details* of virtue and vice are socially constructed, even as they fill individual emotional needs (*e.g.* McNaughton 1994: 7-14, Miller 1992). Children are socialised to develop opinions and standards of behaviour that reflect the standards of their parents and communities, and over time these preferences become unconscious and automatic – though they also develop a sense of agency and the capacity to make choices about which values to accept (Hitlin 2008: 30-31).

To understand this process, a number of theorists have proposed models of morality and moral development. For example, George Herbert Mead considered morality to follow the development of critical reasoning and reflexivity, which allow the ability to think about one's actions and their effects on others, while Piaget and Kohlberg proposed various stages in the moral development of children, ranging from self-interested rule-following and fear of punishment, through approval-seeking and the maintenance of social norms, to abstract thinking, critical reflection and dedication to moral principles (Selznick 1992: 161-169). Gilligan (1982: chapter 3), on the other hand, emphasises self-sacrifice, empathy, nurturing and trust, building her analysis on a feminist understanding of social interdependence and emotional attachment. All of these models are useful in understanding different elements of morality: diverse experiences, relationships, and situations for individuals and social groups mean that there is no 'one size fits all' model for all behaviour, whether morally-driven or otherwise.

However, there are some elements that appear in all of these models, along with ancient concepts of morality: responsibility to others, a sense of justice, avoidance of direct harm, etc. But while these are relatively universal elements of morality, they can be interpreted very differently through the lenses of different political and social values. To give one (very much simplified) example, the right side of the political spectrum tends to define personal responsibility in terms of formal duty, rule-following, tradition, self-control, in-group loyalty

and regard for authority, while the left emphasises empathy, flexibility, fairness, diversity, context, and loyalty to the 'global village' from humans to ecosystems (Cohen 1985: 107-9, Elliott 2003: Chapter 9, Graham *et al.* 2009, Krugman 2007, Lakoff 1995). This is not to say that all left-leaning people are broad-minded and universally empathic, or that all right-leaning people are rigid and intolerant – only to point out that even something as fundamental as what 'responsibility' means is deeply influenced by political ideologies. It is important to remember that even when values appear to be 'universal' at first glance, they are always filtered through political and cultural lenses.

Defining Social Conscience

In addition to a sense of right and wrong for personal action, people also experience a sense of right and wrong more broadly – *social* conscience.[5] Where individual conscience compels us to act morally on a personal level (Hitlin 2008: 30), social conscience compels us to consider and act on the social consequences of our personal actions, and to insist on moral action from the wider institutions of society – for example, when we 'vote with our conscience' or work for social change.[6] In considering the difference between personal and social conscience, Neafsey (2006: 146) calls them "distinct but overlapping dimensions of the same inner voice," both of which are ultimately directed outwards through action. He writes that individual conscience "[applies] primarily to matters of private, personal morality, while [social conscience] is more concerned with public morality and the common good" (*ibid.* 7). To use the language of Mills (1959), individual conscience deals with personal troubles, while social conscience deals with public issues. The latter is reflected in the ways we organise ourselves socially, and in behaviour geared towards public rather than individual good – though of course these are not mutually exclusive.

---

[5] It should be noted that in writing about social conscience, I mean an individual phenomenon – a person's sense of morality that extends beyond their immediate interactions – rather than the kind of collective conscience that has been written about by a number of scholars (*e.g.* Angell 1922, Durkheim 1895, Glautier 2007, Mecklin 1920, Walsh 1957). These authors write about *the* social conscience, as a single entity, but problematising this idea is beyond the scope of this project.

[6] I have written previously on social conscience in the context of action for social change (Goldberg 2009b), but in this project I have taken a wider view of social conscience in everyday life, as my conception of social conscience evolved considerably during the final year of this project.

Fundamentally, social conscience is rooted in an understanding of social structure: intuitive, experiential and intellectual knowledge about how the social world operates – what Mecklin (1920: 143) calls "groundedness in reality." The way we understand the world gives us a sense of our place and our relationship to others, along with moral judgements about what feels right and wrong on a social level. While I broadly agree with Galbraith's (1996) vision of "the good society,"[7] different moral frameworks and understandings of the social world, along with different experiences and material conditions, will inevitably give different shapes to what constitutes a good society. For example, our understanding of the social world determines what we identify as social problems, how we attribute blame for those problems, and who we feel is responsible for solving them. As I will discuss below, political ideologies have a role in shaping these perceptions, but for many people, 'how the world works' seems self-evident to the point of irrelevance. As Mills (1959: 3-4) points out, people "do not usually define the troubles they endure in terms of historical change and institutional contradiction. [They are] seldom aware of the intricate connection between the patterns of their own lives and the course of world history."

Taking familiar social contexts for granted, it is possible to move through life without forming particularly strong moral opinions about the social world, or without being conscious of – or questioning – inherited opinions (*ibid.* 16-18). On the other hand, while moral worldviews are deeply embedded, they are not absolute: throughout life they can transform in response to new experiences, situations, knowledge and relationships, as often happens when students leave home and face new perspectives at university (Hitlin 2008: 31-32). Either way, whether our understanding of the social world is conscious or unconscious, passively inherited or actively developed, passionate or indifferent, it forms the basis of our social conscience, and guides our feelings about socially correct actions from ourselves, others, and the broader institutions of society. Where an understanding of social reality is grounded in a firm grasp of the connections between biography and history, and between

---

[7] Galbraith (1996) argues for "practical judgement" in developing a society that will reduce human suffering and inequality while striving for ecological sustainability, social justice, and the development of human potential. To achieve this vision, he sets out a number of specific suggestions ranging from economic interventions to questions of military and educational policy.

personal troubles and public issues, then social conscience can be seen as the moral facet of the sociological imagination (Mills 1959), translating imagination into emotion, judgement and action.

It is important to draw a distinction between this understanding of social conscience and other models that link values and behaviour, such as those found in Marxism, feminism and movements to overcome oppression through popular education. These models are often based on the assumption that new information will lead to new behaviour – breaking through false consciousness will lead to revolution, raising consciousness will lead to women's empowerment, and conscientisation, or understanding one's own oppression, will lead to action to overcome it (Lukács 1920, Gilligan 1982, Freire 1970). While the words conscience and consciousness are often used interchangeably, they are not the same – the former is an emotional drive while the latter signifies awareness and intellectual understanding. In many ways, social conscience bridges the gap between consciousness and action: it is the emotional force that links the two. When someone's understanding of social reality changes – often through a consciousness shift – the foundations of their social conscience change as well, prompting a new sense of how the social world should be, and often a new urgency to change their own behaviour, and that of others.

Of course, values and behaviour do not always align: choices are constrained by the situation a person finds themselves in, including social roles and relationships (Hitlin 2008: Chapter 5). As Mills (1959: 11) points out, when cherished values are allowed expression and are not under threat, people experience well-being. But when those values are stifled or threatened, they experience uneasiness or outright crisis, even if they are not consciously aware of their values or threats to them. This latter situation results in "the beat feeling that all is somehow not right" (*ibid.*) – a phrase that also, in my experience, describes the frustration and fractured integrity when facing barriers to the expression of social conscience. As Aristotle insisted centuries ago, knowledge of right action is meaningless without seeking to carry out right action (Barnes 2000, Flyvbjerg 2001: 2-3), but the latter can be blocked by outside forces. While Durkheim explained anomie as moral rootlessness (Giddens 1978: Chapter 4),

I believe that anomie can also develop in the opposite direction: strong moral rootedness thwarted by an inability to express values through action.

The Political Neutrality of Social Conscience: Liberal[8] vs. Conservative

As I will discuss in Chapter Six, neoliberal institutional structures place growing constraints on the expression of social conscience stemming from other political paradigms, often by insisting that all action be justified by its financial returns. However, the concept of social conscience is itself politically neutral.[9] As discussed above, social conscience is based on our understanding of the social world, which is shaped by our values, beliefs and assumptions – and political ideology can have a powerful influence here. Galbraith (1996: 5) argues that those in privileged social positions develop political, economic and social justifications for their position: "No one likes to believe that his or her personal well-being is in conflict with the greater public need." But whatever their origins, political ideologies shape the way we view the world, and our moral opinions about it. For example, Lakoff (1995, 2002) explains the fundamental differences between liberal and conservative thought by outlining the philosophical and moral foundations of each. Conservatives define morality as purity, self-control, and above all, moral strength:

> The metaphor of Moral Strength sees the world in terms of a war of good against the forces of evil, which must be fought ruthlessly. […] It imposes a strict us-them moral dichotomy. […] Evil must be fought. You do not empathize with evil, nor do you accord evil some truth of its own. You just fight it. (Lakoff 1995: 8-9)

This bears a striking resemblance to Becker's (1963: 148) concept of the moral entrepreneur: "what he sees is truly and totally evil with no qualification. Any means is justified to do away with it." On the other hand, liberals see morality as empathy, nurturance and fairness, with a diverse in-group that stretches beyond the boundaries of class, nation, and even species (Lakoff 1995: 16-18). The distinction between liberal and conservative values represents a

---

[8] In my use of the word 'liberal' here, I am referring to social or embedded liberalism (Blyth 2002: 5) rather than classical liberalism.

[9] Excluding ideologies that draw no distinction between individual self-interest and the common good, *e.g.* American libertarianism (Mühlbauer 2006: 156).

spectrum, rather than two discrete 'camps' – and our position along the spectrum affects the way we might approach the social world. In a political/moral system with broad boundaries, nearly all are worthy of respect and consideration: resource wars, sweatshops, urban poverty and ecological destruction, to name a few, become morally wrong and offensive to the social conscience of a liberal (*e.g.* Jensen 2000, Krugman 2007, Neafsey 2006). Conversely, in a political/moral system where those who deviate from the norm are outsiders (*e.g.* Becker 1963), it is immoral to accord such deviants the same respect, rights and privileges as 'people who count' (*e.g.* Glautier 2007, Murray 1990, O'Keeffe 2004).

To give a concrete example, Williams (2004: 42-43) argues that minimum wage laws are immoral because they deprive employers of profits and remove a worker's 'choice' to accept poverty wages (also see Murray 1990: 32-33). As I will discuss below, a similar attitude was at the heart of Thatcher's restructuring of labour markets during the 1980s (Robertson 1986: 279-283, 288). Yet from a liberal perspective, poverty wages are morally wrong because they are unjust and deprive workers of dignity and decent living standards. A liberal may fight to strengthen minimum wage laws, while a conservative may fight just as hard to weaken them. Both are expressions of social conscience, based on radically different understandings of social reality, and different conceptions of right and wrong. When Trow (1998: 125) described Thatcher's sweeping changes to higher education, which I will discuss below, as "policy by intent rather than by assessment of consequences," he meant the negative consequences for those at the sharp end of Thatcher's cuts rather than the positive consequences (*i.e.* financial savings) for 'the taxpayer.' The continuation of the policies, both by Thatcher and her successors, reveals their moral priorities more clearly than rhetoric.

Of course, this is a gross oversimplification – my aim is not to untangle these complex political processes or to reconcile liberal and conservative value systems, but rather to give an example of how social conscience can be expressed in ways which seem near-unintelligible when viewed from the opposite end of the moral/political spectrum. Because their understanding of social reality is rooted in such different sets of values, conservatives and liberals often criticise each other for being irrational or immoral, but when judged by their

own standards, both sides' positions make sense. Where outsiders are enemies to be defeated, compromise is morally wrong; where everyone is a potential insider, compromise is a moral imperative. The conflict between these orientations is obvious, and especially troubling when the former gains the power to enforce its moral paradigm. While conservatism and neoliberalism are by no means the same, they share a similar orientation of loyalty to insiders and hostility to outsiders, particularly where financial interests are concerned (Hayek 1960, Hull 2006: 141).

Intellectual Context: Sociology & Social Conscience

Out of the Ivory Tower

Since its nineteenth-century beginnings, sociology has undergone dramatic transformations in the way it understands the social world and its own role in it. On a foundation of Enlightenment ideas, early sociologists sought to explain social phenomena, either through positivism, which sought laws modelled on the physical sciences, or interpretivism, which focused on understanding human meaning (Benton and Craib 2001: 70-87). In both approaches, the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was taken for granted. Weber wrote that the social scientist's primary task is to "construct stories about the social world" (*ibid.* 80), and Mauss (1901) borrowed scientific methodology to understand social patterns – but neither questioned *why* this knowledge might be valuable beyond academia. While early social scientists like Marx actively sought social transformation, much of early sociology sought to observe and explain society, often to maintain the status quo. Explanations were based on an understanding of the social world as consisting of 'social facts' (*e.g.* Durkheim 1914). There is an attitude of inevitability in early sociology that mimics the outlook of imperialism of the time: the sense that social 'progress' is a series of interconnected large-scale processes where individuals are swept along by the tides of history.

Much of this early work was theoretical in nature, based on philosophy and history. But from the 1920s onward, empirical research gained importance in the Chicago School, giving

sociologists more contact with their subjects as a way to test social theories (Bulmer 1984: 4-6). During the same period, large philanthropic foundations began to fund research on social problems: "There was a greater readiness in the 1920s to see academic social science as providing knowledge useful to society […] it represented an important change in orientation" (*ibid.* 8). It is debatable *who* sociological knowledge was 'useful' for, as social science was often used to defuse labour unrest and improve other forms of social control (Mills 1959: 82-84) – but sociologists of the period maintained faith in social progress. The focus was still on universal social laws, but there was a sense that those laws could be used in the halls of power. In 1927, Mauss wrote, "[a]fter having advanced [scientific understanding], one should attempt to utilise it […] to guide political decisionmakers" (1927: 82-83). While he was sceptical of the "dangerous step" of sociology seeking to act in the social world, he felt that the discipline's chief service to politics and society at large is "helping people to see the degree to which political problems are social problems," and vice-versa (*ibid.* 73, 80-81). In this sense, sociology was beginning to develop a sense of its role in clarifying understandings of the social world, the better to respond appropriately.

While sociology's broad social role remained largely passive throughout the first half of the twentieth century, it was beginning to move away from the 'ivory tower' in shifting from the role of detached observer to that of advisor and social commentator, in the tradition of Marx and Engels. This development intensified mid-century in response to the post-war appetite for social explanation and large-scale improvement. Britain "was prepared to look for political answers to life's problems," and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan "staked much of his authority on improving standards of living" (Costello 2007b: 69, 2007a: 68). Meanwhile, the United States embarked on the 'Great Society' programmes of the 1960s, with similar aims (Andrew 1999). In this environment, sociology began to not only explain society, but to imagine how it might become better.

Critical & Value-Rich Sociology

Becker (1950: 293) was one of the first sociologists to challenge the role of values within the discipline, arguing the impossibility of any person remaining completely morally and

ethically neutral. He accused science and social science of "value-monotheism," where research was carried out for the sake of narrow utilitarianism, which he calls "applied control" (*ibid.* 289-290). In a world of growing complexity, he recognised the paradox of consequences, where the narrow use of scientific problem-solving for one situation could unintentionally disrupt other situations (*ibid.* 295). He saw the monotheism of science as blind to paradox and contradiction, harbouring an irrational faith in applied control that "carries with it the danger of mental isolation and rigidity" (*ibid.* 297-300). However, he criticised both scientific value-monotheism and that of "meliorists" who are driven by patriotic, humanitarian, democratic, or religious concerns (*ibid.* 300). His solution to the problem of value-monotheism, regardless of its source, was value-polytheism: he encouraged researchers to exercise a wide variety of social roles with differing sets of values, in pursuit of greater mental flexibility and greater awareness of the complexity of contemporary issues (*ibid.* 301-303).

This frame of mind represents a shift from considering rigid 'social facts' to a more flexible and informed view of social reality. In a world where social structures can be influenced by individuals and groups – for example suffragettes or civil rights activists – it becomes a moral question whether knowledge should be gathered for its own sake, kept within the walls of academia. According to Becker, not only should sociologists advise politicians and choose research projects relevant to pressing social issues, they should also make sure to participate in the political process as critical citizens. Mills (1959: 12) held a similar view, accusing the social sciences of excessive careerism and too much focus on irrelevant minutiae, "in a pathetic attempt to avoid the large issues and problems of modern society." For the Gouldners (1963: 663), a focus on minutiae was outright immoral in the shadow of potential nuclear war: "unless we can change [humanity's] pattern of alternating peace and war, our advances in [understanding small aspects of society] may not matter." Similarly, Galbraith (1958: 4) writes in the hopes that "the ideas here offered bear on our chances for escape from [the] fate [of nuclear war]," and Becker (1950: 281) rebukes the discipline for its detached stance: "When, literally speaking, the destiny of the greater portion of mankind seems to be

following courses of previously unimagined portent, it ill becomes the sociologist to remain on his pedestal."

All of these authors reject the notion that research can or should be value-free. Instead, Mills (1959: 2-6) argues that "anyone who spends his [or her] life studying society and publishing the results is acting morally and usually politically as well" (*ibid.* 79). He argues that they should employ and help others develop 'the sociological imagination,' connecting personal troubles with wider public issues, grounding individual lives within a broader social-historical context. Lacking this understanding, people suffer a sense of isolation, alienation, and generalised uneasiness which hinders their ability to deal with their own problems, let alone those of their society (*ibid.* 12-14). Similarly, the Gouldners (1963: 662-663) argued that human beings are not sure what they want to become, and the role of social scientists is to suggest possible goals and pathways for them to choose from, to "help [people] to develop and use their social forces constructively" (*ibid.* 663).

The desire to help people develop sociological imaginations or choose among possible futures is rooted in the belief that ordinary people can and should participate in guiding their own lives, rather than 'going with the flow' of social forces beyond their control. But where Mills harboured a strong faith that people will make the right choices when given adequate information, the Gouldners (1963: 662) are not so certain: "As social scientists we have every faith that [humanity] will increasingly have the knowledge to control [its] own destiny. But having the knowledge and using it are two different things." They observed that in the absence of extreme dissatisfaction, people are usually resistant to social changes unless they see a clear benefit with little or no cost (*ibid.* 660-662). Similarly, Galbraith (*ibid.* 10-11) notes that people are reluctant to give up the comfortable 'conventional wisdom' that reinforces their views of the world unless forced to do so by challenging events.

In many ways, Galbraith and the Gouldners held a strong sense of social conscience for the discipline of sociology, yet doubted whether it would be enough. In the midst of Cold War anxieties, there is a clear sense of sociologists as Cassandras, offering warnings to societies

which may or may not heed them. But even so, they expressed ambitious moral goals for the social sciences. Galbraith (1958: 17) saw his work as contributing to "civilized survival" itself, and the Gouldners (1963: 663) argued that social scientists should produce "a constructive sociological counterweight to nuclear bombs. […] they have a responsibility to do all that they can within the limits of their present knowledge and theories." For Mills (1959: 92-101), one of the more troubling limits to sociological knowledge was the excessive influence of elite groups on the topics and outcomes of research. Instead of passively accepting this influence, he urges sociologists to "realize the cultural meaning of the social sciences" (*ibid.* 8). In Mills's view (*ibid.* 76-88), a social scientist who avoids questioning structures of power justifies those structures or distracts from them. Better to be morally autonomous, holding the powerful accountable for their actions and empowering the powerless (*ibid.* 178-185, 2-6) – though as I will discuss below, moral autonomy is made much easier with the security of tenure, steady funding, and a highly privileged social position.

Questioning the structures of power is central to the work of later sociologists and social theorists like Bourdieu, Elliott and Giddens. Wacquant (1992: 49-50) writes that for Bourdieu, "the business of the sociologist is to denaturalize and to defatalize the social world, to destroy the myths that cloak the exercise of power and the perpetuation of domination." Bourdieu (1998: 8) writes that the sociologist "questions the things that are self-evident." Similarly, Elliott (2003: 14) argues that many people are blind to the wider patterns of their social worlds, and "it is the urgent task of sociology to show that the complex ways in which we take our individualized fates for destiny is itself a pressing political issue." However, parallel to the visions of sociology discussed above, Bourdieu (1998: 76) argues, "it is not certain that [sociologists] can play the great positive role of the inspired prophet that they sometimes tend to take upon themselves in periods of euphoria." Instead, sociology can determine the conditions under which moral action is possible – not the course of action itself (Wacquant 1992: 50). While Bourdieu advocates political engagement, he also emphasises the role of "properly scientific authority" so that sociology will be taken seriously (*ibid.* 187). Elliott (2003: 13-14) criticises this kind of stance, arguing that the "manic quest for scientific respectability" has fostered pretentiousness, oversimplification, and complicity

with social ills. Still, Bourdieu and Elliott both argue for the role of intellectual rigour, political honesty, constant reflexivity and a consistent critical stance.

Giddens (1982: 3) focuses on the critical nature of the discipline, arguing that the social sciences are fundamentally different from the physical sciences, and each should develop its own strengths (*ibid.* 3-15). He points out that humans "are not condemned to be swept along by forces that have the inevitability of laws of nature," and that we are able to change our behaviour based on changes in knowledge and understanding. Assumptions about the social world that were taken for granted fifty years ago are now morally offensive – for example, notions that women and ethnic minorities are biologically inferior to white men. In a similar way to the Gouldners, Giddens saw the role of the sociologist as analysing the existing structures of society and suggesting potential alternative futures (*ibid.* 26). To Giddens, the final aim of sociology was to change history (*ibid.* 178), with social conscience woven into the fabric of the discipline. Giddens later became an advisor to the New Labour government of Tony Blair, abandoning his belief in sociology's subversiveness in favour of political influence. Bourdieu (1998: 76) criticises this kind of move, cautioning sociologists to "refrain from entering into complicity and collaboration with the forces which threaten to destroy the very bases of their existence and their freedom, in other words the forces of the market" – though as I will discuss in Chapter Six, such restraint is becoming ever more difficult as market structures gain prevalence within academia. Still, regardless of his later actions, Giddens's earlier works are nonetheless a good example of a socially conscientious role for sociology.[10]

[10] In his later work (*e.g.* 2001: 1-21), Giddens seeks to chart a "third way," rejecting both far right and "old-style social democratic" paradigms and advocating balance between government, markets, and civil society. While Giddens (*ibid.* 18-19) accuses neoliberalism of having "no effective theory of, or politics relevant to, developing a cohesive and integrated society," Schöller and Groh-Samberg (2006: 177) argue that the 'third way' is simply a form of neoliberalism, re-branded for disillusioned left-wing intellectuals.

Public and Professional Sociology

The 'value-rich' sociologists above seek to make the discipline relevant and accessible outside of academia – a practice for which Gans (1989) coined the phrase 'public sociology.' On the other hand, 'professional' sociology seeks to be value-neutral by emulating the physical sciences and conducting research "*of* publics" rather than "*for* publics" (Boyns and Fletcher 2005: 5, original emphasis). Particularly in the United States, public sociology has gained considerable influence. The American Sociological Association's 2004 presidential address (Burawoy 2005) sang the praises of public sociology, sparking debate across the discipline. The ongoing debate is most vigorous in North America, but its questions are increasingly raised in the UK (*e.g.* Calhoun 2005, Miller 2007, Misztal 2007). In the address, Burawoy (2005: 266-269) identifies four styles of sociology which are autonomous and interdependent. In addition to public and professional sociology, he describes policy sociology, which works on goals defined by clients, and critical sociology, which examines the research programmes of professional sociology. Morally speaking, he writes that "critical sociology is the conscience of professional sociology just as public sociology is the conscience of policy sociology" (*ibid.* 268). However, I would argue that all four strands of sociology involve social conscience rooted in subtly different balances of values, as I will discuss below.

Among the four sociologies, Burawoy's main focus is on public sociology and its potential to give sociologists a vehicle for changing the world (*ibid.* 260, 289). He argues that of all the social sciences, scholars are drawn to sociology from a sense of social conscience – a "passion for social justice, economic equality, human rights, sustainable environment, political freedom, or simply a better world" (*ibid.* 260). It is the vision of public sociology for activism in academia to be widely accepted, allowing sociologists to "defend the interests of humanity" (*ibid.* 287). This reflects an understanding of the social world as the collaborative creation of its participants, and a moral role for sociologists to help make that world more equitable, similar to the 'value-rich' sociologies discussed above. The call to public sociology has been widely applauded (*e.g.* Chase-Dunn 2005, Jeffries 2005, McLaughlin *et al.* 2005, Putney *et al.* 2005), and several scholars have expanded elements of Burawoy's vision (*e.g.* Brint 2005, Calhoun 2005). In particular, Calhoun, president of the Social Science Research

Council (US), urges a more careful characterisation of the discipline and its wider cultural context, especially within the economic and political structures of academia (*ibid.* 356-357, 359-362). As will be clear by now, examining sociology's position within the changing spheres of academia is one of the major aims of this project.

Inevitably, there has also been backlash from professional sociologists, who see political engagement as unnecessary, overly idealistic, and dangerous to sociology's legitimacy as a discipline (*e.g.* Boyns and Fletcher 2005, Deflem 2004, Tittle 2004, Turner 2005). For example:

> The Save Sociology website was developed in response to various forms of attack on sociology as an academic discipline that have taken place in recent years, especially since the advent of so-called 'public' sociology. This site [is] an attempt to safeguard the academic status and integrity of sociology. (Deflem 2004)

Deflem goes on to criticise public sociology's 'narrow' remit of social justice issues, arguing that sociology should be free to examine all areas of society, and Turner (2005: 35) criticises the "tyranny of political correctness." However, both fail to consider that the priorities of much sociological research are guided not by sociologists themselves, but by the needs of research councils, government agencies, charities, businesses, and other sources of funding, as I will discuss in Chapter Six. Even so, it is a misunderstanding of Burawoy's point to presume that all sociological work should follow the public sociology ethos: his reason for discussing sociology as four distinct strands was to clarify a division of sociological labour, not privilege one form above others (Burawoy 2005: 4-5). His focus on public sociology seeks to balance the 'turn to the right' of recent decades, rather than pioneer a morally-monochrome sociology (*ibid.* 6).

The other main criticism of professional sociologists is that "[s]ociological knowledge cannot challenge the world, nor should it. We have philosophy and morality for such tasks" (Deflem 2004). Tittle (2004: 2) calls the programme of public sociology "a mistake" and Turner (2005: 28) calls it "a wrong diagnosis." These views resemble right-wing attacks on politically-engaged sociology, which I will discuss below. The main reason for their criticisms is concern

for the public credibility of the discipline – few enough people listen to sociologists now, and they fear that open political commitment will further alienate potential audiences and funders. It is unclear how they expect to reach audiences without some form of public engagement, as most seem to advocate the kind of 'ivory tower' detachment associated with the early sociologists and social theorists. Suspicious of innovation, they favour a slow evolution of the discipline, building up knowledge and credibility (Tittle 2004: 3, Turner 2005: 31, Deflem 2004, Boyns and Fletcher 2004). In this sense, their values align with traditional conservatism, where preservation of the status quo trumps the potentially-dangerous pursuit of social justice: "[o]nce we start up (*sic*) the slippery slope of moralizing, we soon lose our credibility as social scientists" (Turner 2005: 30). However, throughout this project – whether through reading, interviews, or casual conversations – I have found it rare for sociologists to indulge in moralising without a firm basis in empirical study, and even then they generally avoid being 'evangelical' with their ideas.[11]

Still, for the most part, even professional sociologists are expressing social conscience; they differ from public sociologists in terms of strategy and timing, methods and means – ultimately they hold different values surrounding the moral roles and responsibilities of sociologists. Where public sociologists envision the discipline becoming involved with political matters today, professional sociologists believe that the discipline's potential to change the world can only be realised after proving itself in rigorous, scientific, apolitical research. According to Turner (2005: 34), "if we want to help people, we need to get the ear of those who have political and economic power to change people's lives. […] To man the barricades in a cause simply barricades us from the halls of power." Steven Brint (2005: 46) identifies a widely-held sentiment among all sides of the debate: "[o]ur research touches directly on public issues – if only decision-makers would listen!" Despite a common experience of invisibility, both camps seem to feel threatened and under attack from within the discipline. Professional sociologists like Turner (2005: 36) write of the "attack dogmatism" of political correctness, while Burawoy (2005: 261, 274) describes the detrimental influence of careerism on the moral motivations of new sociologists. From grand

[11] Though admittedly, one exception is Burawoy (*e.g.* 2007).

metaphors invoking images of holy war, it is clear that both camps feel that a battle rages on for the future of the discipline. By implication, since sociologists want to change the world, the battle can be seen as a struggle for the future of the world itself.

Conservative and Neoliberal Sociology

With sociology's left-wing history and tendency towards (embedded) liberal values, sociologists at the other end of the political spectrum are uncommon. However, Bruce (1999), Murray (1990) and O'Keeffe (2004) are exceptions. Where professional sociology seeks to 'keep its hands clean,' avoiding both moral judgement and public engagement, conservative and neoliberal sociology embrace the evangelism of moral critique. While acknowledging that "people are not like atoms," Bruce (1999: 10, 16, 19) still considers the physical sciences the "best available template" for sociology. He describes morality and culture as social replacements for biological instincts which control the behaviour of "lower animals," and uses examples from the physical sciences to argue that competition is the only way to pursue truth (*ibid.* 19-21, 4, 92). In line with conservative values (*e.g.* Hayek 1960), his focus is towards the past, and his concern is with preserving a form of 'true' sociology, which is incompatible with a desire for social transformation (Bruce 1999: 81-84, 86-88).

Where conservative Bruce accuses other sociologists of being naïvely forward-thinking, neoliberal O'Keeffe (2004: 161) argues that "most academics in the [...] social sciences remain obstinately stuck in socialism's moralistic time warp." While both Bruce and O'Keeffe share broadly right-wing values (Elliott 2003: Chapter 9), the difference in their attitudes towards social change highlights a key difference between conservatism and neoliberalism. The former ideology promotes social stability through a return to the 'traditional,' while the latter promotes the stabilising transforming force of free markets, and its potential for social improvement. Where they align is in the belief that social change cannot, and should not, be centrally managed, especially on the suggestions of social scientists.

Where Bruce considers left-wing academics incompetent, O'Keeffe (*ibid.* 162) considers them actively harmful, arguing that rich societies "could be so much richer" if not for

"mischief-making socialist opinion" that encourages governments to "squander" wealth on the welfare state. Additionally, he blames "today's moral turpitude" on the spread of egalitarian ideologies, progressive education, multiculturalism and other "destructive ideologies" (*ibid.* 173-174). Both Bruce and O'Keeffe fear that attempts to influence social change might not be successful, and Bruce (1999: 80) invokes "the amply-evidenced fact that much action goes astray." Murray (1990: 33) expresses a similar sense of impossibility, when discussing 'the underclass problem,' disparaging "our cleverest social interventions" as useless at best, and destructive at worst.

Despite the divergence between conservatism and neoliberalism, these expressions of social conscience are both deeply rooted in a right-wing understanding of the world, emphasising individualism, competition, hierarchy, restraint, and equal rules rather than equal outcomes. There is a strong aversion to free-riding and 'deviance,' alongside steadfast loyalty to people with social privilege and the 'deserving poor' (*e.g.* Murray 1990: 1-4). There is also the sense that sociology's 'meddling' is doomed to failure, so the discipline has no responsibility to contribute to social change – in fact, it has an explicit responsibility *not* to do so, in order to protect the status quo. For Bruce and O'Keeffe, the only appropriate use for sociological knowledge is to gather it for future use, or to make it available for the use of elites. But it is clear that for right-wing sociologists, intervening in the affairs of society would be explicitly immoral; for nearly all other sociologists, to refrain from intervention would be immoral.

Morally Passive Sociology

In contrast to the morally-committed positions discussed above, from both sides of the political spectrum, a sterile, 'politically-correct' tone has become popular for introductory sociology textbooks (*e.g.* Cohen and Kennedy 2000, Marsh and Keating 2005, Taylor 2000). Rather than asking why we should study particular social issues, they focus on the issues themselves, avoiding taking sides and relegating discussion of purpose to the edges of the work. For instance, Marsh and Keating (2005) are vague about sociology's purpose, although quotations from Mills, Bauman, and other left-wing thinkers offer clues to the editors' own political leanings. They note the disagreement among sociologists about the discipline's

purpose and inoffensively identify sociology's aim as understanding individual experience in the context of social structures, defamiliarising the familiar, and "mak[ing] sense of the world we live in" (*ibid.* 7-10, 33). While they do not say why this is valuable, there is a sense that sociology not only gives students new information, but also new ways of thinking about that information, which may in turn lead to moral questioning. However, the links here are subtle and easily missed – making the textbook attractive to a wide audience, but also losing an opportunity to directly encourage moral questioning.

Cohen and Kennedy (2000: 3-24) lament the negative consequences of social change in recent decades, but focus on the discipline's explanatory role, implying that understanding social problems will necessarily change them. While 'raising consciousness' about social issues and their causes can change a student's understanding of the social world, it does not necessarily lead to moral questioning. In this sense, social conscience becomes relatively passive, its expression limited to absorbing information about particular issues (though some students will take the opportunity to give these issues deeper thought). However, unlike Marsh and Keating, they hint at a wider role for sociology: "never before has there been a greater need for so many decisions to be made or conflicts to be resolved by organizations set up to advance the cause of humanity" (*ibid.* 23-24). The reader can only guess that sociology is expected to advise those organisations, but the rest of the book contains almost no discussion of what sociological explanation is *for*. Similarly, they offer a enthusiastic conclusion to their text:

> [The changes of globalisation] provide a greater potential than ever before for the world's inhabitants to forge new understandings, alliances and structures […] in the pursuit of more harmonious, environmentally sustainable and humanitarian solutions to local and global problems. […] The future directions of global society depend on us as ordinary citizens, on what moral positions we choose and what battles we are prepared to fight. […] We hope we have encouraged you to see some of the many possibilities for social engagement, co-operation and positive change. (*ibid.* 372)

In this alluring statement, as with the rest of the book, Cohen and Kennedy keep sociology's role invisible, implying only that its insights may be of some help to global change-makers

(*ibid.* 323). While increasing knowledge of social phenomena contributes to the process of solving social problems, it is important to acknowledge the difference between the two, and how they relate to each other. There is a fine balance between political correctness and moral commitment, as I will discuss in the data chapters below. Books that lack passion and purpose are unlikely to inspire deeper engagement with either sociology or its subject matter.

Keeping this wide range of different moral visions for sociology in mind, we may turn now to examining the role of the discipline in Scotland, alongside higher education more broadly.

Historical & Political Context: Higher Education & Sociology in Scotland

The Enlightenment & The Democratic Intellect

As McCrone (1992: 100) argues, "[e]ducation and national identity are inextricably linked in Scotland" (also see Arnott 2005, Bond and Paterson 2005: 333, Humes and Bryce 2004: 108-110). For a small country, Scotland has a high number of universities, which has been the case from the fifteenth century onwards. Where England's secondary education system evolved from elite 'public' schools, Scottish secondary education arose from much more egalitarian parish schools (Paterson 2003b: 27-31). In 1696 the Scottish Parliament mandated that every parish have a school, if not already equipped with one, and many parishes in Scotland already provided primary education as early as the sixteenth century, to allow children to read religious texts (Herman 2001: 19). Beyond its religious facet, education embodied a paradox: on the one hand, the broadly acknowledged social purpose of education – at all levels – was to reduce social segmentation and link individuals with society, while also freeing talented individuals from social constraints (Humes and Bryce 2004, Paterson 2003b: 27-31). On the other hand, formal education in any society generally maintains and reinforces social inequalities (hooks 1994). In this sense, the development of a secondary and higher education system can be seen as a way for the privileged classes to maintain dominance as universal primary education took hold: by the mid-eighteenth century, Scotland's literacy rate was the highest in the world – up to 75 percent in 1750 (Herman

2001: 19-20). Lending libraries were popular among people who could not afford to buy books, and printing was an important industry in eighteenth-century Edinburgh (*ibid.*).

This was the context that gave rise to the Scottish Enlightenment. According to Herman (*ibid.* 54-55), it was the Scots who first linked history with human nature in the late eighteenth century – not far off Mills's (1959) insistence that we seek the connections between biography and history within social structures. Indeed, Wolfe (1989: 22-23) urges sociology to "recover the moral tradition that was at the heart of the Scottish Enlightenment," arguing that "social scientists are moral philosophers in disguise." Herman (2001: 54) calls Scottish Enlightenment thinkers "the true inventors of [...] the social sciences," because they were the first in the modern era to suggest that individuals and societies are a product of history, and that human beings are constantly evolving, both culturally and morally. This radical idea was built on the broad foundations of a generalist educational tradition. Scottish universities traditionally offered a broad introduction to what we would now call liberal arts (Paterson 2003a: 73-74). Whereas the English higher education system advocated early specialisation and the separation of distinct disciplines, the Scottish system was more in line with continental European models, favouring the general over the specific and averse to strictly vocational instruction (*ibid.* 4). All students were required to study language, literature, philosophy, ethics, mathematics, and physics, with an emphasis on the foundations, history, and first principles of each (Davie 1961: xii-19).

Within this system, philosophy was seen as a 'matrix discipline,' providing the critical and moral questioning on which to build all other inquiry (Herman 2001: 330). However, Scottish-style philosophy was practical rather than abstract, concerned with questions of right and wrong from social and political perspectives (Griswold 1991: 55). For example, Francis Hutcheson, one of the pioneers of the Scottish Enlightenment, advocated "education as a means of teaching human beings to be free and good" (Herman 2001: 141). A generation later, Adam Smith became well-known for his praise of capitalism, but he also believed that human beings are naturally social and sympathetic, with our 'moral imaginations' holding society together (Griswold 1991: 57).

For example, Smith wrote, “The wise and virtuous man is at all times willing that his own private interest should be sacrificed to the public interest of his own particular order or society” (Smith 1759 (2002): 277). He extolled prudence as an important virtue and criticised greed (*ibid.* 248-255), and argued that public support for education would help to counteract the negative effects of capitalism, strengthening individuals’ moral imaginations and instilling a sense of social responsibility (Herman 2001: 89-90). In this context, higher education was valued not only for its economic benefits, but for its wider role of social improvement, both for individuals and communities (Paterson 2003b: 100). During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this attitude was expressed through public lectures and what would now be called continuing education or open-access courses: “for middle-class Scots, education was more than just a means to professional credentials or social advancement. It became a way of life” (Herman 2001: 22).

Along these lines, Paterson (2003: 69) writes, “[a]ccording to the dominant epistemology of the Scottish universities, knowledge itself was public, a matter of clarifying and making rigorous the ‘common sense’ of society. The whole body of belief was later called democratic intellectualism.” In defining democratic intellectualism, Davie (1961) linked this sense of public knowledge with the practice of broad-based humanistic study, intensive teaching methods, civic responsibility and meritocratic access to universities. According to Davie (1961: 4-7), generalism, critical thinking and a grounding in philosophy allowed Scottish graduates a flexibility of mind that was missing in their English counterparts, and contributed to Scotland’s success at ‘exporting’ educated men (also see Herman 2001: 58).[12]

He argues that the 1707 Act of Union centralised control in political and fiscal matters, but allowed for diversity in social ethics (Davie 1961: xi-xvi). Religion, law, and education retained local autonomy, and together formed a strong foundation for Scottish cultural identity. However, Parliamentary reform in 1832 created a gap between religion and law that

[12] As Scottish universities were institutions of their time, degrees were not available to women – but open lectures and what we would now call adult education courses attracted women as well as men in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Herman 2001: 22).

widened over the nineteenth century, and "it was hoped that the universities would assume responsibility for the nation's spiritual leadership […] [and] achieve the practical reaffirmation of the moral ideals of Scottish life in a form appropriate to the nineteenth century" (*ibid.* xvi). In many ways, the democratic intellect was a fusion of Calvinism/Presbyterianism with Scottish Enlightenment thinking. According to Mecklin (1920: 28-30), Calvinism instilled a deep sense of civic responsibility and moral idealism. The practice of democratic intellectualism preserved these values, while replacing the Calvinist dogma of predestination with more progressive Enlightenment ideals of personal freedom and social improvement.

Where Davie focuses on the philosophical and pedagogical foundations of the democratic intellect, McCrone (1992: 95-101, 2004: 240-45) examines its meritocratic slant. He describes the popular nineteenth century story of the *lad o' pairts*, where a clever country boy is assisted by his teacher to gain sponsorship and attend university, later taking up a respectable, community-oriented profession. This story emphasises that Scots egalitarianism was not necessarily social equality – it was a meritocracy built on equality of opportunity, rather than outcome. In this way, Scottish higher education contrasted sharply with the English system, which existed mainly for the benefit of wealthy students. Tuition fees were as much as ten times lower in Scotland than in England, drawing students from the middle classes and even some from working-class families (Herman 2001: 22). For example, in 1790, half of Glasgow University's students came from merchant and industry families, versus only eight percent at Cambridge (*ibid.* 140-141).[13]

Despite the strength of Scotland's educational tradition, in the late nineteenth century the structure and function of Scottish universities began to change. The 1872 Education (Scotland) Act and particularly the 1889 Universities (Scotland) Act aligned the structure of Scottish higher education more closely with that of England, bringing changes to university exams, administration and curricula (Paterson 2003b: 35, 73-87). For Davie (1961: 6),

[13] In 2003-04, the figure in Scotland for the middle three quartiles of social deprivation is fifty-eight percent, with the lowest and highest quartile 14.2 percent and 27.8 percent, respectively (Reibig 2005: 31).

assimilation into the English system fundamentally threatened the democratic intellect of Scottish higher education:

> In short, they broke away from an educational system, at once unified and flexible, which had directly developed out of the mediaeval heritage, which had a close historical relationship to Continental educational norms and which, indeed, had long been world-famous, in favour of a piece-meal, opportunist policy, destined to conciliate the English rather than impress the world. (*ibid.* 7)

Even with Anglicisation and more recent changes, which will be discussed below, Scottish higher education still forms a significant part of national pride. McCrone (2004: 239) argues that universities exemplify the most cherished elements of "the Scottish character," including individual initiative, social ambition, and respect for talent. In a survey of academics in Scotland and England, Paterson (2003a: 67) finds "widespread attachment to a civic role for higher education, alongside strong attachment to traditional academic values," with the former expressed more strongly among academics in Scotland, regardless of national origin. Paterson and Bond (2005) also find that Scottish academics value civic engagement and critical citizenship much more strongly than their English counterparts, and academics in Scotland also engage more frequently in civic activities than academics in England (Bond and Paterson 2005).

In an opposing view, Kerevan (2003: 676) calls Davie's democratic intellect an "historical invention." He argues that prior to Anglicisation, Scottish higher education was a hybrid of secondary school, adult education, and what would be identified as university today. Far from eroding a rich pedagogical tradition, he argues, adopting the English system separated the universities from other educational sectors and improved teaching standards. He insists that Scottish universities have long maintained relationships with the private sector, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and business (*ibid.* 677-680). Based on these relationships, he identifies the Scots tradition as one of "practical intellect," characterised by links between academia, business, and middle-class culture (*ibid.* 678). Between funding from businesses and partnerships of training and employment, Kerevan argues that it was practical intellect – not democratic intellect – that allowed Scotland's universities to flourish

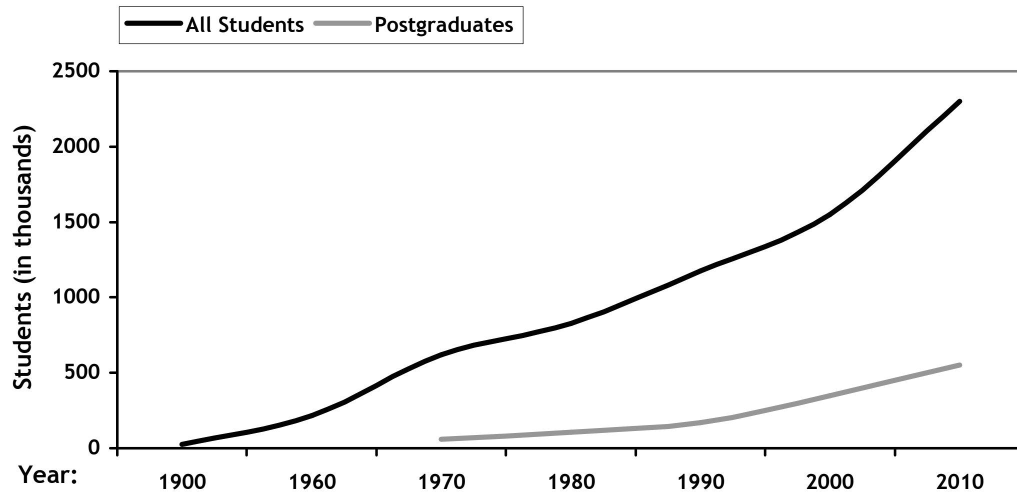
prior to nineteenth century Anglicisation. However, Bond and Paterson (2005: 332-333), citing other scholars who have recognised the role of vocationalism in Scottish higher education, explain the 'usefulness' of Scottish universities as an *expression* of civic virtues and democratic intellect, rather than negating such values.

Although Kerevan disagrees with Davie's concept of the democratic intellect, he acknowledges the power of this idea in debates about higher education (Kerevan 2003: 677). He identifies the myth of the democratic intellect as a key ideological force behind university expansion in the 1960s, which ironically contributed to further specialism and vocationalism that Davie would equate with 'Englishness.' Several decades later, Scots face "an emerging cultural crisis in the civic role of the Scottish university" (*ibid*).

Post-War Expansion & the Rise of Sociology

As shown in Table One, The first half of the twentieth century saw slow but steady growth in higher education in Scotland, which intensified in the post-war period (Paterson 2003b: 155). In 1962, government-funded grants were introduced for all students, attracting more women and working-class students (*ibid.* 157). Generous funding from a series of Labour governments allowed universities to expand rapidly, though with expansion came division between faculties and between academic and vocational programmes (*ibid.* 161-163). The expansion of further education drew working-class students into colleges and polytechnics, and the UK-wide expansion of higher education meant that Scottish universities became less rooted in their local areas as more students moved around the UK (*ibid.* 158-159). Throughout the expansion process of the 1960s and 70s, there was little debate about the purpose and social role of further and higher education (*ibid.* 173-175).

Table 1: Growth of Higher Education Through the Twentieth Century
(Sources: ONS 2002, Deem et al. 2007, NUS 2010)



	1900	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
All Students	25,000	216,000	621,000	827,000	1,175,000	1,550,000	2,300,000
Postgraduates			61,000	107,000	170,000	348,000	550,000

As discussed above, the study of social patterns was carried out long before the discipline had a name – for example, de Tocqueville's (1835) *Democracy in America* can be seen as a 'proto-sociological' study. However, as an academic discipline, early sociology departments were established in the United States and France towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the American Sociological Society was founded in 1905 (Burawoy 2005: 68). The London School of Economics founded a sociology department in 1903, but the discipline did not undergo major expansion until mid-century (Soffer 1982: 768). Soffer (*ibid.* 802, 800) links Britain's "faith in social evolution" to its failure to nourish sociology as a discipline until after the Second World War, when "the enormous and unprecedented need for national reconstruction demanded some kind of theoretical guidance." The emerging academic discipline of sociology sought to find its place among other social sciences to fill this role, even though the Conservative governments of the 1950s resisted calls to fund social science research (Fox 2005: 5-6).

Still, the British Sociological Association was founded in 1952 (*ibid.* 796) and departments of sociology were established at Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow Universities in 1964 and 1965 (Bechhofer and McCrone 2009, McCrone 2005, The University of Glasgow Story 2008).

Under the predominantly Labour governments of the 1960s and 70s the social sciences flourished: between 1962 and 1967, the number of social science undergraduates rose by sixty-two percent, and continued to rise (Fox 2005: 9). The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) was founded in 1965 to support social research through funding, advice, dissemination, and other services (*ibid.* 7). Initially, the policies of the Council were not meant to direct research, the direction of which was to be decided by academics themselves (*ibid.* 9-10), but, as core funding for universities has declined over the years, the availability of funding council grants now plays a much more central role in guiding research in the UK (Universities Scotland 2008). Additionally, the 1982 Rothschild Report advocated a focus on research of "public concern," so committees were developed to provide funding for particular areas of priority (Fox 2005: 17). And as the budget for research has changed over the years, so has it changed for training. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, more than half of the SSRC's budget was allocated for postgraduate training and studentships (*ibid.* 12-13) – and with the rapid expansion of higher education, jobs were plentiful for newly-trained academics (Paterson 2003b: 155). But in 1975, the SSRC began to prioritise research more strongly, and in the economic crisis of the late 1970s, the budget for postgraduate training was cut by a quarter (Fox 2005: 15).

1979-1997: Conservative Government

More cuts would follow after the 1979 victory of Margaret Thatcher – who Scotland never voted for (BBC 2009a). Thatcher famously later said, "there is no such thing as society" (Keay 1987)[14], and the SSRC's Annual Report of 1980-81 called the start of Thatcher's regime "a cold climate financially for the academic world" (Fox 2005: 15). The cuts to higher education were in line with Thatcher's strategy in other sectors: "Rather than launching an immediate and grand assault on all fronts, Mrs Thatcher picked off enemies one by one, each victory

[14] Wider context of this quotation: "I think we have gone through a period when too many people have been given to understand that if they have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it. 'I have a problem, I will go and get a grant to cope with it!' 'I am homeless, the Government must house me!' And so they are casting their problems on society, and who is society? There is no such thing as society! There are individual men and women and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves, and then also to help look after our neighbour. Life is a reciprocal business and people have got the entitlements too much in mind without the obligations. There is no such thing as an entitlement unless someone has first met an obligation."

consolidating her position for the next attack" (Matthews *et al.* 1987: 58). This period was characterised by a systematic "roll-back" of the post-war welfare state provisions (Peck and Tickell 2002: 388). University budgets were cut by up to forty percent in 1981, "on criteria that were not discussed or even revealed," with newer universities bearing much more of the burden than their ancient or Victorian 'red brick' peers (Trow 1998: 114). More cuts were to come over the course of the 1980s:

> They were introduced very suddenly, without any discussion or consultation with the institutions that were directly affected. [...] they were made without serious consideration of alternatives, without what we might think of as serious policy analysis. The cuts were put into effect immediately, not giving the institutions time to accommodate themselves to their new financial circumstances, or [...] influence the pattern of retirements. (*ibid.* 114-115)

In a process that Trow (*ibid.* 125) calls "policy by intent rather than by assessment of consequences," these "haphazard" and "traumatic" cuts led to staff-student ratios that varied wildly between institutions and disciplines, along with the consolidation and closure of departments that had shrunk to the point of being impractical (*ibid.* 119). The reason these cuts seemed so chaotic was that they were responsive to the advice of businesspeople, not educationalists (Wolf 2002: 99). Despite poor economic performance from the post-war period onwards, certain large companies and manufacturing firms held enormous sway over Conservative higher education policy: "under the Tory governments of the 1980s and 1990s, business opinions consistently carried more weight than those of the educational establishment" (*ibid.*). So alongside expanding student numbers, public funding per student decreased forty percent between 1979 and 1997 (Dearing Report 1997: 8.14). In an Orwellian twist, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, annual cuts of two to three percent were called 'efficiency gains' (Trow 1998: 120).

One major outcome of the cuts was a tremendous loss of 'slack' – in terms of both time and funding – which had previously entrusted academics and departments with the freedom to maintain a flexible balance in the division of academic labour (*ibid.* 124). According to Trow (*ibid.* 124-125), this withdrawal of trust was based on the misplaced assumption that "higher

education is a predictable, rationalisable transfer of knowledge and skills from teachers to students," and that research is a "programmable" activity that can be precisely scheduled and budgeted. In this sense, higher education can be reduced to a product or service that can be traded on the open market. By imposing market-based models to educational management, Thatcher and her successors practiced what Ball (2006: 72-73) calls "a form of policy magic" that relies on incorrect assumptions about the workings of both markets and education. In fact, seeking to quantify education in order to improve quality often had the opposite effect. For example, the introduction of targets-oriented funding in youth training during the early 1990s resulted not in more efficient training programmes, but in inflation in certificates awarded, with a resultant fall in the reputation and quality of the certificates themselves (Wolf 2002: 110).

Of course, the social sciences were not immune to Thatcher's cuts. The 1982 Rothschild Report concluded that "It would be an act of intellectual vandalism to destroy the [Social Science Research] Council," but the SSRC was renamed the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in 1983 (Fox 2005: 17). The then-chair of the SSRC/ESRC admitted that the Council "did a deal" – in exchange for survival, they accepted the necessity to "suffer more financial deals" (*ibid.*). And indeed, during the first eight years of Thatcher's reign, the ESRC's budget was cut, in real terms, by a quarter (Durbin 1987), losing six million pounds between 1983 and 1986 alone (Fox 2005: 18). In addition to cuts for research, this also meant reductions in postgraduate training budgets:

> Enormous concern was felt as the number of awards the Council was able to make diminished to a point where it was feared to threaten the future of scholarship in the social sciences. A problem compounded by the similar cuts then being made in university budgets. (*ibid.*)

The shift of name from the Social Science Research Council to the Economic and Social Research Council reflected a push towards greater instrumentalism in the social sciences. More broadly, egalitarian notions of the 1950s and 60s were replaced by business-based visions, and Hartley (2004: 284) sums up the dominant philosophy of politicians during the 1980s: "Individual freedom would replace social justice; quality would prevail over equality;

business contracts would replace social contracts." According to Robertson (1986: 275-277), Thatcher discarded the prevalent post-war notion that the state should have a role as guardian of jobs, wages and living standards (also see Buiter *et al.* 1983: 305-306). Instead, she pushed forward a neoliberal agenda favouring business needs, 'efficiency' and 'discipline,' and actively sought to drive down labour costs by manipulating the balance of supply and demand in labour markets and dramatically reducing unemployment benefits (Robertson 1986: 279-283, 288). In the higher education sector, tenure was abolished for new lecturers by the Education Reform Act of 1988, to facilitate the process of university restructuring with a growing preference for flexible and insecure forms of labour (Bryson 2004: 39, Deem *et al.* 2007: 45).

Parallel to the diminishing financial support and shift to insecure labour that occurred under Conservative leadership, universities and departments also became more accountable to government through bureaucratic procedures – most notably the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The first RAE was introduced in 1986 as a formal, centralised process for evaluating the research work of all disciplines and setting funding priorities (RAE website). Further exercises were conducted every three to five years until 2008, and in 2012 they will be replaced by a new Research Excellence Framework (REF). Both the RAE and REF place a premium on work that is profitable and easily measurable, and they place universities into formalised relationships of competition (Collini 2009a, Shepherd 2009a). While the stated aim is to encourage high-quality scholarly pursuits, sceptics insist that the RAE/REF subverts its own goals by forcing departments to defend themselves against closure, and the funding structures of the UK give significant advantage to departments and universities that perform well (*e.g.* Corbyn 2008, Marshall 2009, O'Gorman 2009). The Universities and Colleges Union (the main union for further and higher education staff in the UK) has maintained a policy of opposition to the RAE:

> The RAE has had a disastrous impact on the UK higher education system, leading to the closure of departments with strong research profiles and healthy student recruitment. It has been responsible for job losses, discriminatory practices, widespread demoralisation of staff, the narrowing of research opportunities through

> the over-concentration of funding and the undermining of the relationship between teaching and research. (UCU website)

1997-2010: New Labour Government

The New Labour government elected in 1997 inherited the legacy of Thatcher and her successor, John Major:

> In the late 1990s, UK higher education was in a mess. Policies had lurched from contracting the number of students to increasing them. Underfunding had left universities so stretched they were about to snap. The amount universities had to spend on teaching had halved, and funding for infrastructure and research had been reduced. (Crace and Shepherd 2007: 1)

In response to the 'mess,' a report was commissioned to examine higher education for the first time since the Robbins Report of the early 1960s (*ibid.*). The Dearing Report was most famous for recommending the introduction of tuition fees for undergraduates, but also recommended increased student numbers, wider participation, greater 'professionalism' among staff, increased use of technology, increased quality in teaching and research, stronger regional and community connections, and protection of the 'world-class reputation' of UK universities (*ibid.*). Writers of the Report also maintain that higher education should "play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilised, inclusive society," and "be part of the conscience of a democratic society" (Dearing Report 1997: 8.23, 8.5). The Report gives significant praise for the quality and efficiency of higher education, along with the dedication of its staff. It calls education "life enriching and desirable in its own right," and "fundamental to the achievement of an improved quality of life in the UK," setting out ambitious goals and targets for higher education (*ibid.* 8.2). However, in contrast, the writers also insist that higher education "needs to demonstrate that it represents a good investment for individuals and society" (*ibid.* 8.18).

It is this latter attitude that set the tone for the New Labour government's relationship with higher education. It maintained the neoliberal ideology introduced under Thatcher – but where the Conservative administrations were characterised by a destructive "rolling back"

and discrediting of welfare-state provisions, New Labour shifted to a creative "roll-out" strategy which developed and deepened the role of neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell 2002: 384). The most notable example was the abolition of student grants and introduction of tuition fees in 1998 (Ryan 2005: 94-96),[15] despite Tony Blair's insistence that his party's priorities were "education, education, education" (Coughlan 2007).[16] After the ravages of the 1980s and 90s, Sutherland (2004: 687) argues that universities have become much more reactive and focused on survival, responding to political agendas that impose a 'do more with less' paradigm (also see Hartley 2004: 284).

According to Sutherland (2004: 686), universities' "sense of worth and identity" has been displaced, and their sense of "self-direction and self-definition" has been lost: "washed out of the system by successive tides of change and revolution." They are expected to rely increasingly on non-governmental funding and to adhere to neoliberal 'free market' values of competition, privatisation, entrepreneurialism, and individualism (Deem *et al.* 2007, Law and Work 2007). Higher education has been re-branded as a personal investment for individual gain and a business investment for economic growth, with notions of its social and moral value conspicuously absent (Sutherland 2004: 687-689).

These changes have developed in tandem with changing financial policies towards higher education. In the late 1970s, universities in Scotland received eighty percent of their income from core public funding, while today the figure is only fifty-one percent; the remainder is made up from competitive research grants, tuition fees and corporate partnerships (Universities Scotland 2008). Meanwhile, the past half-century has seen a ten-fold increase in student numbers across the UK and a near-doubling of staff-student ratios (ONS 2002, Bryson 2004: 38, Deem *et al.* 2007: 38-39). Scotland has one of the highest university participation rates in the world, and also one of the highest completion rates: more than fifty percent of the population has studied at university by the age of twenty-one (compared with thirty-five percent in England), and forty percent of each age cohort will earn a qualification

[15] In Scotland tuition fees are currently paid by the devolved government for Scottish and EU students.
[16] It is telling that in protest of their deep cuts to higher education, Oxford University refused to grant honorary degrees to both Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair (BBC 2005).

(Caldwell 2004: 65). However, Scotland loses nearly a quarter of its graduates to work elsewhere in the UK (Newall 2004: 147).

Even while government support has been scaled back dramatically, higher education is seen as a high priority in the devolved government. The first independent committee of inquiry created by the Scottish Parliament examined student finance (Newall 2004: 141), and according to a 2002 Parliament Paper (quoted in Caldwell 2004: 70), "Ministers [...] have resisted the temptation to become involved in the detailed management of the [higher education] sector." Still, despite the ideal of Scottish universities remaining autonomous institutions, they are influenced by government through funding, and are accountable to both funding councils and Audit Scotland (*ibid.* 66). The government agencies and departments in charge of higher education also deal with further education and economic development: the Scottish Government Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department, and the Scottish Parliament Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee (*ibid.* 69). Combining higher education with economic development is in line with the Dearing Report, which maintains that "Universities are no longer ivory towers, but engines of the economy" (quoted in Newall 2004: 147).

2010 Onwards: Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition

The election of May 2010 offered no party an outright majority, in part because nearly all of Scotland favoured the Scottish National Party, Labour and the Liberal Democrats over the Conservatives (BBC 2010f). A hung parliament brought about an unlikely coalition between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, with Conservative David Cameron as Prime Minister and Liberal Democrat Nick Clegg as Deputy Prime Minister (*ibid.*). Cohen (2010) argues that the Liberal Democrats' "alliance with the right has sundered their links with the social democratic tradition," and critiques the increasing elitism of the British political class that was unimaginable half a century ago. Cameron and Clegg's cabinet, with twenty-three members, contains only four women, one of whom is the cabinet's only ethnic minority (BBC 2010g). While it is unclear what changes this will herald for higher education in

Scotland, the coalition is likely to continue, if not intensify, the cuts already in process under New Labour. Liberal Democrat Vince Cable will oversee higher education as part of his remit as the Secretary for Business, Innovation and Skills (*ibid.*), with Conservative David Willets as Shadow Secretary for Universities and Skills, and both have professed strong support of free-market capitalism (*e.g.* Laws and Marshall 2004).

Key Features of the Marketised University

> As the market enters the soul of the university, it has caused the commitment to the traditional values to contract. (Thornton 2009: 376)

The process of universities coming to function on the logic of the market has been well-documented by scholars in Europe, North America, Australia and other regions; it has been described using a number of names, including marketisation, corporatisation, commodification, McDonaldisation, privatisation, new managerialism, academic capitalism, etc. (*e.g.* Bertelsen 1998, Brown 2009, Deem *et al.* 2007, de Groot 1997, Hartley 1995, Law and Work 2007, Miller 1995, Prichard and Willimott 1997, Scott 2003, Slaughter and Rhoades 2004, Steck 2003, Thorne and Cuthbert 1996, Ylijoki 2003, de Zilwa 2005). While each of these processes is distinct, they are interwoven and have much in common, particularly in their consequences for higher education.

For example, Brown (2009: 3) writes, "Whilst conceptually marketisation and privatisation are distinct, in practice a marketised higher education system will be likely to have a significant degree of private involvement." Similarly, new managerialism (Deem *et al.* 2007) describes the practice of enforcing market-based priorities within higher education, and academic capitalism (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004, Ylijoki 2003) describes networks of actors within higher education marketing and selling university 'goods' and services, or engaging in market-like behaviour. Steck (2003: 71) argues that "[t]he trend we call corporatization describes not one or another single element of the contemporary university, but a range of many features that link together in a systematic fashion." The same can be said for the key process underpinning my analysis – marketisation. Imposed and passively accepted, or actively pursued or resisted, marketisation both transcends and is encompassed by the other

concepts in the literature on the changing structures of higher education. Where I refer to these concepts throughout the rest of the text, it should be understood that I refer to their junction with marketisation.

At its most basic level, marketisation can be understood as “the application of the economic theory of the market to the provision of higher education” (Brown 2009: 2). This trend represents a shift in the fundamental assumptions of what a university is (Readings 1996) and what it is for, in the context of the evolving knowledge-based economy:

> For centuries, the university has been viewed as the custodian of culture, the seat of higher learning and the paradigmatic site of free enquiry. These lofty aims have been turned upside down by a constellation of values emanating from the interstices of neo-liberalism, the new knowledge economy, and globalization. The result is that the university as a key knowledge producer is now primarily regarded as a source of wealth creation to be exploited. (Thornton 2009: 376)

While universities have always had connections with the private sector, including partnerships with industry in engineering, ‘applied’ sciences and business studies (Kerevan 2004), the relationship between higher education and the private sector is becoming more entrenched. Departments in the humanities and social sciences, along with entire universities, must now justify their existence on economic terms and rely increasingly on private-sector financial support (Lambert and Smith 2009, Shepherd 2009a). According to Bertelsen (1998: 130), increasing commodification of knowledge has led to universities “being systematically transformed into a pliant service industry for the late capitalist market system.” Of course, the actual processes taking place within and around higher education are much more complex, conflicted and fraught with contradiction, as I will discuss in Chapter Six. However, there is a real danger of universities becoming mere service providers in the information economy.

The withdrawal of government financial support for core operating costs, alongside wider neoliberal pressures, has given rise to the marketised university. Broadly speaking,[17] its key features are:

- Reliance on competitively-won funding, corporate sponsorship and postgraduate and overseas tuition fees
- Quantification and commodification of academic labour
- Focus on the financial aspects of research, teaching and knowledge exchange
- Restructuring and strategic planning for financial efficiency and profit-building
- Widespread use of business-oriented language in official documents
- Widespread use of performance indicators, 'quality control' regulation and managerial surveillance
- High levels of competition between individuals, teams, departments and institutions
- Widespread use of insecure and fragmented labour models

Following on from these trends, the effects of financial and bureaucratic pressures on working life in academia have been well-documented (*e.g.* Callinicos 2006, Deem *et al.* 2007, Giroux 2007, Jacobs 2004, Law and Work 2007), showing that structural changes in higher education have led to stress, dissatisfaction, heavy workloads, poor relationships with students and colleagues, and a transformation for the worse of the academic role. These themes and others will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Conclusion

Theoretically speaking, this research is grounded in a conception of social conscience as the emotional force which compels us to consider the social consequences of our personal actions, and to insist on moral action from the wider institutions of society. Social conscience is rooted in our understanding of the social world, and provides an intuitive sense of right and wrong when it comes to social organisation and social action. Because it is based on a person's values and worldviews, it is politically neutral, making social conscience a useful way to understand conflicting sets of values within a complex social sphere.

[17] And drawing on the following references: Bertelsen 1998, Brown 2009, Deem et al. 2007, de Groot 1997, Hartley 1995, Law and Work 2007, Miller 1995, Prichard and Willimott 1997, Scott 2003, Slaughter and Rhoades 2004, Steck 2003, Thorne and Cuthbert 1996, Ylijoki 2003.

Broadly speaking, the discipline of sociology is rooted in an understanding of the social world that favours left-wing values: empathy, diversity, social justice, etc. Early sociological thinkers like Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Mauss valued knowledge for its own sake and sought to develop immutable social laws, in a 'value-free' social science based on the physical sciences. From this foundation, 'value-rich' social science emerged in response to the pressing social issues of the post-war period. Classic sociological thinkers like Mills, Becker, Galbraith and the Gouldners urged the discipline to challenge the power structures of society and face its pressing problems head-on rather than taking refuge in ivory towers of detached irrelevance.

More recent scholars, including Bourdieu, Giddens and Elliott, make similar arguments, focusing on the importance of both honest reflexivity and critical subversiveness. In arguing for public sociology, Burawoy has re-ignited the debate about the role of moral commitment in the discipline, and Flyvbjerg revitalises ancient Greek ideas with his conception of phronetic social science based on practical wisdom. Meanwhile, right-wing scholars like Bruce, Murray and O'Keeffe attack the notion that sociology can be socially useful or politically engaged, and criticise the left-wing foundations of the discipline. In the realm of introductory textbooks, a morally passive paradigm has taken hold, seeking political neutrality and failing to question why the pursuit of sociological knowledge is worthwhile.

In the specific context of Scotland, Enlightenment concepts of rationality and moral questioning, alongside a social inclination towards egalitarianism, nurtured 'the democratic intellect.' This gave rise to a strong tradition of broad-based university education that emphasised rigorous philosophical debate and interdisciplinary understanding. This system shifted towards greater vocationalism in the nineteenth century, but even today academics in Scotland express a greater civic-mindedness than their colleagues south of the border (Paterson and Bond 2005).

After the Second World War, higher education across the UK experienced mass expansion, and post-war governments were broadly supportive of higher education. The economic

crises of the late 1970s brought the Conservatives to power for nearly two decades, and while higher education continued to expand, the Conservatives cut university funding and made dramatic policy changes, most notably the abolition of tenure in 1987. The Research Assessment Exercise was introduced as a way to allocate funding based on research performance, and universities saw their core budgets slashed (Trow 1998). In pushing universities towards a neoliberal market model, academics were confronted with much greater levels of bureaucracy, accountability and competition, alongside much less professional autonomy. The personal, professional and moral consequences of these changes will be discussed in Chapter Six.

The New Labour governments of the late 1990s and early 2000s accelerated these trends, introducing tuition fees for students while continuing to cut per-student spending on higher education. Universities have responded by relying more heavily on insecure labour models and forcing academics to 'do more with less' (Bryson 2004, Deem *et al.* 2007). The recession of 2008 onwards has squeezed university budgets even tighter, and the formation of a Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government brings greater uncertainty about the future of higher education.

It is within this interconnected context that the story of contemporary sociology in Scotland unfolds. Now that the backdrop has been created, we can turn to the approach and methods for telling the story itself.

Chapter Three
Research Approach & Methods

Overview

Before going into specific detail about the research process, it is worthwhile to give a broad overview – the practical elements of this overview will be discussed in more depth below. Cresswell (2007: 20-23) identifies four paradigms which are common in qualitative research: postpositivism, social constructivism/interpretivism, advocacy/participatory, and pragmatism. Broadly speaking, my thinking and approach fall into the social constructivist/interpretivist paradigm: I am interested in meanings and beliefs developed through social interaction, along with historical and social contexts. In line with Mills (1959), I seek to understand connections between biography and history within social structures, with a particular interest in values, their expression, and threats to that expression.

My research process has been iterative, moving between broad and specific contexts, between theory and data, and between different areas of inquiry. As with most qualitative research in the social sciences, this project has evolved over time, its shape arising from the data and the research process itself, rather than taking a preconceived form (Yin 1994: 52). For example, I started with a focus on philosophical questions about the junction between social conscience and academic work, but over the fieldwork and analysis process my thinking took on a much more practical element, considering how participants' material conditions (employment, workload, etc.) supported, shaped, or came into conflict with their moral views. This facet of my thinking began to develop during interviews with academic staff, and became stronger as I read and re-read the transcripts, where practical themes emerged as much more important than I initially anticipated.

As will be apparent from the context chapter above, my approach is not one of grand or abstracted theory (Mills 1959, Silverman 2007) – such approaches would be inappropriate for the subject matter and aims of this project. Instead, as Silverman (*ibid.* 120) advocates, theoretical thinking has been "an aid to sober, empirical research." My empirical research has

taken a hybrid form – a case study based in grounded theory, with elements of ethnography in the writing-up. According to Cresswell (2007: 73), "case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system" – an ideal approach for examining higher education in Scotland. Examining several disciplines would have been too broad, resulting in a superficial analysis given the time constraints of a PhD. On the other hand, a detailed ethnography of a single department would have been too narrow, given my interest in Scotland as a broad geographic context.

My 'middle path' has been to examine several departments within a single discipline – several cases within one case. With this approach, the morals and meanings associated with a single discipline (and threats to those morals and meanings) can be examined in depth, rather than spending most of my analysis clarifying intellectual and moral differences and similarities between disciplines. By choosing one discipline as a starting point, I was able to compare 'like with like' to a certain extent, while also being able to compare different types of institutions and the experiences of participants at different points in the academic life cycle.

According to Yin (1994: 46), a study of six to ten individual cases can, "in the aggregate, [provide] compelling support for the initial set of propositions." While this project seeks to identify patterns and develop explanations rather than test a hypothesis, examining several different sites across Scotland makes the project much more robust than the other possible designs. At the same time, Alvesson (2003: 181) advocates that an ethnography of the researcher's own academic sphere should "deliver an engaging empirical account, going beyond the forestage, in exchange for scoring lower on some other possible virtues, e.g. a lot of empirical footwork and procedure-following" – though I have sought to balance the two.

For the analysis, I took a grounded theory[18] approach (Cresswell 2007: 62-68, Glaser and Strauss 1967), developing explanations for academics' experiences based on interview data and other sources, including a review of relevant literature and a thorough examination of

[18] My core argument – that the marketisation of higher education is constraining academics' ability to express social conscience in their work – arose directly from the interview data, adding a new element to theoretical understandings of neoliberalism's effects on higher education.

university websites and other marketing materials. Rather than relying on a single source of data for my analysis, I sought to 'triangulate' (Yin 1994: 90-91) using several sources – or 'slices' (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 75) – again in an iterative process, each element of which will be discussed in more detail below. Alongside multiple data sources, I also developed a model for understanding social conscience, as discussed in the previous chapter. According to Glaser and Strauss (*ibid.* 6), it is acceptable to use models in grounded theory research that have not arisen directly from empirical data, as long as such models are "brought into relation to the data," as I have done throughout the data chapters.

After carrying out background research, I conducted an anonymous online survey of sociology undergraduates, followed by interviews first with PhD students, then with staff. Details of my rationale and process for these will be covered below. After transcribing the interviews in their entirety, I re-read them several times to identify themes, in the manner discussed by Cresswell (2007: 75), Glaser and Strauss (1967: 40) and Yin (1994: 104). These themes formed the initial basis for my analysis and write-up below. I used NVivo software to help identify patterns and narrow down the quantity of data relevant to my research questions, and continually returned to the data to refine my understanding of key themes throughout the writing-up process.

As I will discuss below, there was consistency across the accounts of nearly all participants, and to re-check the validity of these accounts (Silverman 2007: chapter 5), I cross-referenced participants' subjective views with relevant government statistics, previous scholarship and news reports. This has led to a very rich set of data and supporting evidence, which I have presented with an 'ethnographic flavour,' organising the write-up thematically rather than artificially separating the data from theory and analysis. An ethnographic style seemed to be the most appropriate for this particular research, allowing the organisation of chapters to arise directly from the data itself. Therefore, the 'data' or 'findings' chapters (Four, Five and Six) contain quotations, general themes, observations, some survey data, statistics, and previous scholarship, interwoven with my interpretations and some of my own experiences as a postgraduate. As Alvesson (2003: 176) points out, studying academia – and my own

discipline – as a PhD project constitutes “a double socialization process,” rendering my personal experience of academia a piece of ethnographic data in itself (also see Glaser and Strauss 1967: 254). The ethical ramifications of this fact will be explored below.

Site Selection

Among Scotland’s thirteen universities in the summer of 2007,[19] I identified which universities contained sociology as an academic unit, either on its own or grouped with similar disciplines like geography, anthropology or criminology. From these, I selected six with the ability to award sociology PhDs, identified through reading university websites and postgraduate prospectuses. By ‘supplying’ doctoral graduates to the higher education and social research sectors, these units (hereafter referred to as departments, though these include sections, schools and other designations) have greater influence than their non-PhD-granting counterparts. The way these departments practice sociology, and the kinds of values they incubate, will be carried by their doctoral graduates far beyond the walls of their universities. Additionally, because of the research focus signalled by the presence of PhD students, these departments are directly affected by the ongoing changes in research assessment and funding. On a practical level, it would be impossible to carry out interviews with PhD students in departments that did not offer sociology PhDs.

The six universities are located in four Scottish cities, with three ancient universities and three modern (1960s and 1990s). While research on UK higher education usually makes a distinction between pre- and post-1992 universities, I have chosen to categorise 1960s universities with their 1990s counterparts rather than with ancient universities because the former two seem more closely related in terms of prestige, structure and ‘feel.’ Additionally, it seemed more analytically appropriate to view the universities in two groups of equal size. Either way, all three university types are represented, including two Russell Group

[19] Abertay University (then University of Abertay Dundee), Glasgow-Caledonian University, Heriot-Watt University, Napier University, Robert Gordon University, University of Aberdeen, University of Edinburgh, University of Dundee, University of Glasgow, University of St. Andrews, University of Stirling, University of Strathclyde, University of the West of Scotland (then Paisley). Queen Margaret University College subsequently gained University status.

institutions, meeting Cresswell's (2007: 127) criteria for "stratified purposeful" selection – I have prioritised universities that offer sociology PhDs, but ensured a diversity among these. Yin (1994: 45-50) argues that survey-style 'sampling logic' (which aims to sample a certain percentage of a population) is less relevant in case studies than a 'replication logic,' where the presence of key cases takes priority.

Undergraduate Surveys

In September and October 2007, I designed an online survey[20] of approximately thirty questions, intended to examine undergraduate sociology students' attitudes towards sociology and social change. After refining the survey twice through pilots with friends and colleagues, I clarified several questions and shortened the overall format. The final survey included twenty multiple-choice and ranking questions, divided into three categories over six pages: demographic details, attitudes about sociology, and attitudes about social problems (questions and responses are available in the Appendix). All responses were anonymous, but participants were invited to separately enter a prize drawing for a £50 book voucher by giving their e-mail addresses in forms that were not linked to their responses.

In late October 2007, I drafted letters to the heads of the six departments I had selected, requesting access to their undergraduate students for the survey, via a link in an e-mail or posted in a Virtual Learning Environment. The letter was printed on University of Strathclyde letterhead, and included a brief description of my project, as well as contact details for my supervisors. I received immediate positive responses from three of the six departments, with a positive response from an additional department in December once I resolved a communication misunderstanding. In another department, there were major delays due to paperwork, and in the final department there were repeated delays due to administrative staffing issues. In one e-mail I was told that the department was "very stretched" – a good example of the patterns I will discuss in Chapter Six. After several rounds of e-mails to various administrators, some with no response, and after one of my supervisors

[20] Hosted on the website SurveyMonkey.com.

contacted the department head directly, I was still unable to gain access to the students in this department, so in the end my sample consisted of five departments (two ancient and three modern).

Heads of the five departments sent survey links to their students in April 2008, and the response was very good, even though students were in the midst of their exams and final projects. After a month, I sent reminders to the two under-represented sites, and there was soon a new wave of responses. The survey was closed in June 2008, and in total there were 551 responses – between 89 and 149 for each department, and a good balance between ancient and modern universities. While the data from the surveys was interesting and relevant to my original focus, after presenting preliminary results (Goldberg 2008b), the project changed direction significantly. During the analysis phase, a focus on neoliberalism's effects on higher education became much more important, and this was an area that was not covered by the surveys, rendering much of the survey data tangential.

Interviews: Overview

Once the surveys were underway, I turned my attention to interviews. I opted for individual interviews because I sought to gather rich qualitative data on moral themes that might be difficult to discuss in group settings, where it would also be impossible to offer participants anonymity. Practical reasons also played a role in my decision. For example, participant observation at six field sites would be impossible given the time constraints of a PhD, and organising focus groups would be very difficult given the busy schedules of academics. My original plan was to interview PhD students during April and May 2008, and staff during June and July. I chose to carry out interviews by participant type rather than site for several reasons: first, I was aware that different themes would arise for PhD students and staff, and by focusing on each group rather than mixing them, I felt I was able to 'spot' relevant themes more easily. On a more practical level, starting with PhD students would help me to gain confidence in my interview technique among peers, and I also knew that teaching staff would be unavailable during April and May due to exam administration and marking.

To recruit participants, I drafted an e-mail with a brief description of my research (*e.g.* Yin 1994: 66-68), explaining that "my research focuses on sociology in Scotland – experiences and attitudes of sociologists, motivations, the discipline's value to students and to wider society, changes over time, etc." These areas broadly reflected the main themes for interview questions, and the e-mail was worded as neutrally as possible. In order to avoid skewing participants' responses, I did not mention social conscience, as I will discuss below.

Initially, I sent the e-mail to all PhD students listed on the websites of the six departments, one department at a time.[21] Each mailing received several positive responses, and I interviewed two to four PhD students from each department during April and May 2008. In June, I drafted a similar e-mail to teaching staff at the six sites,[22] using a slightly more formal tone suitable for addressing my professional superiors rather than peers. I received only three responses, probably due to summer holidays. I interviewed three staff in July 2008, and sent another batch of e-mails in early September, with a much better response. I carried out fourteen more interviews from mid-September to early December, with two to three staff from each department. In total, there were eighteen interviews with PhD students and seventeen with staff.

Overall the response was good, despite Cresswell's (2007: 138-139) warnings about difficulty gaining access, most likely because of my position as an 'insider' or a peer, and because many participants were concerned about the current state of higher education in Scotland. While Alvesson (2003: 181) suggests an "emergent-spontaneous" approach to data collection when studying academia, such an approach would have been ineffective with six field sites, and inappropriate for this project. Instead I used what he calls a "planned-systematic" approach, where much of the research-gathering work is planned in advance and carried out systematically, resulting in "a pile of notes or interview statements to work with and from" (*ibid.*). However**,** I did take advantage of unexpected data-gathering opportunities. For

[21] Between four and thirty-seven PhD students in each department, with a total of one hundred eighteen.
[22] Between six and twenty staff in each department, with a total of eighty-three.

example, a PhD student suggested I interview her friend, and seminars and meetings I attended as a PhD student or tutor took on the dimension of participant-observation.

Pre-Interview Process

For both PhD students and staff, interviews took place in participants' offices, university meeting rooms, or local cafés, and each lasted between thirty and ninety minutes (most were around an hour). I began all interviews with a 'header,' as recommended by Cresswell (2007: 135). This included introducing myself, giving the names of my supervisors and reiterating the aims and focus of the project – a PhD on the attitudes and motivations of sociologists, again avoiding mention of my specific interest in moral motivations, to avoid skewing responses. Additionally, I informed participants that their responses would be confidential and anonymous, asked whether they consented to audio-taping,[23] and also gave the name of the head of my department at the time, who had agreed to be an outside contact if participants wished to voice any complaints or concerns about the project. I invited participants to ask any questions they had for me, and also asked them to fill in a brief form with their demographic details (job title or PhD year, gender, age range, nationality, ethnicity and class background).[24]

This pre-interview process was intended to gain verbal informed consent,[25] fulfil the requirements stated by my university's ethical guidelines, and gather demographic details. It also allowed me to 'set up' each interview in broadly the same way. On the level of social interaction it reinforced my status of an 'insider' (Goffman 1959: 67-68) and served to separate the interview 'temporal space' from other events of the participants' day (Hall 1959: 7). It also allowed participants to observe me for a few minutes before they were expected to speak, so they might feel more comfortable. In general the process went smoothly, with the notable exception of the demographics form – not unexpectedly, many participants took

[23] All participants were happy to be taped, and none asked for the tape to be stopped for any reason.
[24] In hindsight, I realise I should have also asked staff participants how many years they had worked in academia in order to precisely identify career stages, but I have identified approximate stages based on participants' academic biographies, alongside their job titles and ages.
[25] As my research was 'low-risk,' written consent forms were not necessary (*e.g.* University of Strathclyde 2009: 16-17), and my department's Ethics Committee approved my fieldwork without mention of such forms.

issue with the 'class background' question. A few challenged a 'tick box' notion of social class (see Sayer 2005, Chapter Four), and most asked whether I was interested in their early-life or current class affiliation. I assured them that they should indicate whichever social class they identify with, and two indicated dual identities – itself an interesting piece of data.

Ambiguity on the matter of class here was intentional: by asking participants to define their own notion of a 'slippery' sociological topic at the start, rather than imposing my definition, I hoped to set the tone for later questions where I would ask them to define and discuss broader topics, and to reinforce the verbal message (Hall 1959: 35) that the interview was about *their* opinions, not mine. In many ways, it was an expression or 'dramatic realization' (Goffman 1959: 40-44) of the social dynamic I wished to foster in the interview, with myself as a listener (Back 2007) and participants in a position of power, despite my asking the questions. Of course, staff participants already held a position of power as my academic superiors, but the opportunity to 'test' my sociological legitimacy helped to reinforce this. And with fellow PhD students, I wished to challenge the dynamic where interviewees are powerless or 'ruled' by an interviewer (Cresswell 2007: 140-141), and emphasise their status as my peers.

Interview Topics & Technique

Broadly speaking, the interview format was semi-structured (*e.g.* Cresswell 2007: 132-134, Yin 1994: 84-86). I had no specific list of questions, focusing instead on five basic topics for discussion:

- experience in academia;
- research;
- teaching;
- sociology's wider social purpose;
- and how participants' work expresses that purpose.

The choice of these topics was another form of triangulation – I did not wish to ask participants directly about their cherished values, especially given the typical British discomfort with directness (*e.g.* Mikes 1986, Walmsley 2003), but asking broad questions

about participants' working lives would implicitly reveal some of their work-related values. In order to avoid influencing responses (Cresswell 2007: 140, Alvesson 2003: 170), I specifically did not ask about social conscience, and did not mention social conscience in my e-mails. Obscuring my motivations in this way was what Goffman (1959: 141) might call a 'strategic secret' – hiding a key piece of information in order to gain a desired result; in this case, a more candid response. I described my project as examining the attitudes and motivations of sociologists in Scotland, but did not go into greater detail about the specific themes I was interested in. If participants were strongly motivated by moral concerns, I assumed they would speak freely about them – and indeed, nearly all participants discussed moral motivations for their work, even though they were not 'primed' to do so.

Still, because interviews are social interactions contrived for a particular purpose, and because participants are politically conscious actors, their statements do not necessarily reproduce 'objective' reality (Alvesson 2003: 168-171). Alvesson (*ibid.* 170) points out that in interview settings, academics – and indeed, members of any elite group – are likely to censor their speech based on professional loyalties and personal discretion. This is an important issue which I have kept in mind throughout the process, and indeed, several participants expressed relief that the interviews were anonymous, sharing opinions they considered sensitive. My sense was that for most participants, avowed dedication to truth and strong concerns about the state of higher education provided good motivation to be candid. However, even if participants voiced their beliefs of how sociologists *should* think rather than their actual innermost thoughts – or rather than their actual behaviour, as Kane *et al.* (2002) criticise – their accounts nonetheless provide important insights about the ideals and values of the discipline. And because I was approaching the issue of values laterally rather than directly, I felt that responses were candid and honest reflections of participants' views.

Beyond the question of beliefs versus action, Alvesson (2003: 172) notes the problem of over-familiarity inherent in research on academia: "Too much of organizational life is often too familiar. For academics studying other academics this is an especially strong problem." This includes ideas, structures and assumptions – but also people. However, it is important to

note that despite my ‘insider’ status as a PhD student, I am still a relative ‘outsider’ in most departments: less than a quarter of interviews were with people I knew previously, and these were not significantly different from the other interviews. I am also an outsider when it comes to nationality, so participants were willing to explain facets of the Scottish higher education system they might have assumed as prior knowledge for a Scottish researcher. In terms of ‘impression management’ (Goffman 1959: 32-40), with staff in particular I consciously emphasised the role of neophyte PhD student, and even with other PhD students I emphasised my position as a foreigner, to “allow the respondent to provide a fresh commentary” (Yin 1994: 85). While most PhD students treated me as a peer, a few late-stage PhD students and many staff took on the role of advisor, often giving their opinions about academia in the tone of advice for a new academic. Unsurprisingly, this dynamic had gender and age dimensions, with female and older participants more frequently adopting an advisor-type role, reflecting the kinds of relationships I will discuss in Chapter Five.

With all participants, I opened by asking how they became involved in academia. Inquiring about each participant’s academic biography helped to develop rapport and invoke a flowing narrative style with most participants. Further lines of questioning emerged naturally from academic biographies, and over the course of the interviews I moved through the five topics above as they came up, or when it felt appropriate to shift. Some participants spoke at great length without much prompting from me, often covering several of the five topics before I had the opportunity to ask about them. Others were much more concise, giving very brief and precise answers then waiting expectantly for the next question. This latter type of interview was much more challenging, with limited material from which to draw follow-up questions, and less sense of ‘flow’ than with the more talkative participants. While the difference was more to do with personalities than anything else, it still resulted in some awkwardness, and the two participants who were briefest in their answers both asked what I was ‘getting at’ with my questions. The rest of the interviews flowed well, and all yielded rich data for analysis, as I will discuss in the following chapters.

Interview Participants

Beyond affiliation with one of the six departments in this study, participants were self-selected: I e-mailed all sociologists in the chosen departments, and interviewed those who were interested enough in the project to respond.[26] Additionally, just under a quarter of participants – five PhD students and three staff – were personal contacts who responded positively to my standard e-mail, raising the important issue of prior relationships with fieldwork participants. I will discuss this issue in the Ethical Considerations section below.

While self-selection did not yield a statistically representative sample, I was more interested in speaking with people who were interested in the topic than becoming caught up in strict demographics. According to Yin (1994: 45-50), this approach is suitable for case studies – essentially my 'replication logic' was to find academics across six universities who 'have something to say' about their work as sociologists. Of course, this might have led to an over-representation of those with strong views, but these views were backed up by both qualitative and quantitative data from other studies. Viewed in light of the time pressures faced by academics, self-selection might have also led to an over-representation of those with the luxury of an hour's uninterrupted time – though several participants needed to answer phone calls or speak with unexpected visitors during the interviews.

Given the practical constraints of research in general and the time frame of a PhD more specifically, these kinds of biases were unavoidable. With the busy schedules of academics, it would have been impossible to meet specific demographic quotas within a fairly limited community, or to correct for imbalances between favouring those with strong views, time to spare, or countless other variables. Yin (*ibid.* 68) points out that a qualitative researcher "does not control the data collection environment as one might using other research strategies."

---

[26] With the exception of a few teaching staff for whom a suitable time could not be found.

However, while thirty-five participants make up a very small percentage of all academics in Scotland, they comprise twenty percent of the academic staff for sociology in the six departments, and fifteen percent of the total PhD cohort. In small departments I was able to interview up to half of the PhD students or staff. For example, in one department with four sociology PhD students, I interviewed two, and in another department with six sociology staff members, I interviewed three. These departments (and one other) were part of larger academic units representing a range of social science disciplines, so small departments are not over-represented in this sample. In fact, a range of department sizes is represented, from small departments with less than a dozen academic staff in total (sociologists and practitioners of other disciplines), to large departments with more than forty staff. A range of configurations is also represented, including sociologists working alongside other social scientists within cross-disciplinary departments, to those working in specific sociology departments.

Table 2: Interview Participants' Career Details

			Modern	**Ancient**	**Total**
PhD (18)	Early stage	• Full-time: year 1 or 2 • Part-time: year 1 - 3	3	6	9
	Late stage	• Full-time: year 3+ • Part-time: year 4+	4	5	9
Staff (17)	Early career	• Lecturers, age < 45 • Senior lecturers, age < 45 • Self-identified as new academic	4	2	6
	Mid career	• Lecturers, age 46 - 60 • Senior lecturers, age 46 - 60 • Professors, age < 60	3	4	7
	Near retirement	• Any role, age 61 - 65+ • Spoke about recent or upcoming retirement	1	3	4
Job title		Professor	2	5	7
		Senior Lecturer	1	2	3
		Lecturer	4	2	7
		Total	8	9	17

Table 3: Interview Participants' Demographic Details (unselected categories excluded)

		PhD	Staff	Total
Gender	Female	12	6	18
	Male	6	11	17
Ethnicity	White	17	17	34
	Mixed	1	-	1
Age	21-30	10	-	10
	31-40	7	5	12
	41-50	1	4	5
	51-60	-	4	4
	61+	-	4	4

		PhD	Staff	Total
Nationality	Scottish	9	8	17
	Other British	5	7	12
	Other Anglophone	2	2	4
	Non-Anglophone	2	-	2
Class Background	Working Class	3	7	10
	Lower Middle Class	8	4	12
	Middle Class	7	5	12
	Upper Middle Class	-	1	1
	Not Given	1	1	2

Broadly speaking, there was a good representation of all PhD and career stages among participants, well balanced between university types (as shown in Table Two). Where interviews are quoted in the data chapters below, I have identified participants with their job title or PhD stage and university type, as these are the most relevant factors for contextualising their voices while preserving their anonymity. Also to preserve anonymity, I have omitted any potentially identifying details, such as research focus or details of academic biographies. In some instances, I have indicated gender, career stage or other information where relevant (where this is the case, I have omitted the letters used in place of pseudonyms). For example, the long experience of participants near retirement was often relevant in their reflections on changes in higher education that I will discuss in Chapter Six.

Despite the range of career stages represented, the ratio of career stages among staff did not quite reflect the ratios found in the UK academic workforce at large. For example, I did not interview any research-only staff, who make up nearly a quarter of the academic workforce (HESA 2009), because my focus was on the more 'traditional' role combining researcher and teacher, and the struggle to balance these roles. On the other hand, it is likely that several of the early-career staff participants were on fixed-term contracts. As my initial focus was not on labour force issues, I did not realise that contract type would be relevant to the research

until the interviews were nearly complete, so I did not inquire about the employment contracts of staff participants. However, several PhD students spoke about their experience of hourly teaching contracts, as I will discuss in Chapter Six.

Another slight mismatch with the broader context of higher education was that professors were over-represented: more than forty percent of staff participants were professors, while they make up only ten percent of academics more broadly (HESA 2009). Furthermore, four of the seven professors were women, which is very strong representation considering that less than twenty percent of UK professors are women (Lipsett 2008). However, as 'elites' in the academic hierarchy, professors are a difficult group to 'capture' for research purposes, so their over-representation can be seen as a strength here. Additionally, comparing their perspectives, from positions of relative power, with the perspectives of their less-powerful colleagues offers a more well-rounded analysis of higher education than if only one or two professors had been interviewed.

The bias towards professors most likely arises from a combination of ideological and practical issues. On the practical side, professors generally have a lighter load of undergraduate teaching than their junior colleagues (Deem *et al.* 2007: 72), potentially giving them more flexibility to schedule an interview, despite administrative responsibilities. Indeed, five professors mentioned that they were not doing much (or any) undergraduate teaching, whether due to recent or upcoming retirement, or to focus on research or postgraduate teaching. On a more ideological level, professors tend to have greater personal exposure to the 'big picture' of academia. As I will discuss in Chapter Six, all staff are struggling with the changing structures of higher education, but it is often senior staff who must impose difficult or unpleasant new policies on their colleagues – in this sense, senior staff must find a balance between the role of academic and that of manager (*ibid*, Chapter Four). Tellingly, five of the seven professors (and indeed, nearly all participants) strongly identified as academics, with administrative and management duties described as job requirements rather than core elements of their vocational identities. In the case of female professors, it is likely they were so well-represented in this project *because* they are such a

minority in academia at large – three expressed a desire to ensure that the voices of female professors were heard.

In terms of demographics, an appropriate range of people was represented (as shown in Table Three). Just over one-third of staff participants were female, broadly reflecting the gender balance of staff in Scottish universities[27] (BBC 2007, HESA 2004, Lipsett 2008). Two-thirds of PhD student participants were female, which more closely matches the undergraduate gender balance for UK social science students, but is not far off the 57 percent figure for postgraduates (Hill 2004). Participants were nearly all white – again reflecting the demographics of UK higher education[28] – and predominantly from English-speaking countries, mostly the UK.[29] A wide range of ages was represented, from early twenties to late sixties, with four near retirement, two of whom were professors. Participants came from a range of class backgrounds, roughly a third each of working class, lower middle class and middle class, and as mentioned above, two indicated dual identities. Statistics on the class origins or identities of academics do not appear to be kept, though there is ample literature on working-class academics' experience of being 'outsiders' (*e.g.* Borkowski 2004, Rodriguez 1982, Tate 1996) – particularly female academics (*e.g.* hooks 2000, Tokarczyk and Fay 1993, Mahony and Zmroczek 1997: Chapters 3-5, 11 and 16).

Interestingly, there was a much higher proportion of staff than PhD students who identified as working class. The three PhD students who considered themselves working class were among the older PhD student participants (between 36 and 45 years old), and had embarked on their postgraduate education after a period of working outside of academia. On the other

[27] Excluding research-only staff in the most recent figures (Lipsett 2008), which were not separated by gender in earlier figures. In 2006-07, academic research/teaching staff in UK universities were 39% women, including both part-time and full-time (*ibid.*). In 2005-06, full-time academic staff (including research-only) were 36.6% (BBC 2007).

[28] In 2003-04, staff at Scottish universities were 92.2% white (Education Guardian 2004).

[29] In 2005-06, EU students comprised 4.5% of the UK student body, and non-EU overseas students 9.6%. In 2008-09, the figures were 4.9% and 10.5%, respectively (BBC 2010e, Ramsden 2007: 24, HESA 2010). Similar statistics were not available specifically for postgraduates or academic staff. 5.6% of PhD student participants in this project were from the EU, and 16.7% non-EU countries, and 5.6% each for staff. Compared with engineering and the physical sciences, sociology does not attract a large proportion of international students at the undergraduate or postgraduate level (*ibid.*), likely due to the lack of an obvious career path and limited funding availability.

hand, three of the seven staff participants who identified as working class had never worked outside of academia. These patterns offer an interesting insight into changing conceptions of class, and provide context for participants' voices below.

Analysis & Writing-Up

After transcribing all interviews and re-reading them several times to identify themes, (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009, Cresswell 2007: 62-68), I used NVivo software to code the transcripts and narrow down the quantity of relevant data for my analysis. This process was based on Stake's (1995: 74) concept of 'categorical aggregation' – rather than seeking to interpret whole transcripts, I 'aggregated' instances of participants speaking on particular themes, then examined the contents of the categories they formed, without losing sight of the context within individual interviews. Ultimately, the goal of the process was 'explanation-building' (Yin 1994: 110-112), moving in an iterative way between the 'big picture' and the details of participants' accounts, between their experiences and explanations of the social structures and processes underpinning those experiences. In this way, the categories developed through open coding were further divided into smaller sub-categories, which I 'saturated' with data, ultimately "reducing the database to a small set of themes or categories that characterize the process or action being explored" (Cresswell 2007: 160). Through a process of 're-shuffling' and testing different configurations, three central themes emerged, which ultimately provided the shape for this dissertation: the discipline of sociology, positive experience in academia, and challenges to that positive experience.

Obviously, these three themes are strongly interwoven, and by examining them separately as well as how they connect I was able to identify patterns and 'flesh out' the individual stories told by participants. For example, I noted the extent to which participants spoke about particular issues – not always the ones I expected – and on which issues they were silent. I noted particular attitudes that arose continually, and other attitudes that were unusual. Some participants spoke at length on certain issues, or remained conspicuously silent. Often there were gender-related or institutional patterns within particular themes. Using the software to help organise the data, I was able 'spot' issues that were not immediately apparent, and

discard themes which seemed relevant initially, but lost importance when taking the thirty-five transcripts as a whole. Inevitably, after several 'rounds' of the coding and analysis process, the project moved in a new direction (*ibid.* 62-68). Values remained important, but the effects of participants' working conditions on the expression of their values became much more important, as will be clear from the organisation of the chapters below.

Analysis continued throughout the writing-up process; new connections and patterns emerged as I continued to view the data in different configurations and from different perspectives. The initial structure of the data chapters grew from the data itself – mostly interview transcripts, alongside some survey data and university marketing materials. Broadly speaking, there was consistency among the various data sources and interview participants – but to re-check the validity of these accounts (Silverman 2007: Chapter Five), I cross-referenced participants' subjective views with relevant government statistics, previous scholarship, historical accounts and news reports. There was strong correlation here – all sources were telling the same story, with very few exceptions (which will also be discussed). By combining supporting materials with the data, I was able to again 'flesh out' the story and develop a robust understanding of what has been happening in Scottish higher education over the past few decades, and what is happening now.

As with any PhD (Phillips and Pugh 1987), practical challenges arose during the writing-up process. In particular, it should be noted that despite several attempts to register on the Higher Education Statistics Agency website and contact HESA directly, I have been unable to obtain detailed statistics on students or staff, aside from information available on the public pages of the HESA website. Therefore I have relied heavily on statistics cited in news stories, public reports, books and scholarly articles, which I have sought to double-check between multiple sources where possible. Additionally, gaps in the literature have meant that in some areas I have relied more heavily on 'thin' evidence than I would have liked, for example studies on mental health in academia and class backgrounds of academics.

Ethical Considerations & My Position

I obtained approval on 10 March 2008 from my department's Ethics Committee to carry out fieldwork. Throughout the research process I have complied with the University of Strathclyde's (2009) *Code of Practice on Investigations on Human Beings*[30], which is a requirement for carrying out any research associated with the University. In particular, all participants consented to participate and were not coerced, I have preserved their dignity and rights, maintained their privacy and confidentiality, avoided repeating previous research, and stored all data securely (*ibid.* 4-5, 14). I made clear that participants did not have to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable with, and the information I sought from them was generally of a non-sensitive nature (*ibid.* 15-16). Any potentially sensitive information has been considered in my analysis, but omitted from the write-up.

The *Code of Practice* also requires transparency and openness (*ibid.* 4), which I have maintained for the most part – though as discussed above, I did not mention the full details of my research aims, in order to avoid influencing participants' responses. I felt that being completely open about my focus on social conscience might lead to less reliable responses, with the possibility of participants seeking to 'give me what I wanted,' consciously or unconsciously (see Alvesson 2003b: 170). To avoid this, I felt that being vague about the aims of the project would not raise any serious ethical issues. In this choice, my aim was discretion rather than deception, and I did not believe that participants would object to the focus of the research, or that it would cause distress (University of Strathclyde 2009: 15). Additionally, information about the project was publicly available and easily accessible on my department's website and my personal website, though none of the participants mentioned reading this information.

Another potentially tricky area has been preserving participants' anonymity. While I have omitted personal information from quotations, there is still the potential that individual voices may be recognised – after all, this research will be disseminated to sociologists (among

[30] Earlier versions of the Code are essentially the same as the latest version.

other people), many of whom will be colleagues of participants. Speech patterns, typical complaints and unusual anecdotes may 'give away' the fact that someone participated in this research. While the potential for a certain degree of exposure is inevitable, I have sought to be sensitive and err on the side of caution. In particular, I have avoided including anecdotes that may be considered sensitive, such as specific problems with colleagues.

A more broad-based ethical question has been the legitimacy of carrying out research 'on my doorstep,' including interviews with eight personal contacts. According to Alvesson (2003b: 167), "personal involvement should not necessarily rule out an inquiry, it may be a resource as much as a liability." For Alvesson, the liability in studying one's own academic setting arises from self-censorship in matters of "exposing 'backstage' conditions" due to group loyalty or fear of organisational reprisal (*ibid.*). However, what began as a question of academics' personal motivations evolved into a critical examination of the 'backstage' working conditions of academia. Keeping such information hidden would be *dis*loyal, both to academics, their students and the broader society which supports and ought to benefit from higher education.

Another potential liability was the issue of responses being skewed by a prior relationship with participants. However, in a close reading of the interview transcripts, there was no significant difference between the responses of the eight participants I already knew and others who I had not met before the interviews, indicating that a prior relationship did not influence their responses. Concerns, experiences and opinions fell into the broad categories I will discuss in the chapters below, and the issue of prior relationship did not constitute a meaningful category in the analysis – though this was a category I had in mind when I sought patterns in the interview data.

On a practical level, my own department met the criteria by which I selected the other field sites, and with a relatively small number of possible sites it seemed unwise to exclude it. On a practical level, including my own department gave me relatively easy access to participants, which I did not wish to take for granted. Given the uncertain nature of qualitative research,

at the start of the process there was no guarantee of attracting enough interview participants to build a rigorous study. Additionally, there was also a psychological element here. Due to the nature of the research, I knew I would be speaking with potential future colleagues who would be in a position to judge my interview technique – a daunting prospect. The ability to begin the process of interviews with people I knew helped to ease my anxieties and develop confidence, which made the process of building rapport much smoother.

On a more philosophical level, I have explained my reasons for studying academic sociology in Scotland above, but it is important to further justify the choice on ethical grounds. As a new academic who hopes to pursue a career in Scotland, I have a strong personal interest in the trajectory of Scottish higher education. Some might consider this a threat to my 'objectivity' as a researcher (*e.g.* Bruce 1999). However, strict objectivity is neither possible nor desirable – as Benton and Craib (2001: 87) argue, the work of social science is to elaborate meanings within social worlds, and subjective experience adds complexity and insight to detached and rational observations. According to Agar (1982: 783), the trick is to balance the two: "ethnography is neither 'subjective' nor 'objective.' It is interpretive." He advises researchers to "quit worrying about person-independent access to an objective world, not because it is a difficult goal, but because it is a delusional one that strips away some important aspects of ethnographic work" (*ibid.*). In this sense, my research is made richer by the fact that I am studying a social sphere while also experiencing it myself, and indeed seeking professional entry into it. As Mills (1959: 195) argues, intellectual craftsmen "do not split their work from their lives."

In this sense my own position as a researcher has been a useful resource. As an international student based at a Scottish university, and as a sociologist with a background in cultural anthropology and human ecology, I stand on the boundary between insider and outsider in the context of this research. This insider/outsider position gives me access to the social world of Scottish sociology as both a researcher and a participant, while allowing me enough distance to bring a fresh perspective. My position as a PhD student without a strict research

council grant[31] gives me considerable freedom to be critical of higher education, in a way that might be more difficult for someone with an established academic career, as I will discuss in Chapter Six. At the same time, I hope to pursue a career in Scotland, so there are elements of professional risk involved in criticising my future employers.[32] It is precisely this conundrum that informs my research and gives me an experiential understanding of the issues faced by academics across Scotland.

However, discussion of these issues will come in due course. First I will turn to the way that participants view their discipline and their academic work, before discussing the pleasurable and motivational parts of that work, and finally how the neoliberal restructuring of higher education has been changing the nature of their work.

[31] I have been largely self-funded throughout the PhD, receiving a tuition waiver during my second and third years thanks to an Overseas Research Student Award and University scholarship.

[32] I received a taste of this in 2007, when I published commentary in *The Scotsman* critical of the University of Strathclyde's strategic plan (Goldberg 2007). Five days later, a dismissive response was published from the university vice-chancellor, rebuking some of my points and ignoring others, while subtly denigrating my status as a foreigner (Hamnett 2007). It was a good lesson in the speed with which criticism can reach the highest levels of management, and the speed with which a response can come.

Chapter Four
Constructing Sociology

> At any given moment, of course, 'social science' consists of what duly recognized social scientists are doing – but all of them are by no means doing the same thing, in fact not even the same sort of thing. Social science is also what social scientists of the past have done – but different students choose to construct and recall different traditions in their discipline. (Mills 1959: 19)

Understanding sociology is the first step in understanding why participants engage in this work, as I will discuss in Chapter Five. By examining what participants consider valuable in sociology, we can understand how they construct the discipline and their place within it. Defining sociology may seem obvious – introductory texts stretch back more than a century (*e.g.* Durkheim 1895, Weber 1897), and the subject benchmark by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency provides a clear description:

> Sociology as a discipline is concerned with developing a knowledge and understanding of the social world from a distinctively 'social' point of view. Its focus is on the relations that connect individuals, groups and institutions. (QAA 2000: 2.1)

However, central to this project is understanding how contemporary sociologists in Scotland actually see their work, their discipline, and its purpose, in an effort to understand what it offers to wider society, especially in the context of the significant changes discussed above and in Chapter Six. In particular, it is important to consider what social values are expressed in participants' understanding of sociology as a discipline, which in turn will shed light on the moral dimensions of sociology and how those dimensions inform participants' academic practice. Of course, individual sociologists will have their own views, but some patterns can be gleaned from a close reading of the existing literature, combined with interview participants' descriptions of their work, their experience, and their beliefs about the discipline's wider social purpose.

These descriptions ranged from practical accounts of sociological labour to much more philosophical reflections on a grand scale. Some of the more philosophical views are worth noting here, to frame the more day-to-day tasks of the discipline, which will be discussed below. Many participants spoke in philosophical terms, with broad and sometimes idealistic visions providing context and meaning for their work:

> The opportunity to spend time with students, trying to show how the world operates, it's like a commercial break from the rest of their lives, isn't it? Kind of the un-commercial break. *(professor E, modern university)*

> Sociology is, in a certain sense, modern society's self-consciousness of itself. [...] It's modern society reflecting on its own nature. [...] Sociology's role in society, for the last 200 years, has been [...] the self-questioning soul of modern society. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> Sociology is about everyday life. [...] Some of the most important works of sociology have been written in prisons, or in trenches. [...] The history of sociology has been quite heroic in many ways. [...] There have been certain individuals who have taken great risks, looking for what the truth is. *(lecturer L, modern university)*

The virtues alluded to here were common throughout the interviews – service, commitment to truth, courageous and persistent questioning, resistance to injustice, and the simple virtue of choosing to see the world differently from how it first appears. Dedication to these kinds of virtues form part of what Weber (1897: 5) would call "conscious motives" for participants' work – explicit meanings and motivations. They also represent explanatory narratives that participants have constructed about their social world (Benton and Craib 2001: 80) – and of course, we all ascribe meanings to objects and activities to make sense of the world (Donald and Hall 1988, Ball and Dagger 1995). Meanings for sociological work can be discerned in the ways that participants speak about the discipline and its purpose, and through this we can examine both their 'conscious motives' and what I would call 'conscience motives,' rooted in values which may or may not be conscious. Where the former may reflect any number of motivating factors – intellectual curiosity, prestige, practical concerns – the latter reflect a deep-seated sense of right and wrong both on a personal level and a wider social level (also see Neafsey 2007: 36-40).

What is sociology and why is it valuable?

Three broad themes emerged in interview participants' descriptions of the discipline and its purpose: understanding, judging/challenging, and changing the social world, all of which connect strongly with social conscience. Awareness of social issues and their causes arises from a clear and sophisticated understanding of the social world; a critical outlook is necessary to question why injustices persist, who is culpable and how; and seeking to effectively intervene and change the social world is an exercise in translating internal values into external reality. There was a strong link between seeing and understanding injustice and its structural causes on the one hand, and a sense of social responsibility on the other – and the practice of sociology contributed to both. Not only did participants feel that the discipline helped them understand social problems more clearly, nearly all saw teaching sociology and conducting sociological research as part of their contribution to positive social change. Additionally, some chose to engage in activism or advocacy beyond academia, using sociological insights to benefit a wide range of organisations and publics.

While all participants mentioned sociology's focus on understanding the social world, they placed varying degrees of emphasis on this, with some speaking much more passionately about sociology's critical and social change roles – whether expressing support for these roles or challenging their validity. Four first-year PhD students did not mention or were ambivalent about sociology's critical and social change functions, but all other participants spoke positively about all three roles, indicating that these are the broadly accepted elements of the discipline.[33] As discussed earlier, many of sociology's key thinkers shared these views – or were the source of them. To quote Marx (1888, thesis 11), for example, "philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." Durkheim was more focused on social change on an ideological level (Coser 1977: 129-149), while Weber (1922) believed that academic study and political engagement – or even political opinion – should not be mixed: "whenever the man [or woman] of science introduces his personal value judgement, a full understanding of the facts *ceases*." (*ibid.* 14,

---

[33] Additionally, the focus on understanding and changing the social world was backed up by undergraduate survey results (see Appendix).

original emphasis). Still, all three sought to make sense of the social upheaval wrought by European industrialisation, and later scholars followed suit (Hughes *et al.* 1995, Benton and Craib 2001). Later, in the second half of the twentieth century, scholars like Mills, Becker, Gouldner, and Bourdieu brought the social change aspect of the discipline to the forefront, while others focused more on explanation and critique, or sought to keep a holistic grasp of all three: "the object of the exercise should be to change the world, but [...] more effective strategies for changing it will be worked out if we first interpret it correctly" (Rex 1997: 4).

Linked with the three broad themes were several other facets of the sociological enterprise: its interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary nature, questions about how knowledge is gathered and who it is for, the discipline's relationship with structures of power, and where personal responsibility and political beliefs fit with sociological work. Both the scope of participants' views and the disagreements and contradictions between them indicate that sociology is a 'broad church.' As described by the lecturer above (p. 86), many types of intellectual endeavour can be classified as sociology, even when they take place outside of formal academic structures. However, common themes draw discrete boundaries around the discipline. Perspectives on sociology's 'identity crisis' will be addressed in Chapter Five; in this chapter I will focus on participants' views about the nature of the discipline and its value, both to students and to wider society.

Unsurprisingly, all participants to varying degrees considered sociology a valuable subject for undergraduates to study, though some acknowledged that the discipline's 'usefulness' in terms of employability is not necessarily obvious. Still, 'transferable skills' to prepare students for the job market were valued alongside skills and tools for critical citizenship, which included basic intellectual skills, critical awareness, a better understanding of the social world, the ability to see connections between different disciplines and realms of social life, and a sense of possibility in changing the social world. Participants considered sociology a positive force in developing critical and well-informed citizens, as well as informing policy and social change on a wider level, and generally questioning the taken-for-granted assumptions and institutions of society. Though participants did not use the phrase social

conscience during interviews, sociology was clearly seen as a means of expressing it. But all moral and political questions aside, many participants saw sociology simply as a sensible discipline to pursue, looking at the social world that surrounds us all:

> We ask a lot of questions about people as individuals, in psychology. We ask a lot of medical questions. We ask an awful lot of questions about biology, chemistry, physics. It makes perfect sense to ask questions about people and how they behave as groups in wider society. *(early-stage PhD student H, modern university)*

Understanding the Social World

All interview participants spoke about sociology as a way of understanding the social world and its various elements, connecting personal troubles and public issues (Mills 1959). An early-stage PhD student at an ancient university summed it up well: sociology is "a way of exploring and offering explanations for why people live the ways they live." Undergraduates shared this view, with nearly all survey participants considering sociology's main focus as understanding the social world – whether understanding how society works, understanding social problems, or building knowledge about society (see Appendix). This might be seen as stating the obvious, but it provides a counterargument to those who criticise the public sociology movement and individual scholars for sharing their political views with students and allegedly subverting the knowledge-building purpose of the discipline. For example, Bruce (1999: 81, 86) accuses "partisan" lecturers of being "impostors in the sociology camp" who distract students with "external agendas."

Contrast this with Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992: 51) assertion that "social science necessarily takes sides in political struggles," and Becker's (1967) insistence that political neutrality is impossible, so the question is not whether to take sides, but rather, "whose side are we on?" In fact, the dedication expressed by Bruce and others (*e.g.* Deflem 2004, Tittle 2004, Turner 2005) to the *appearance* of detachment is an 'agenda' in itself, and the fervour with which they cling to it indicates its emotional charge – what Mills (1959: 79) calls "the curious passion for the mannerism of the non-committed." As discussed in Chapter Two, many right-wing sociologists' beliefs about the discipline are rooted in the fear that

premature action – including 'taking sides' prematurely – may cause more harm than good. But Neafsey (2007: 140-144) maintains that a refusal to 'take sides' represents a lack of empathy which disconnects us from our humanity, and Back (2007: 8) explains that being "a partisan to the human story in all its manifold diversity does not exclude maintaining a critical orientation to it." Far from seeking to 'indoctrinate' students, most participants who expressed political commitment were careful to separate 'facts' from their own opinions in their teaching:

> I'm not interested in telling them what to think, I'm just interested in giving them the different possible ways of thinking sociologically. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> I do sometimes say to students, 'well look, this is my sociological analysis,' and then say, 'now to change gear, this is what I think we ought to do.' But I try to make it clear to them when I'm changing gear, that it doesn't flow automatically from the sociology, that it's an application politically. *(professor A, ancient university)*

The students who participated in the survey for this project seemed well aware that understanding the social world is sociology's core purpose. Indeed, for many interview participants, a central function of sociology is to help students gain a more sophisticated, balanced and nuanced understanding of the social world, in a general sense and also more specifically in their own particular circumstances:

> Sociology really can help ground people and get them thinking about the world. *(professor B, modern university)*

> It's the most valuable [discipline]. It's the only one where [students] have to think critically from day one. They can't look at education without thinking about health, without thinking about poverty, without thinking about capitalism, without thinking about diets and gender, without thinking about equality. *(late-stage PhD student D, ancient university)*

Several participants, mostly staff, described the process of students applying abstract theories to their own lives – 'getting' sociology:

> They will often come back and talk about how 'it was totally like what Foucault says.' Or, 'oh yeah, my family is totally how Bourdieu describes the upper working class' or

> something like that. It's an application to their own circumstances. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> I can remember one [mature student] saying to me, 'I get very angry, because I now realise how I've been hoodwinked many ways in my life. […] I just wish I'd studied this subject earlier, because it has opened my eyes.' *(senior lecturer C, ancient university)*

Other participants described similar scenarios with students who experienced epiphanies about class, gender, race, social institutions, and other elements of inequality. A number of participants also considered sociology deeply valuable in helping students understand other people's points of view:

> [Sociology] helps [students] to become aware of issues around them, and to engage with them critically, and to look at different points of view. *(professor F, ancient university)*

> It is helping to genuinely contribute to people's education in the most general sense, and making them more effective and critical actors in their own social world. And perhaps more sympathetic to other people's points of view, more able to consider how a whole set of complex social factors went into what other people are doing and thinking. *(professor B, ancient university)*

More Than Meets the Eye: Scope, Complexity and Context

In describing sociology's focus on understanding the social world, there was a clear sense that the discipline helps to make sense of 'big questions' – the hows and whys of inequality, social change, behaviour, belief, etc. These are the mysteries of everyday life, and Back (2007: 3) writes that the "aspiration [of a sociologist is] to hold the experience of others in your arms while recognizing that what we touch is always moving, unpredictable, irreducible and mysteriously opaque." At the same time, the practice of sociology helps to clarify and de-mystify these mysteries, at least a little bit:

> There is a feeling that you're always looking through a veil, looking behind what we're doing to see if there is actually anything there. *(early-stage PhD student H, modern university)*

> You have this possibility of taking the everyday functions and attitudes and the everyday way people live their lives and seeing the interconnections to wider things. *(early-stage PhD student F, ancient university)*

In many ways, sociology was considered a collection of tools. It was described as a methodological approach, a set of questions, or a way of asking questions, rather than answers or conclusions; means to an end, rather than the end itself. All participants were optimistic that sociological study can offer *some* answers to pressing social questions, but even the most enthusiastic participants knew it was not a panacea. The social world is far too complex for us to understand completely, but there is value in the attempt:

> Sociology gives you these kinds of investigative tools, so you can systematically look at things […] Of course, you can't ever explain everything, and there's lots of things it doesn't help you to answer, there's always a big unknown. But nevertheless, it gives you some sort of way in. *(professor F, ancient university)*

> You think yourself away from all the presuppositions, all the things that you take for granted, and you look at the world from a different place. […] You can start to recognise all these forces that are working on your brain. Doesn't mean you're exempt from them, but at least you can recognise them. *(late-stage PhD student B, ancient university)*

It can be challenging to recognise the social forces at work on our perceptions of the world, and exceedingly difficult to do so completely or to work around them – the cultural codes through which we see the world "define the terms and the limits of our knowledge, our experience, our social reality" (Donald and Hall 1988: 12). Indeed, many participants were quick to qualify their statements with reminders that their opinions about academia were based on their own position and experience. There are few hard-and-fast truths in a discipline that specialises in looking at issues from a variety of perspectives, yet participants remained dedicated to the pursuit of truth more broadly – clarifying, understanding, and explaining social phenomena. There was a healthy respect for the complexities of everyday life, and a sense that big questions cannot be answered easily, or lightly, or with empty political platitudes – but for many participants, this makes them all the more worthwhile.

In a society that increasingly demands easy answers, fast solutions, and all-or-nothing judgements (*e.g.* Burgess 1996, hooks 1994, Jensen 2000, Schumacher 1973), a discipline like sociology can occupy an awkward space. Sociology urges its practitioners to pause, look and listen deeply, and reflect – activities at odds with the haste and voyeurism of modernity. Back (2007: 19) writes, "while cliché and 'fast food thinking' prevail in public discussions of social issues, one of the things that is precious about sociological judgement is its slowness of pace." But several participants complained that students, university managers, and the general public often have difficulty seeing the 'point' of a discipline that often raises more questions than it answers. Participants tended to value nuance, context, and a long view – consistently keeping the 'big picture' in mind, and exercising Mills's (1959) sociological imagination. Overall, there was a sense of expansiveness in the way that participants described the discipline:

> You learn to look beyond the obvious, and try and see things in a much wider perspective. It's difficult because there are so many different views, but everything's always in a wider context. *(late-stage PhD student C, modern university)*[34]

> It's a subject which has a certain grandness of scale about it, and a great scope about it, but also a subject which can illuminate our own lives and experience in ways which are quite revealing and refreshing. *(professor C, ancient university)*

This sense of expansiveness – that sociology can help expand our vision and understanding – was a common theme in participants' more philosophical reflections about the discipline, mentioned at the start of this chapter. Dedication to the pursuit of truth has been identified as a universal academic value (Scott 2003). In particular, Mills argued for the moral significance of truth-telling: "in a world such as ours, to practice social science is, first of all, to practice the politics of truth" (1959: 178; also see Mills 2008). While even the concept of 'truth' can be seen as multifaceted, there is value in exposing elements of truth that have been obscured or rendered invisible by social, political and economic forces – giving voice to the silenced (*e.g.* Back 2007, Becker 1967).

---

[34] While the PhD process necessitates examining one topic in a very focused way, within strict disciplinary boundaries, it has been my experience that such a focus helps to develop the ability to see subtle connections – without a narrow focus, only superficial connections would be visible.

Participants valued not only the development of *more* knowledge, but also deeper, clearer, and more *truthful* knowledge. For many, dedication to truth meant long-term dedication to one research area, or a small constellation of areas, in order to explore in as much depth and from as many perspectives as possible. However, participants were also enthusiastic about the wide range of topics that come under sociology's umbrella. Where many other disciplines are becoming more specialised (Hartley 1995, Kain 2006, Scott 2003, Mendoza 2007), sociology's strength resides in its breadth, within which individuals may pursue particular topics to great depth, or apply particular methodological approaches to any number of topics:

> That is the fascinating thing about sociology, because as a discipline it's so broad. [From] very small-scale ethnographic stuff, on the boundaries with anthropology [...] all the way up to the other end, with very quantitative methods, statistics, analysing longitudinal data sets. *(early-stage PhD student F, ancient university)*

Indeed, this range was reflected in the research foci of interview participants, with good representation of qualitative and quantitative methods; theoretical and empirical approaches; small group ethnographies and studies of broad social trends; local, regional, national, and international research areas; etc. Even within departments, different participants were engaged in very different research projects, covering nearly all of sociology's 'typical' research areas, from gender, ethnicity and class to stratification, belief, and conflict, and many other areas besides (Cohen and Kennedy 2000, Marsh and Keating 2005, Thompson and Tunstall 1971). That scholars of such diverse areas can express a unified identity as sociologists (even those on the 'borders' of sociology with other disciplines) indicates the value of diversity within the discipline – even diversity of opinion, which I will discuss further below. This falls in line with stereotypes that sociology is a predominantly left-wing discipline, with diversity one of the key values of the left (Elliott 2003).

Despite their differences, one striking similarity of participants' diverse research types was a strong dedication to find the connections between different spheres of social reality, particularly subjective and objective – Mills's (1959) "personal troubles and public issues," or

Thompson's (1993: 19-22) "personal, cultural and structural" elements of social reality. Entwined with the value of looking beyond the obvious and appreciating nuance and context was the belief that elements of the social world are not as disconnected as they may seem (Galbraith 1958, Giddens 1982). What can the subjective experience of one small group tell us about broad social trends? How do economic patterns impact individual lives? What are the unintended consequences of particular social policies? Where the physical sciences generally focus on objective phenomena, and the humanities on subjective experience, participants made it clear that the 'both-and' approach of sociology is key to its value as a discipline.

However, perhaps in response to negative stereotypes about the 'uselessness' of humanities and social sciences, many participants emphasised the objective and scientific elements of sociology (see Marshall 1990), as distinct from 'common sense' views of the world, or the more abstract and subjective approaches of other disciplines:

> It [is] one of the few perspectives on society that [is] actually rational and objective and evidence-based, in a way that certainly popular perspectives aren't. It [challenges] received wisdom, conventional common-sense, all of the other things that turn out to be wrong on close examination. *(lecturer D, modern university)*
>
> [Social science is] kind of philosophy that [gets] its hands dirty. It [asks] a lot of the big questions, why do people believe what they believe, these kind of things, but at the same time, really [looks] at different ways of life [rather than theorising in the abstract]. *(senior lecturer B, ancient university)*

As with the physical sciences, there is an interesting paradox between asking big questions and extrapolating (some) answers from what is found in small samples. However, the subject matter of sociology is obviously different from that of the physical sciences, and there have been many critics of modelling the former too closely on the latter (*e.g.* Flyvbjerg 2001, Geertz 2001, Giddens 1982, Wolfe 1989). Several participants critiqued the discipline's mainstream for being overly detached or science-based, to the point of losing its human side, and one lecturer remarked that "we don't get our hands as dirty as we might do," complaining that some sociologists refuse to personally interact with the people they study.

On the other hand, a few participants critiqued certain factions within the discipline for not being scientific enough (see Tittle 2004, Turner 2005). These kinds of questions, of what constitutes 'real' or 'proper' sociological research, are the foundation for the next two sections.

How is knowledge gathered?
Theoretical vs. Empirical & Quantitative vs. Qualitative

In order to pursue the abstract goals of truth and understanding, any scholar will use a particular set of intellectual and methodological tools, and as discussed above, participants employed a wide range.[35] For the most part, different approaches were seen as complementary elements of the sociologist's 'tool kit,' to be applied to research questions and problems as needed. While some participants held a preference for one approach or another, they were usually seen as interconnected or even inseparable – much in the way that different spheres of social reality were seen as interconnected.

However, there was a significant minority who brought up debates over how sociologists gather and produce knowledge: a third of participants (six PhD students and six staff) spoke about a tension between theoretical and empirical strands of sociological practice, or between qualitative and quantitative research methods. Tensions were generally portrayed not between the methods or approaches or sociologists themselves, but as conflicts generated and imposed by the structures of academia, with consequences on the way that scholars are allowed to work, as I will discuss in Chapter Six. Tensions were also linked to creating artificial divides between different styles of research and teaching, with many participants favouring a more holistic approach (see Elliott 2003, Flyvbjerg 2001, Rex 1997).

---

[35] To give an example of indicative sociological work, the most recent issue of *Sociology* (volume 44, issue 2, April 2010) contained a quantitative study on routes into the British service class, a theory-based study on therapeutic institutions, a survey on the rights of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, a literature-based study on gay 'chavs' in the UK, a case study of work/family balance among Australian nurses, a qualitative study on the experience of food allergies in England, a theoretical model of the way people think about health and medicine, methodological reflections on reliability in qualitative research carried out by teams, a theoretical and empirical reflection on alternative forms of youth political participation and a review essay on Asian economies.

Theory was often seen as the precursor to other kinds of work – a necessary step in developing knowledge or addressing social issues. According to Agar (1986), theories about social phenomena allow us to understand those phenomena in different ways. He argues that ethnographers must draw upon a wide range of theories in order to develop sophisticated and multifaceted explanations (*ibid.* 45-49), and both Rex (1973: 29-35) and Giddens (1982: viii) argue that social theory is the key to understanding empirical and historical data. Several participants expressed similar ideas, taking them even further to argue that theory is embedded in the fundamental questions that research is built on:

> You have to have the theoretical constructs before you can think about what it is you're doing. I think you should have all that, 'why we do this' and 'what this is all about,' before you start thinking about 'what I need in my toolbox' to do the work. *(lecturer A, modern university)*
>
> I wouldn't see any direct application of what I do, I'm coming from a theoretical sociological perspective, that another sociologist would use to then make a more applied study. […] It's absolutely essential that people do this, because […] theoretical frameworks are essential to match up – it's that interplay between empirical and abstract. *(late-stage PhD student C, ancient university)*

Beyond its use for researchers, the lecturer above also argued that theory helps students avoid purely instrumental thinking and encourage intellectual flexibility and creativity, including the flexibility to question dominant models and develop new ones (see below). However, while some participants were passionate about the discipline's theoretical strand, others saw it as irrelevant or simply dull:

> I find it very boring to go and listen to just theoretical things, to tell the truth! *(laughs)* […] Mostly, I think I'm more interested in studies that try to explain something, some concrete issue. *(professor F, ancient university)*
>
> I'm not sure [abstract] theory is going to particularly help us solve the crisis of inequality, global poverty, global warming, whatever it might be. […] Sociology should be a data-driven and empirical discipline that has evidence to bring to public debate. […] If it diverges into abstract theorising and theory for the sake of theory […] I think that's problematic. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

The second view here captures what Giddens (1982: 1-2) calls sociology's "mixed reputation" – on the one hand, it is linked with subversion, rebellion, and social change, as I will discuss below, while on the other it is considered dry, irrelevant, and overly scientific. This mixed reputation, or even dual identity, can be seen as one negative consequence of its broad scope. Marshall argues that sociology's scientific rigour is precisely what makes it socially relevant, but while Giddens argues strongly for political engagement, Marshall warns, in a Weberian sense, against bringing politics into the classroom or into sociological research (Marshall 1990: 1-11, 34, Giddens 1982: 1-9). But the conundrum between political engagement and objectivity has been debated since the nineteenth century, and strong feelings across the spectrum of opinion mean that it is unlikely to be resolved. As with the diversity in research topics discussed above, and as with any dialectical relationship, it is the debate itself which lends vibrancy to the discipline – though this vibrancy can be (and has been) undermined by conditions of competition (see Chapter Six).

An indication of the discipline's deep-seated respect for empirical work can be found in the opinions of participants who were more interested in theory. While there was strong critique of theory for its own sake among those who favoured empirical work, there were no complaints, even from theory-focused participants, that empirical work is irrelevant – though some participants did critique certain *types* of empirical work, as I will discuss below (also see Rex 1973, Chapter One). For several participants, the theoretical/empirical split was itself the problem, and they wanted to see more connections and overlap between the two strands of the discipline.

> You have to link [theory] to empirical material, it just makes it much more alive. Students get more excited when they can see these abstract ideas applied to specific social situations, and they can say, 'I see how that works.' *(early-stage PhD student A, ancient university)*

> There are certain divisions that are getting too entrenched. I think it's very difficult for people now who are interested in social theory also to do empirical work, and vice versa. [...] Ideally, I think one should be able to be a social theorist who contributes to empirical analysis as well. [...] But I see that division between the two getting stronger. *(professor A, ancient university)*

According to several participants, this split has manifested through the tendency to be 'type-cast' for funding, making it difficult to cross boundaries once expertise in a particular area has been established. By the same token, there has been increasing need to specialise in precise, 'fundable' areas, particularly around research 'clusters,'[36] often shifting focus away from areas like social theory and other less-fashionable topics. However, much of the perceived split may be due to other patterns – for example, as I will discuss in Chapter Six, the speeding-up of academic production and the explosion of available information combine to make a broad-based expertise increasingly difficult. And with increasing competition for funding, jobs, and prestige, it is unsurprising that so many participants felt their own research styles or areas were under-funded or under-appreciated. This can be demonstrated, for example, by the opinions of two professors at the same university, which are almost completely opposite. The truth is most likely somewhere between the two:[37]

> The ESRC is an attempt to commercialise sociology and other academic disciplines. [...] Everything [is] looked at in a utilitarian way. So the great way of getting money from the ESRC is to do something that's about social inclusion and exclusion, done quantitatively. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> I often feel like I'm a bit of a minority in sociology, because not many sociologists are empirical sociologists. [...] It's like a hierarchy of status. So the theorists, they're the geniuses, *(laughs)* and next come people who do some research, and at the bottom of the hierarchy are the people who do any kind of applied research, where you're actually helping to solve people's problems and [...] making some difference to the society around you. *(professor F, ancient university)*

In these two opinions, we can see disconnection between hierarchies of funding availability and prestige, indicating that the values of scholars and of funding councils do not necessarily align. Ideally, theoretical and empirical work would balance out, with departmental autonomy creating space for certain types of work that are less valued by funding councils, yet considered valuable in their own right. But as I will discuss in Chapter Six, changes in the

---

[36] Participants at several universities used this phrase.

[37] Looking into the actual projects funded (and rejected) by the ESRC and other funding bodies is beyond the scope of this project, but would provide an interesting direction for future research.

structures of higher education are making such balance rarer (also see Law and Work 2007, Levin 2006, Milem *et al.* 2000, Nixon 2001, Scott 2003, Tasker and Packham 1994).

However, even the values between different scholars do not necessarily align, as demonstrated by the spectrum of participants' opinions expressed above. Interestingly, theory was perceived by many participants to carry much higher prestige than other types of sociological work, even when they did not personally value it very highly. This may be due to the prestige connected with classic sociological theory, along with theory's role as a necessary 'building block' within empirical research. It is unsurprising that strong theorists would develop a high level of prestige from the simple fact of being widely cited, even if their theories are based on empirical work of their own. In this sense, theory can be seen to 'intrude' on empirical work, which might provoke subtle resentment. On the other hand, as described by the first professor above, participants who considered themselves more theory-aligned felt that empirical work is more highly valued by funding councils and university administrators. For example, while the ESRC (2010: 45) claims to support "a diverse range of research," including "research focused on advancing scientific theory," its strategic plan indicates areas of research priorities and 'impact factors' that exclude theoretical work (ESRC 2009a: 3). These contradictions can lead to a 'Catch-22' situation for sociologists with a strong preference for either theoretical or empirical work, where they must either become adept at both, or work in a team with other academics whose skills balance their own.

Along similar lines, some participants identified a bias for quantitative over qualitative methods. For some, this was down to personal preference in research methods; but it became problematic when personal preference was overridden by structural pressures, as I will discuss in Chapter Six. While the collective opinions of participants present a convincing case that quantitative studies do have an advantage in terms of funding, its advantage does not necessarily extend to prestige or desirability. As with theoretical and empirical methods above, opinions were mixed as to whether statistics are more relevant, valuable, or interesting than more qualitative methods:

> Those who would have wanted to do […] stuff that isn't [immediately] relevant, I think increasingly that either during the PhD or at the end of the PhD, they'll get channelled into a path that says, 'look, if you're going to get a job, you're going to have to do […] all the [statistical and quantitative] stuff that you hated as an undergraduate.' *(professor G, ancient university)*

> People seem to want to camp on one side or the other […] But I also think it's unfair that some qualitative sociologists have a right go at quantitative sociology. *(early-stage PhD student H, modern university)*

> Sociology cannot be non-political. [But] in order to present it as non-political [to get funding], it's gone in a direction that's all about statistics, it's all about quantitative methods. […] The method itself excludes any kind of critical work being done. *(late-stage PhD student A, modern university)*

The latter opinion excludes research done by the Radical Statistics Group (*e.g.* Dorling and Simpson 1999, Pantazis and Gordon 2000, Shaw *et al.* 1999) and others who seek to 're-politicise' quantitative work – so it is a good example, as above, of a view blinkered by the difficulty of keeping track of the entire discipline at once. It is likely that an over-abundance of information and a shortage of time contributes significantly to the perception of rifts between different approaches, along with the sense of being isolated or disadvantaged in comparison with others. It is one negative aspect of a discipline as broad as sociology, and potentially a necessary one. However, conditions of increasing competition for dwindling resources, along with job insecurity and increasing pressures can only exacerbate any sense of division or disadvantage. Still, what nearly all opinions had in common was valuing autonomy in choosing subject matter, research methods, and approach – an autonomy that is rapidly decreasing, as I will discuss in Chapter Six.

The Interdisciplinary Discipline & Basic Intellectual Skills

Building on the breadth and diversity expressed in debates over theoretical/empirical and quantitative/qualitative approaches, sociology was seen as a deeply interdisciplinary field. More than half of participants (nine PhD students and ten staff) linked it with other social sciences like politics, economics, and history, or more distantly related disciplines, including biology, ecology, and literature. Whether through 'borrowing' the intellectual tools of other

disciplines, investigating their subject matter with a sociological focus, or collaborating with other scholars, participants valued the flexibility of sociology's boundaries:

> There aren't rigid boundaries, in practice, and you can readily move and select the bits and pieces of disciplines that have a different emphasis. *(lecturer E, modern university)*
>
> It spans everything. [...] And we shouldn't over-define it, really. I love being able to do research that a psychologist could do, a geography person could do, a social policy person could do [...] it just spans all these different disciplines. *(late-stage PhD student D, ancient university)*

The views above echo a number of scholars' reflections on sociology as an interdisciplinary discipline. For example, Elliott writes, "theoretical innovation in sociology results from a cross-referencing of disciplinary perspectives," which helps invigorate, broaden, and deepen our understanding of social phenomena (2003: 1). Many classical sociologists have maintained strong interdisciplinary connections, often before disciplinary boundaries were strongly forged – economics, politics, anthropology, history, psychology, and philosophy all shared intellectual borders with sociology, and scholars crossed those borders freely. For example, Marx is generally seen as a political and economic theorist, and Weber and Durkheim are both considered founders of anthropology as well as sociology (Benton and Craib 2001: 70-87). Even now, when disciplinary boundaries are more firmly established, those boundaries remain permeable. Three-quarters of participants (fifteen PhD students and eleven staff) came to sociology after earning degrees in other disciplines, and as I will discuss in the next chapter, very few actually started university with the intention of studying sociology.

A third of participants (six PhD students and five staff) situated themselves on the boundaries between sociology and other disciplines, including anthropology, criminology, social psychology, social policy, philosophy, politics, literature, and social geography. Most saw themselves either as sociologists with 'one foot' in another discipline, or as experiencing hybrid identities – though a few considered themselves practitioners of other disciplines who had 'landed' in a sociology department by accident or circumstance. Among those who

considered themselves fully immersed in sociology, all were informed by and interested in other disciplines, and some came into regular contact with practitioners of other disciplines through their research work. In speaking about interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary work, all participants were positive and enthusiastic, both in terms of what other disciplines can bring to sociology, and in terms of what sociology can offer to the wider world as an interdisciplinary subject:

> sociologists can point to important connections between aspects of social life which on the face of it would seem to be quite unrelated. […] they can bring to the study of society a profound understanding of the *interconnectedness* of social phenomena. (Marshall 1990: 236)

Marshall highlights the common attitude among participants that sociology, because of its breadth and interdisciplinary nature, is uniquely suited to helping resolve social issues:

> We are in this period of globalisation so I think we are in a period in which all the different sciences should be connected, and hopefully sociology will make a difference in the natural sciences, […] engineering and all of this, because everything […] has the social behind it. *(late-stage PhD student I, modern university)*

Several participants expressed views that other disciplines are much more limited than sociology in their ability to see the interconnections between different spheres of social life, instead remaining focused, for example, on individual psychology, economic transactions, or technological puzzle-solving. One professor said that sociology is the only discipline that can see the "totality," though most participants would agree that sociology does not have all the answers, and must work in partnership with other disciplines:

> I quite often work with people who are not sociologists, and I'm not tribal about it. Obviously we share lots of tools with other disciplines, [but] I think interdisciplinary research is partly able to have a lot of strengths because people are nurturing the differences between the disciplines as well as coming together to do work together. So I think both are important. *(professor B, ancient university)*

The compatibility of sociology with other disciplines was also reflected in the broad range of other subjects being studied by undergraduate survey participants (see Appendix). While the

majority were studying other social sciences, some chose to study subjects like computing science, maths, biology, religion, and journalism, despite the institutional challenges of combining diverse subjects in an undergraduate degree. According to interview participants, sociology can help inform all of these fields, and will serve students well in their careers and lives after graduation:

> I think that's interesting and relevant and important for anyone who goes into any job, or any life. […] I think it offers insight into what ever you are called to do in your life and your career. *(early-stage PhD student I, ancient university)*

One benefit that students can gain from sociology is a set of basic intellectual skills, including what university brochures advertise (and benchmarks enforce) as 'transferable skills' – tools that students can use in a wide range of future workplaces:

> If you want to work in lots of fields, if you want to be an administrator in a hospital, or work in an NGO, then it's always useful to be able to write reports, [and do basic analytical tasks] And if you can do something beyond that, to do more sophisticated statistical analysis or qualitative analysis, […] those kinds of research skills are very much in demand. *(professor F, ancient university)*

> I think the ability to question the world […] People then take that mode of questioning into other subjects, and that to me is absolutely vitally important. And I think a lot of the people that we would teach it to are going on in some way or another to work with other people. *(late-stage PhD student C, modern university)*

The latter view was backed up by the survey data, with more than two-thirds of undergraduate participants intending to go into educational or caring fields (see Appendix). Of course, it would be difficult to find a career that did not involve working with people on some level, and Babbie (2004: 333) has pointed out that "there are sociologists all around us," listing famous sociology graduates in a diverse range of social roles. Participants saw sociology as valuable in any situation of human interaction, from card games to power games at the highest levels of world government:

> In order to understand the power struggles amongst kindergarteners, you have to know a little bit about sociology, to understand why one kid gets picked on. *(early-stage PhD student D, ancient university)*

For many participants, sociology's value went well beyond 'transferable skills,' and extended to the kinds of skills and knowledge that will help students become not only skilled workers, but also critical citizens and thoughtful people more generally. In contrast to rhetoric about modern universities as sites for mass job-training (*e.g.* Brown 2009, Curtis 2009, University of Strathclyde Planning Team 2007), participants saw universities' role as developing educated people, which in turn helps to develop a more educated, self-aware, and critical society. Fuller links this approach to academia of the 1960s and 1970s, but it is clearly visible for sociologists today:

> Although most of those passing through academia were not motivated by the ethos of pure inquiry, the occasion of their training provided an opportunity for instructors to enlarge and replenish the public sphere by instilling a critical attitude in whatever fields the students happened to pursue. (Fuller 1999: 584)

Reflecting a similar attitude, participants expressed a belief that skills developed through sociological study will improve not only the lives of students, but the lives of the people with whom they interact as graduates, in work, family, and civic life:

> It's [developing intellectual skills] in a context that's directly relevant to the world they live in, and it can make people more aware of their own biographical unfolding and think more critically about their own lives and their own agency as social actors. *(professor B, ancient university)*

> I think sociology has uses which are not easily put down on a CV, however much we may be told to write them as transferable skills. [For example], critical mindedness, which I don't think you can put on a CV. But it's unquestionably a valuable thing [and] we would have a much healthier society in some respects, if we had more citizens who had those attitudes. *(lecturer B, modern university)*

Judging & Challenging the Social World

Beyond understanding social reality, nearly all participants (four PhD students excluded) spoke about the importance of sociology judging and challenging the status quo. In using the term 'judge,' I mean critically examining and assessing evidence, evaluating situations based on this evidence, and developing opinions about the social world. I use the term broadly in

the same way as Mills (1959: Chapter Four), who argues that critical questioning is a way of judging the social world. He notes that "one cannot infer judgements of value from statements of fact or from definitions of conceptions. But this does not mean that such statements and definitions are irrelevant to judgement" (*ibid.* 77). Neither does it mean that judgement is inappropriate, or even possible to avoid. As Ball (2006: 59) explains, social sciences *necessarily* embody political and moral opinions because they deal with issues of justice and social well-being. Where moral entrepreneurs seek to validate their outrage with exaggerated data, speculation and outright fabrication (Cohen 2002: 91, Jenkins 1992: 206-209), sociologists seek to build their moral opinions firmly on the close examination of empirical evidence:

> I think sociology [is] self-consciously about critique of society [...] to critically understand contemporary society. [...] At its best, the best kind of sociological writers really capture, in very compelling and simple terms, what's wrong with the world, and how you might go about addressing it. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

A focus on what is *wrong* with the social world – as distinct from a 'neutral' account of social phenomena – indicates that an important goal of sociology is to critique the negative so that it might be improved. As discussed in Chapter Two, this has been the case since the discipline's nineteenth-century origins, when scholars like Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Comte sought to understand new constellations of social inequalities wrought by European industrialisation and urbanisation, and even earlier, when Enlightenment thinkers like Hutcheson, Ferguson, Smith and Hume questioned the 'natural' social order (Benton and Craib 2001, Cohen and Kennedy 2000, Kettler 2005, Marsh and Keating 2005). In the 1920s, this focus on the socially problematic gained momentum when large philanthropic foundations began to fund research on social problems in the United States, and the discipline's critical facet developed rapidly on both sides of the Atlantic during the middle part of the twentieth century. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first, a critical viewpoint has played a central role in the discipline in North America and western Europe.

Of course, there have been opponents to the idea that sociology's purpose is to critique the social world. Deflem (2004) argues that "sociological knowledge cannot challenge the world, nor should it. We have philosophy and morality for such tasks." Bruce (1999) criticises partisan allegiance among sociologists and strongly implies that the discipline is meant to understand social structures, not judge them. However, these kinds of views have been relatively marginal. In the context of this project, participants' narratives indicated that the discipline's critical function is what links understanding the social world with changing it, as I will discuss below. For a quarter of PhD student participants and three-quarters of staff participants, the abstract value of a critical stance extended explicitly into their own work. Abstract or specific, only four participants – all first-year PhD students – did not mention judging or challenging the social world at all. Unsurprisingly, sociology's broad critical function was related largely to teaching – sharing the critical element of the sociological imagination with students. However, it also extended to research, and to a more abstract notion of what it means to be a sociologist in a vocational sense, as well as a critical citizen more broadly.

Teaching Critical Thinking

For many participants, a critical stance is inherent in what it means to think sociologically, and what it means to be a sociologist:

> Most people in sociology [...] see their work as encouraging students and society at large to engage with difficult problems, to look critically at their own and others' preconceptions. *(lecturer E, modern university)*
>
> You [are] forced to rethink everything you had seen as automatic or eternal or natural before. And that [is] very exciting. *(professor A, ancient university)*
>
> I don't think that there's any other way that you could identify a sociologist, because there's so many different [...] approaches, I think that the one thing that should count is that critical analytical perspective. It's that natural urge to look beyond the surface. *(late-stage PhD student C, modern university)*

Of course, sociology is not unique in its critical stance – other social sciences share the "urge to look beyond the surface," including anthropology, psychology, and social history. Of the

social sciences in general, Wolfe writes, "[they] are not just descriptive – they are also exercises in moral philosophy" (1989: 33). Flyvbjerg argues that any social science that is to be meaningful must question not only where we are, but also where we are going, whether it is desirable, and what should be done (2001: 60-61). In many ways, postmodernism has marginalised these kinds of questions (Fuller 1999: 586), but they still came through strongly for many participants, hinting at a strong sense of civic responsibility among academics in Scotland (Paterson and Bond 2005).

As mentioned above, the kind of critical outlook and critical questioning described here extends to helping develop the critical skills of students and others. Nearly all participants saw this as a key part of their job, with the exception of one staff participant who called undergraduate teaching "keeping the larder stocked" and a waste of her research-based skills. In some ways, she was the exception that proved the rule – her main problem with undergraduate teaching was that students have yet to develop the critical-mindedness that many other participants sought to impart, and she prefers to work with postgraduate students or other researchers who are ready to move straight into complex questions. Other participants expressed similar frustration working with students in the early stages of their degrees, but still considered it a worthwhile use of their time. Some spoke about first- and second-year teaching as a kind of rite of passage – the price that must be paid to attain the more desirable work of honours or postgraduate teaching, or a greater focus on research. Others enjoyed early-stage teaching and the pleasures of seeing students' critical skills develop. The distinction was generally in whether students eventually grasped the course material and applied the ideas to their own lives, as discussed above. Amidst a high volume of unrewarding bureaucratic tasks, participants took pleasure in the very human process of witnessing concepts 'click' for students.

Regardless of what stage of teaching they preferred, all participants who mentioned critical-mindedness believed it a core part of the discipline's contribution to students' lives and to wider society:

> What students mostly get from university [is] the ability to argue, to question things. […] It's probably a good thing to try and widen participation in higher education, even if they go on to be plumbers. What's wrong with having plumbers who can engage in arguments in society? *(late-stage PhD student G, ancient university)*

> I think [students] need to take a critical look at their own society and how they can become useful members of that society. [In a democracy] we need an informed public, and part of the task of universities should be about […] educating that public to reason and think through the issues of the day. So, I think that's where sociology has a key contribution to make. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

> I feel very strongly that our job is not just to […] objectively talk about how processes fit together. I think we have a duty, more than any other department in the university, to encourage our students to think. […] When they graduate, they should be critical thinkers. *(late-stage PhD student D, ancient university)*

When participants spoke about helping students develop a critical viewpoint, there was often an undertone of frustration. They complained that undergraduates often accept 'common sense' views of society at face value, and have little experience questioning the social structures and patterns that shape their lives. For example, a common complaint was that students took gender roles for granted, believing that women take on the bulk of childcare duties because they are 'better' with children than men. However, participants' frustration was juxtaposed with a sense of pride and pleasure in seeing students finally grasp the 'sociological imagination' and start asking critical questions themselves. More broadly, participants believed strongly in the value of a reflective or reflexive attitude, both for students and for wider society:

> I think is existentially beneficial, to question what you have previously been indoctrinated with. *(lecturer G, modern university)*

> There's a lot of noises being made [by university management], that our job as academics is to prepare students to be citizens. And one important aspect of being a citizen is a capacity to think reflectively about issues. […] We enable students to become thoughtful and reflexive citizens. *(senior lecturer C, ancient university)*

A Discipline Critical of Power

Beyond abstract ideas of critical practice and citizenship to be shared with students, a third of participants (ten staff and two PhD students) felt it was crucial for the discipline to remain critical of power relations in particular. They emphasised a strong concern about which groups hold power, which groups remain less powerful, and how that power is exercised and experienced, particularly in connection to questions of democracy and justice:

> [Society] still [needs] a traditional social science that pays attention to power, and pays attention to it as a society wide phenomenon. *(senior lecturer B, modern university)*

As discussed above, a critical stance is what connects the discipline's role of understanding the social world with its role in social change. According to Flyvbjerg, "understanding how power works is the first prerequisite for action, because action is the exercise of power" (2001: 106). However, the link is not necessarily so straightforward – understanding of social structure, and even a critical questioning of that structure, does not necessarily impart a direction for action or the will to act. One PhD student captured the essence of this paradox in his description of Antonio Gramsci. While Gramsci is more commonly known as a political theorist, philosopher, and revolutionary, this participant called him "the ideal sociologist" because of his focus on "the unequal distribution of power:"

> I think that he lays it out best. The guy is sitting in prison, […] and then he looks at this whole cultural apparatus. So in that respect I find him to be the most ideal sociologist.[38] *(late-stage PhD student A, modern university)*

Several participants spoke at length about the paradox of sociology's relationship to power – academics are dependent on elites and the state to fund universities and research projects, and yet they are also critical of the hand that feeds them. Practical issues arising from this paradox, including critiques of the power relations in academia, will be covered in Chapter Six – but on a philosophical level, many participants found the paradox troubling. Speaking

---

[38] Other participants did not speak so strongly about their intellectual 'heroes,' though several mentioned influential authors and teachers, as I will discuss in Chapter Five, using them to locate their intellectual identities.

of the discipline's relationship with successive governments, from Thatcher in the 1980s to Blair in the 1990s, a participant near retirement said,

> I think that sociology must always sustain a critical distance from those who are in power, otherwise it gets incorporated. […] You can either get cast out as the demons of modern society. […] Or you can become incorporated and come into that nice warm place by the fire, in which case you're stifled. […] Sociology at its best is a critical discipline, which always stands back a little from whoever is in power. […] Otherwise, there's always the danger that you just become part of a prevailing political ideology. *(professor C, ancient university)*

In the final chapter of *The Sociological Imagination,* Mills (1959) makes a similar argument: that it is a particular moral duty of sociologists to critically question the structures of power, and to avoid becoming too comfortable within the halls of power. Indeed, Giddens is considered by some to have betrayed the discipline in promoting his doctrine of 'third way' politics, embracing a 'friendly' form of neoliberalism, and becoming an advisor to Prime Minister Tony Blair (Callinicos 2001, Jessop 2006, Yates 2002). However, as I will discuss below, engagement with political power is another important element of the discipline, fraught with contradictions. There is a fine line between a sociologist's engagement *with* power and assimilation *by* power. For Mills, the solution to the paradox of being "advisor to the king" is moral autonomy, holding the powerful accountable for their actions, and empowering the powerless (1959: 178-185). Some participants expressed similar sentiments:

> [Sociology] should always be an awkward bedfellow of power because it has a critical function. […] pricking people's consciousness, raising awkward questions. […] Questioning consensus and taken-for-granted nostrums […] That isn't particular to sociology – literature, art, has always done that kind of thing too. But I think sociology can do it in a particular way. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

Again referencing Mills, this participant went on to speak about the practice of the sociological imagination: connecting personal troubles with public issues in the context of social structure, and asking critical questions. Where literature and art question and critique social and political consensus through satire, parable, storytelling, and developing imaginary realities, sociology develops stories about the real world (Weber, quoted in Benton and Craib 2001: 80). Grounding in reality and dedication to empirical truth are the source of the

discipline's power, even with a wide range of analytical 'schools' through which to understand and interpret the raw materials of empirical study. However, where the lecturer above saw empirical work as most valuable in challenging the status quo, another saw the discipline's theoretical strand as the root of its critical power:

> [Theory] I feel will always open up alternatives. Things do not have to be like this. [...] And I think that's the most important aspect of sociology, it always sees society as contradictory. Things we plan never really turn out as we want them to, and there are always alternatives. *(lecturer C, modern university)*

This kind of opinion is similar to theories that a story's underlying ideology – its inner archetypes and the *way* it is told – is just as important as its objective truth. Social change happens, first of all, because people can imagine other ways of living (Ball and Dagger 1995, Fairclough 1992, Goldberg 2005, Rich 2001). In this sense, social conscience is rooted not only in an understanding of the social world *as it is*, but in visions of the social world *as it could be*. For this reason, one participant challenged the inner narratives of seemingly 'good' social research:

> Is this about finding out how you get the poor and the disadvantaged to adjust to their positions? [...] Is this giving the elites tools to find ways of minimising conflict? *(lecturer E, modern university)*

However, in her experience, sociologists tended to cover a wide spectrum of approaches and political attitudes – from the intensely critical radical tradition to the much less critical 'managerialist' tradition. In the sample for this particular project, most participants expressed left-leaning political opinions, but many resisted the stereotype that such opinions are inherent in the discipline. They tended to value diversity of opinion over strict dogmatism, voicing respect for other points of view and defending their colleagues' right to disagree. They also noted the difficulty of fitting all of sociology into one stereotype – the reality is not as tidy as Mills's heroic vision in *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) or Bradbury's pessimistic *The History Man* (1975). As with preferred research topics, approaches and methods, the tendency to be partisan or managerial covered a wide and complex spectrum. Some participants challenged power outright, in an outspoken and even

aggressive manner; others sought a more subtle approach but were no less radical in their beliefs. Some considered themselves politically neutral, but were intensely critical due to basic curiosity. But whatever their views on the critical nature of the discipline, many felt that exercising and sharing their critical perspective was a moral duty – one of many responsibilities that came with the knowledge and privilege of being an academic, or a citizen more broadly:

> There's no point in deciding whether something is positive or negative in society without it having some influence on the debate. [...] For there to be a wide debate, then there have to be academics who are prepared to inject the public debate with new arguments. *(late-stage PhD student G, ancient university)*

> It's a life project, to be a critical researcher. It's not, 'oh, I'm doing a PhD, three years, [...] and I'm going to try to be critical and non-oppressive.' No, this is something that goes with you all your life. *(late-stage PhD student I, modern university)*

A participant near retirement linked the abstract need for a critical perspective with the concrete needs of the present historical moment:

> The great prevailing ideology [says], 'it's all about freedom.' [...] But underneath that, [it] seems to depend upon massive inequalities in the world. [...] Now, [there must be] voices who are prepared to speak about that and say, [...] 'there's a dark side to this, and you need to understand this better.' [...] just as when Marx was speaking in his day about capitalist society. [...] Otherwise, the problems which neoliberalism generates in the world will lead to unintended consequences. *(professor C, ancient university)*

Being critical of contemporary power structures brings up the classic question of "whose side are we on?" that sparked debate between Becker and Gouldner in the late 1960s, along with feminist and anti-racist questions of connections between the personal and the political. On a fundamental level, Bourdieu (cited in Nixon 2001: 184) writes that artists, writers and scholars must be "critical and watchful" of power, not least to defend the institutions that allow them the autonomy to produce art and knowledge. These kinds of questions will be discussed further below and in the following chapters.

Changing the Social World[39]

Nearly all participants (again excluding four first-year PhD students) spoke about sociology as a way to change the social world, whether through the process of the work or through its research or teaching outcomes. Even for participants not directly involved in work related to social change, it was a strong theme throughout the interviews, indicating that sociology's transformative potential – that sociology *might* or *should* be used to make the world a better place – is a valued facet of the discipline. As discussed above, this has roots in the origins of sociology as a way to understand and transform the social ills of industrialisation (Benton and Craib 2001, Cohen and Kennedy 2000, Marsh and Keating 2005), and is deeply embedded in the discipline's self-image (Luck 2007). But as Cancian (1995) points out, "unmasking inequality" does not necessarily lead to political or economic improvements in the lives of people who suffer – she argues that improvement can only come with a parallel goal of *reducing* inequality. While nearly all participants expressed dedication to this goal, there are fractures within the discipline concerning the role of sociology in social change:

> There is an impression, widespread among our detractors and not unknown within the discipline, that sociology is (or should be) in the business of helping people. This is understandable but it is mistaken. (Bruce 1999: 81)

In some ways, a dedication to social change can be seen as a form of self-justification: work becomes more 'politically correct' when its focus is on helping others, and middle-class academics might feel a sense of guilt or shame when confronted on a daily basis with the realities of injustice. However, a sense of moral correctness or meaningful purpose is a strong vocational motivator (Flyvbjerg 2001, Gladwell 2008, Neafsey 2006, Steger 2009), and the language that participants used to describe sociology's potential for social change reinforces this (see below). The consensus view was that sociologists can influence social change with our choices in how we do research (as discussed above), what we choose to study or teach,

---

[39] In the pursuit of research for the public good, a lecturer at an ancient university made an important point: "I don't know how you know, how you judge whether […] you're actually just capturing a Zeitgeist or you're actually changing it. I don't know." This kind of 'chicken-or-egg' question is important to consider, but it does not change the importance of considering the moral motivations and social conscience, which is ultimately the aim of this project.

what we do with the results of our research, and who benefits. Each of these aspects has its own set of moral questions which participants addressed directly or indirectly, by describing their own preferences or criticising the preferences of others. As with interview participants, among undergraduate survey participants, the social change element of the discipline was clear, but it came out less strongly than understanding the social world (see Appendix).

Social Change and Sociological Research

Delving into sociology's potential to influence social change, some interview participants spoke explicitly about the moral dimension of sociological research:

> With my own work, I feel that there's a definite obligation to connect what I'm doing […] with a social situation that needs to be addressed and needs to be changed. […] On a moral level, you have to, as far as possible, give something back. *(early-stage PhD student C, ancient university)*

> You can't start asking critical questions without also wanting to start talking about what possible solutions are there. I don't advocate a value-free sociology, I don't see how that's really sustainable for anybody who actually lives in the world. *(lecturer B, modern university)*

These kinds of statements could be seen as empty platitudes or self-justification, but looking at participants' research interests, only four (not the four ambivalent PhD students, interestingly) were not connected in some way to examining a social problem on some level, whether finding alternative ways of thinking about social problems, more accurate ways of understanding them (including identifying phenomena as problematic), or more effective ways of responding. In this sense, moral beliefs did not only inform participants' abstract notions of the discipline, but also guided their practical choices within it – even those whose work was not related to social problems. The four participants whose work was based on developing social theory or understanding unproblematic phenomena (two professors, a senior lecturer, and an early-stage PhD student) spoke at length about the social contribution of teaching sociology to undergraduates, as discussed above. They chose to express the discipline's social-change potential through their role as teachers rather than researchers. For the other thirty-one participants, this potential was also expressed in their research, to a

greater or lesser extent, indicating a strong sense of moral or civic purpose behind research (also see Paterson and Bond 2005). For some, it was explicitly the core of their work; for others, contribution to knowledge was the core goal, but the choice of research area was a moral one – they sought to contribute to knowledge in an area of social urgency or injustice. Around half of the participants (eight PhD students and nine staff) spoke explicitly about the moral dimension in choosing a research topic:

> I think [my topic] is the biggest injustice of our time. […] I find it very much an outrage morally. *(late-stage PhD student A, modern university)*

> [When I first saw these issues] I could give my life for this, I could leave everything […] to dedicate myself, almost like if I was a nun or a priest, to dedicate myself totally, when I saw human suffering. *(late-stage PhD student I, modern university)*

While these participants represented one end of a spectrum in their moral dedication to their research, there was a clear preference for research that dealt with social problems, even from participants whose work was not directly related to practical social change outcomes. As discussed above, this likely has its roots in the work of the discipline's early thinkers, who saw the study of social phenomena as a way to spark positive social change. Modern sociology textbooks share the attitude that the study of social problems is a moral imperative, even though they are not necessarily explicit about the discipline's social change function (*e.g.* Cohen and Kennedy 2000, Marsh and Keating 2005). Participants were much more explicit in their preferences, and several illustrated 'good' research by comparing it with 'bad' research. They were strong critics of work that deviated from what they considered morally sound:

> I do think sociology situates itself outside the public discussions, and just waffles about theory. And I think, it's all very well to sit and say, 'well, that's a terrible [object].' […] Why don't I say, 'this is how you can make it better?' *(late-stage PhD student B, ancient university)*

> I went to two or three [conference] sessions, and it was so memorable, I can't even remember what they spoke about. […] It was abstract. It had nothing to say to me, no contribution to make to wider society, it was quite arrogant in a lot of ways, it was quite selfish, self-interested. (*early-stage PhD student B, modern university)*

> I know I'm never going to go back to [a particular] conference because I just found it rather self-indulgent. […] It's like going to a philosophy conference. You think, 'this is quite clever,' and then you're like, 'but I can't really use any of this, and neither can anyone else in the real world.' *(lecturer G, modern university)*

These arguments suggest that sociologists have a moral responsibility to look beyond their own personal interests and address issues of relevance to the wider world.[40] Interestingly, what many participants described as 'bad' sociological research mirrors elements of corporate and neoliberal values that are critiqued by the liberal/socialist left in Western capitalist societies: self-interested individualism, focusing on speed and quantity over depth and quality, following fashionable trends, and abandoning moral obligations for the sake of material gain (Lakoff 2002, Elliott 2003). In this sense, sociologists who value changing the social world are framing their critique of the discipline in a rejection of mainstream corporatist values. The question is, does a left-leaning, emancipatory political position attract people to the discipline, or does studying sociology contribute to such a political stance? Most likely it is a dialectical process, with one element feeding another. I will discuss the socialisation process of sociologists in greater detail below.

On another level, the kinds of statements above invoke the fundamental debate over the purpose of sociology, and of social research more broadly. Must research always have direct social relevance, or is contribution to knowledge enough? Burawoy (2005) identifies four interconnected types of sociological labour, and argues that each is significant. Certainly, most participants spoke about the social relevance of sociological research, and most expressed their belief in its importance through their own choices of research areas, whether as PhD topics, or for staff, in their academic careers more broadly. But as with political views above, they also acknowledged that a diversity of opinions and approaches exist throughout the discipline, and many saw value in this diversity.

What was referred to above as "self-indulgent" work may well have a valuable place in the broad scheme of developing knowledge – but conditions of competition distort that scheme,

---

[40] Of course, self-reflexivity is required to 'interrogate' personal motivations.

as I will discuss in Chapter Six. While some participants disparaged the kinds of research they considered to be morally lacking, most were more troubled by its dominance, and by the difficulty they experienced in carrying out what they considered morally superior work. In other words, it is a problem of balance. The new Research Excellence Framework (REF) seeks to shift the balance towards more 'useful' research, by assessing a project's economic and social relevance (HEFCE 2009b). However, there is much scepticism in the higher education sector regarding what will be counted as useful and relevant (see Collini 2009a, Derbyshire 2009, Marshall 2009, Mitchell 2009).

Participants, on the other hand, were very clear about what they considered useful and relevant, whether or not they were engaged in it themselves. Even without going into the details of their examples, their abstract criteria for 'good' research are revealing:

> I think there's an important corrective role for sociology to play […] social science can contribute to understanding how society works, and how to make it better. *(senior lecturer B, modern university)*
>
> The measure [of useful research] would be, […] do you just do research for the sake of it, or do you do research that you think will make things better for people? *(lecturer A, modern university)*
>
> I get more excited about research that's more about engaging people, more about activism. […] That's the stuff that makes me feel that maybe there's a chance for social research to make a real difference to people's lives, rather than just going on the bookshelf to gather dust. *(early-stage PhD student A, ancient university)*

As with 'bad' research above, these views of 'good' research reject neoliberal values, particularly the pursuit of individual self-interest and belief that market forces will erase injustice (Lakoff 2002, Elliott 2003). Questions of what makes a 'better' society were often taken for granted, though when participants spoke about the kind of world they sought, they tended to express traditionally liberal or socialist visions of democracy, social justice, diversity, environmental sustainability, and alleviation of poverty (Lakoff 2002). As discussed above, they had varying opinions on how many degrees of separation were acceptable between sociologists' work and positive social outcomes, and here we can see a subtle

difference between intention and outcome. For most participants, intention was key – positive social-change outcomes were noble to strive for, but good intentions were enough to make good research, morally speaking. And with ever tighter constraints on the 'outputs' – and by extension, outcomes – of academic labour, it is unsurprising that participants focused on intentions, over which they have more control than outcomes, though even good intentions are becoming more difficult to express. This becomes doubly problematic when an exclusive focus on good intentions becomes a form of empty self-justification, but most participants did attempt to 'walk the talk,' whether by choosing research topics of social relevance and reaching beyond the walls of academia, or by seeking to influence social change through helping students develop skills for critical citizenship. Positive social change was not simply an abstract idea, but something for which they took personal responsibility.

Sociology and Personal Responsibility

While more than three-quarters of undergraduate survey participants believed that "everyone" is responsible for solving social problems, only about half actually felt personal responsibility in this area (see Appendix). The lack of connection between awareness of social problems and a sense of responsibility for solving them reflects the quandary that when everyone is responsible, very few people take responsibility. In groups, for example, individuals are more likely to ignore a crime or a person in distress than if they encountered such a situation on their own. The most famous case of this 'bystander effect' was the 1964 murder of Kitty Genovese, where at least a dozen neighbours failed to help the young woman, despite hearing her screams (Keltner and Marsh 2006, Manning *et al.* 2007). Rather than being the response of people "dehumanized by living in an urban environment," as newspapers at the time accused, social psychologists have identified a "diffusion of responsibility" that occurs in groups, as well as "pluralistic ignorance" – the tendency to assume all is well if others show no sign of alarm (Keltner and Marsh 2006).

These tendencies are exacerbated if people are in a hurry or feel under threat themselves: in a famous psychology experiment, only ten percent of seminary students stopped to aid an injured person when they were pressed for time, even though they were on their way to give a

lecture about the parable of the good Samaritan (Darley and Batson 1973). In these cases, many of the 'bystanders' felt distress at seeing or hearing human suffering, and even felt in retrospect that they should have helped; what was missing was a sense of agency to act. Whether speaking of individual or social conscience, simply being aware of suffering is not necessarily enough to inspire action. The critical eye of sociology is one way to break through a sense of 'pluralistic ignorance,' giving others permission to speak or act. Participants believed that studying sociology can be a positive force for students of any age, helping them understand injustice and the potential for social change:

> Over time, if you do it properly, [...] every person who studies sociology should ideally be a revolutionary. Because if they look at the world around them, there is massive injustice, massive inequality [...] every one of them should be looking at how to break down the system. *(late-stage PhD student A, modern university)*

That this does not happen reflects the patterns above: learning about injustice on an abstract level is the social equivalent of hearing a stranger's screams – distressing but not necessarily a call to action. One way that higher education has challenged this pattern in the past, at least in Scotland, has been through pressing students to consider their own moral responsibilities through the study of philosophy and theology. When higher education was once for the privileged few, philosophy was a mandatory subject and universities had strong connections to religion, so discussion of moral values and responsibilities was taken for granted (Davie 1961, Herman 2001: 330-334). Over time, as access to higher education widened and generalist degrees were phased out in favour of specialisation, universities not only became more secular and removed from their religious foundations, they also began to marginalise 'impractical' moral questioning. Bourdieu (1988: 495) identifies the shift from moral to practical focus in higher education internationally, arguing that elite intellectuals once received an "altruistic education," which today is considered "pointless [and] unrealistic" compared with technical or business-oriented studies. While moral questioning still exists within higher education, it no longer holds the central position it once enjoyed in Scotland.[41]

---

[41] In other contexts, for example the American liberal arts tradition – itself based on Scottish generalism – some level of moral questioning has been preserved through requiring the study of a broad range of subjects, often including philosophy (Finlayson 2009, Herman 2001: 330-334).

In the case of sociology, this means that lecturers and tutors can easily initiate discussion about how and why injustice exists and even how it might change, but raising moral questions about students' personal responsibility in light of injustice is something that participants did not mention. Whether due to fear of reprisal from management, desire to maintain 'professionalism,' the pressures of constricted teaching time, or other reasons, explicit moral questioning appears to be a taboo within teaching practice. More broadly, Hitlin (2008: 198) suggests that the "relative marginalization of studying morals and morality may come from a fear of appearing to advocate a particular moral system."

Participants often spoke of their own sense of responsibility arising directly from learning about injustice, and assumed it would be the same for students – the facts of injustice would spark moral outrage and motivate students to action. In describing their journeys into sociology, which will be discussed in Chapter Five, many described experiences with passionate, politically-outspoken or inspiring lecturers, who presumably contributed to participants' own moral questioning – but participants did not seem aware or comfortable mentioning that this role had a moral element. While most participants expressed hopes for students to gain a sense of civic responsibility in the role of critical citizens (rather than outright revolutionaries), they did not question the assumption that knowledge leads directly to participation. In many ways, this indicates that participants were fairly uncritical of their own values, assuming that students would make similar 'self-evident' value judgements in the face of empirical evidence.

This pattern stands in contrast with the Scottish tradition of explicit philosophical and moral questioning as part of a university education. According to Davie (1961) and Bell (2000: 173), the popularity of the philosophy-based Ordinary Degree was waning in Scotland by the 1920s, and I was unable to find any listed on the websites of Scottish universities or on the

website of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA 2009).[42] Increasingly over the last century, universities have become places to learn facts and skills, not to reflect on values or ask moral questions – especially because the latter is a delicate and labour-intensive process (Deem *et al.* 2007, Giroux 2007, Maskell and Robinson 2001, Wolf 2002). While there will always be some students motivated by social conscience who ask moral questions on their own initiative, an absence of more structured moral questioning means that many sociology students might leave university with a clear view of certain social problems, but little moral sense of what their own response should be.[43]

Even so, participants expressed a strong sense of personal responsibility in their work. For some, this was linked with a sense of superiority – they believed that other disciplines examine social problems in a more limited way, leaving sociology to 'connect the dots.' However, most participants experienced a sense of duty or obligation arising from expertise rather than any consciously-expressed feelings of superiority – a sense that with knowledge comes responsibility, whether as a sociologist or an intellectual more broadly. As discussed above, sociology derives part of its identity from a sense of social responsibility, being so intimately bound up with the study of social problems – but as with the theoretical/empirical and qualitative/quantitative tensions discussed above, most who advocated personal responsibility felt their own views were in the minority:

> Gouldner basically said, 'if expertise doesn't give you authority to speak on certain public issues, then what does?' And if you can show that certain opinions or certain social practices have certain outcomes, [...] then he thinks you have a public duty to draw this to public attention. [...] And I agree with that. I'm not sure that that many sociologists do. *(lecturer G, modern university)*

In contrast to participants with these kinds of views, four first-year PhD students (one at a modern university and three at ancient universities) were not so enthusiastic about the social

[42] Three-year degrees at Glasgow University are called "general" degrees and do not require the same level of specialisation as honours degrees, but these appear to be programmes where students choose their own combination of courses, rather than following a prescribed sequence.

[43] Several scholars have argued that moral questions must be examined alongside the learning of facts, *e.g.* Freire 1970 and hooks 1994.

change strand of the discipline. One argued that desire to change the social world is not "the reason why people study sociology, fundamentally." For him, the real reason is curiosity about human behaviour, and he believed that much political talk from sociologists only serves to make their own curiosity more socially acceptable. Another offered a harsher critique, calling academic activism "just another angle of bringing the self into the research," derisively comparing it to other forms of "navel gazing." However, she later said, "I'm really interested in working in an area where you actually can see progression of your ideas into practice." It was unclear where she drew the distinction between these two ideas, but she held unmistakably strong opinions about both. The other two PhD students ambivalent about the discipline's potential for social change were much less outspoken, but equally contradictory. They spoke about moral motivations on a personal level, but when it came to the discipline's broad social purpose, they wavered:

> I'm not really sure. I don't think [sociology] is necessarily for policy-making. […] I think it just helps to broaden understandings of social phenomena and social activity and social relationships. I think it's interesting politically, but I don't think that's its purpose. *(early-stage PhD student I, ancient university)*

> We can use the things that we learn to, I don't know, make things work better? It's all about understanding, I guess. […] I think it's good to have a purpose in whatever kind of research is being done, but at the same time, it's kind of about developing people's brains as well. *(early-stage PhD student E, ancient university)*

As I will discuss in Chapter Five, some scholars come into sociology with clear political values and ideas about their own moral responsibilities, which shapes their research both in terms of topics and approaches – whether they are determinedly non-political (itself a political stance) like the first PhD student above, or strongly committed to a certain politics, as other PhD students quoted earlier have been. Others have been drawn to the discipline for other reasons, and take their time to develop a sense of themselves morally within the discipline. Tellingly, these four PhD students also did not speak about sociology as a critical discipline. Their view of the discipline was primarily as a way to understand the social world, and they either avoided or resisted notions that the discipline might have other contributions to make, through critical practice or public engagement. Conversely, all staff participants

spoke of all three elements of the discipline – understanding, judging/challenging, and changing the social world – and while they expressed varying levels of interest in the social change strand of the discipline, they all saw it as a legitimate element of sociological practice. For example, two participants whose work was primarily theoretical said,

> [Research and teaching cannot] be done on one model. I think sociology as a discipline would lose something if we all became proponents of exactly the same kind of answers to [social] questions. *(lecturer B, ancient university)*

> I think all the things I find frustrating have their place in [the discipline]. Grand theory is important, the big ideas and the empirical stuff, it's all part of it. *(late-stage PhD student G, ancient university)*

In describing a diversity of approaches, several staff participants defended the value of contribution to knowledge for its own sake, even on topics of apparent social irrelevance. In a similar pattern to the PhD students above, staff who argued for the detached, quantitative, or theoretical strands of sociological practice represented ancient universities, adding credibility to the stereotype that staff at ancient universities are less politically-outspoken than their colleagues at more recently-formed institutions. However, proponents of contribution to knowledge were evenly spread across all three types of universities:

> One of the signs of a civilised society is that it's got time and resources to spend on things that are use-less. Because if you turn everything into something that's regarded in a utilitarian way, then you're killing off a whole series of intellectual endeavours. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> If you want a rich culture, if you're interested in life rather than death, then you have to support education in all of its aspects, including instrumental and technical ones, but not to the exclusion of all the ones like art history and philosophy and sociology. [Otherwise] we'll become a society of technocratic dominance and stupidity. *(lecturer C, modern university)*

In many ways, valuing knowledge for its own sake accepts that 'outcomes' cannot always be predicted. In fact, it may be hubris to expect sociological work to always have practical relevance. As I will discuss in Chapter Six, in an intellectual culture that places a high value on 'impact,' emphasising the richness of a process over the usefulness of its product can be seen as a radical orientation in itself. However, it can also be seen as intellectual self-

indulgence in the face of widespread social problems, as Mills (1959: Chapters 3 and 4) accuses of those who practice "abstracted empiricism." Ultimately the difference lies in motives, intentions and approach, which are the moral choices of individual sociologists – though the space to make this kind of choice is becoming ever more constricted.

Another justification for the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was the idea that only its gradual accumulation could 'make a difference.' One senior lecturer was somewhat ambivalent about the social change strand of the discipline, but embraced the argument that sociological knowledge can eventually contribute to positive social change. Essentially, she believed in the discipline's potential for social change, but saw sociologists as much further removed along a chain of responsibility than others who sought to influence social change more directly:

> We'd all like to think that our job's really important and that we have a big impact on others, but I think in practice it's a very slow trickle-down effect. [...] It may not be things that individuals can really see. *(senior lecturer A, modern university)*

Some of the reasons for the slowness of this 'trickle-down' effect are structural limitations on personal agency. As universities are largely state-funded institutions, their structures mirror prevailing political values and priorities, which were often at odds with the values and priorities of participants. The kinds of social change that sociologists favour are not necessarily top priorities for policymakers, so the process of turning research into tangible social change outcomes can seem painfully slow. But eventually, change can happen. Giving the example of feminism, a participant near retirement pointed out that the definition of social problems – and their popularity as research topics – changes over time:

> Originally gender was not perceived as much of a social problem by the people with the purse strings. So it's the radicals that do the research earlier [without funding], but then it becomes more and more mainstream. *(lecturer E, modern university)*

Working in the other direction, scholars who want to 'make a difference' more quickly can target their research towards what is already mainstream – areas that receive generous funding from the research councils, with results that are sought by policymakers:

> If we want to affect society, we have to get more involved in policy research. And as soon as you do that, inevitably, there will be a loss of autonomy. I don't think there's any way of avoiding that. [It's] the most obvious thing. *(senior lecturer C, ancient university)*

So while almost all participants saw themselves and other sociologists as having a moral responsibility to pursue socially-relevant research, they also valued pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and saw the necessity to accept or work around the compromises inherent to working within institutions. While almost all were dedicated to helping students develop a sense of personal responsibility in light of social problems, none had a clear strategy for doing so, which again reflects the structural limitations of modern university teaching that I will discuss in Chapters Five and Six.

Who is Knowledge For?
Detached vs. Engaged Research & Public Intellectualism

Two-thirds of participants (eleven PhD students and thirteen staff) spoke about detachment and engagement in sociological work. Unsurprisingly, those who favoured a more engaged sociology were generally those who believed strongly in the discipline's emancipatory aspect and took personal responsibility for attempting to influence social change. They discussed a number of publics with whom to engage, including students, civil society and activist groups, politicians and policymakers, research participants, and the general public – what university managers might call 'knowledge exchange:'

> We've moved away from talking about knowledge transfer or dissemination, to talking about knowledge exchange, because our practice is to try and involve people from the beginning if at all possible. *(professor B, ancient university)*

Reflections on detachment and engagement were intertwined with the idea of public intellectualism, and while only seven participants (three PhD students and four staff) directly mentioned public sociology or public intellectualism, several more spoke about similar principles without naming them. At the root of these reflections were questions of who knowledge should benefit – even those who advocated the pursuit of knowledge for its own

sake believed that knowledge is valuable because it is available for publics to use – including groups of other scholars (*e.g.* Rex 1973). These opinions resonated with the views of 'classic' sociologists discussed in Chapter Two (*e.g.* Becker 1950, Mauss 1927, Mills 1959), and as pointed out above, the "most obvious" sphere of influence for sociologists is engagement with policymakers. Two-thirds of staff participants are currently (or have previously been) involved in policy-relevant work, and some saw themselves as occupying an interdisciplinary space between sociology and social policy. One had worked as both a civil servant and an academic researcher:

> [Academic and policy work were] very closely related. It was all social research. It was just, your employer changed. Public sector or consultancy or academia, but it was all doing social research. […] I think the movement both ways is actually quite healthy. *(lecturer G, modern university)*

Others saw engagement with policy-relevant projects as an important aspect of their work, although it was not central. Staff whose work was not linked to policy were still supportive of the idea that sociology should inform governmental decision-making. For example, one professor considered his work "irrelevant," but said:

> It would be outrageous of me as someone sitting in a relatively comfortable position to say all the money should be coming to scholarship [unrelated to social change outcomes]. That would be socially irresponsible and I think most sociologists would agree with that. *(professor G, ancient university)*

Among PhD students, nine hoped that their doctoral research would someday contribute to policy, five others were supportive of the idea, and the other four were ambivalent. Notably, this latter group were the same who were ambivalent about sociology's critical function, as discussed above. While none was explicitly hostile to the notion that policymakers should be advised by sociologists, they expressed sceptical views, similar to the senior lecturer above:

> [It's naïve], believing that what you can do will necessarily politically influence people. […] I think there's a danger […] As with all bits of academia, you don't know how that knowledge might necessarily be used, and that's a tricky thing. *(early-stage PhD student H, modern university)*

> Your PhD research isn't necessarily going to be massively useful for the greater good. But the fact that you can then think in that way [means that] you might go on to do something which is [useful]. [...] It's nice to think that something will come of it and it's not just been pointless introspection. *(early-stage PhD student E, ancient university)*

Ironically, the project of the first PhD student above was at the more policy-relevant end of the spectrum, but he did not expect his results to be used by anyone in power. For him, and the other three 'ambivalent' PhD students, the PhD was primarily an intellectual exercise and a means of gaining marketable skills. While all participants expressed a certain level of instrumentalism – after all, gaining a qualification or earning an income are important motivators for intense academic work – most participants prioritised other motivations above instrumental ones, as I will discuss in Chapter Five. The second PhD student above was quick to justify research training on the basis that it might lead to socially-useful skills, but it can also be argued that "pointless introspection" has value in and of itself. However, that she felt the need to justify research training in terms of its eventual social change potential indicates the importance of that potential to the self-image of the discipline (Luck 2007). There was a strong undercurrent throughout the interviews that being a sociologist means being aware of social problems, being concerned about them, and wanting, at least tangentially, to help address them. Those whose work was not directly related to social-change outcomes were not excluded from this pattern:

> I defend theory a lot because I like theory. I consider myself to be a theorist. But I also appreciate that a lot of people don't like it and don't think it's socially relevant. But I think it's socially relevant in the sense that other sociologists can then work on it [and] use that framework to do things. *(late-stage PhD student C, modern university)*

This student and others who defended theory-driven research often made the case that academic or professional publics were valuable partners for engagement because such engagement might eventually lead to practical social change. Rather than absolving themselves of responsibility for contributing to social change, as some empirically-driven participants charged (without evidence), theory-driven participants placed themselves further along chains of responsibility, as providing crucial supports or raw materials for

sociologists who wanted to engage more directly with the mechanisms of power, or by contributing to the education of critical citizens. And while some participants placed themselves several steps removed from influencing social change, most preferred a more direct route:

> When I write, I try and address an audience outside of academia. […] One way of writing is to address debates within the academic community, so it's very internalist. […] But I've tended to turn my writing outwards to address more concrete questions, about policy and society. *(lecturer D, ancient university)*

> I'm probably out of sync with a lot of colleagues. I don't see academic peers as necessarily the most important audience. […] I think there's wider publics, there's civil society, decision makers, and the general public, who I think are equally important audiences, if not more important, given some of the issues I think we need to research and talk about. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

Of course, engagement with peers is part of any profession, and several participants saw it as part of a 'game' to be mastered in pursuit of creating space to engage with other groups (see Chapter Six). As the first lecturer above emphasised, an important way of engaging with groups outside of academia is through writing, and many participants recognised that academic writing is generally not appropriate for other uses. In an echo of Mills's reflections on intellectual craftsmanship (1959: 195-228), they spoke about the importance of not only engaging with publics beyond academia, but communicating clearly with those publics:

> Writing books that are accessible, I suppose is the main thing that you do, not just the academy talking to itself. […] If [someone has] a good idea, then writing it in a clear direct language will just mean that more people can follow the argument. […] Ideas are powerful and you can't dumb down your arguments and your ideas, but I think you can express them clearly. *(late-stage PhD student G, ancient university)*

> Journalists have many flaws, but one of the things that they can do is communicate, for good or ill. And if they make the effort to call an academic […] they kind of hope that you will take the time to comment […] and actually get your ideas across in ways which are fairly succinct and concise, even at the expense of perhaps blunting any nuances. *(lecturer G, modern university)*

As with several other areas above, participants often felt their views were in the minority in terms of their beliefs on detachment and engagement, again indicating a sense of

fundamental insecurity about values. But even for participants who valued engagement with academic peers, engagement with wider publics was seen as a moral responsibility of the discipline:

> Voices have to be heard and they have to be attended to. And if critical voices are stifled, then that is not good for the health of a democracy. […] I think that role of public intellectuals who are prepared to express themselves is part of a healthy democracy. *(professor C, ancient university)*

> This for me is not abstract, it's not ivory tower stuff. It's very, very real. […] If you're going to do this stuff, don't talk to yourself. You need to talk to people out there. And you need to be involved with people out there. […] Out there, in here, it's all the same. *(early-stage PhD student B, modern university)*

> I like the hardcore sociology that sets out with a problem and tries to do something about it. […] That's what I see that sociology is, it's a sort of engagement with society, to understand and to take it back to society, not for it to go into the weird corridors of academia and never come back out again. *(late-stage PhD student H, ancient university)*

One interesting pattern that arose in participants' narratives was an increasing recognition through the 'academic life cycle' of academia's distinctiveness – in some ways, as stated above, it is the same as the world 'out there.' Patterns in academia reflect dominant political trends, and academics are affected by the same social forces as the rest of society. But academia also has particular cultural forms, social structures, communication styles, and what Mills (1959) calls "habits of mind." While there are parallels with other sectors, staff participants with long experience were more likely than PhD students and new lecturers to recognise that academia has its own struggles and its own contributions to make, and to see this distinctiveness not as a barrier to engagement, but as a positive element of that engagement, if academics choose to use it. Still, on the whole participants were fairly evenly spread across the spectrum between full involvement with the political struggles of their participants and scepticism of such involvement.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that in addition to understanding the social world, sociology is a discipline that seeks to critique, challenge and change the social world. Participants expressed a variety of opinions in terms of the best methods and approaches for carrying out sociology's threefold purpose, but contradictions and conflicts between different opinions were generally seen as contributing to the discipline's strength and vitality. Indeed, appreciation of diversity was itself a strongly-expressed value for most participants, alongside an embrace of complexity, interconnection and nuance. Participants also valued awareness of context, dedication to truth, and 'big picture' thinking, all of which they considered central to both teaching and research practice. Additionally, nearly all participants emphasised the importance of critical questioning, again in both teaching and research, and many sought to transform injustice through their sociological practice. Broadly speaking, nearly all participants expressed a strong sense of social conscience and social responsibility, though many took their own values as self-evident.

Now that I have established the foundations of the discipline and its values, I will turn to participants' actual experience in practicing sociology. In particular, I will focus on what they have enjoyed, and what motivates them to pursue this work, before turning finally to the challenges presented by neoliberal values within academia.

Chapter Five
Experience in Academia: Pleasures and Motivations

In the previous chapter, I examined how participants constructed sociology and its meaning, along with the values embedded in how they understand the discipline. In this chapter, I will discuss their *experience* of academic work and sociology, focusing on its positive and motivational aspects, which express participants' values, implicitly or explicitly. As Mills (1959: 11) explains, well-being arises when people experience no threat to their cherished values – so examining the way participants speak positively about their experience (*e.g.* Fairclough 1992) reveals which elements of their values are supported in their day-to-day working lives. In a longitudinal study of work and values, Mortimer and Lorence (1979: 1361) conclude, "[r]ewarding occupational experiences were found to reinforce the same values that constituted the basis of earlier work selection." In other words, the enjoyable parts of academic work help to strengthen the systems of values that led participants to that work in the first place, creating a feedback loop of socialisation, motivation, and commitment.

Additionally, Staw *et al.* (1994) argue that positive emotion in the workplace, both felt and expressed, helps contribute to a supportive social context, good job performance, and individual job satisfaction. In turn, this helps motivate workers to persist, even when difficulties arise. Conversely, a lack of positive emotion is linked to poor performance, poor morale and high turnover of staff (*ibid.*). Steger (2009) draws upon a wide range of psychological studies to show that when work feels meaningful, workers are happier, more committed, more motivated, and more productive. So positive regard for colleagues, work, and its context, and a sense of the work's deeper meaning, are especially relevant in higher education, where a high degree of self-motivation is required (Lamm 2004: 18-19, Philips and Pugh 1987: 20-22, 82-88). In this chapter I will examine both the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that motivate participants – the pleasures inherent in the work itself, and the benefits they receive from doing it.

In discussing the pleasurable parts of their experience, several clear themes emerged: positive engagement with the work, its ideas, its people, and its context were all important elements of the positive experience that drew participants to academia and has kept them involved. In terms of sociology, participants expressed curiosity about the social world, enthusiasm for the discipline and particular research topics, and dedication to social change. More broadly, they reflected on positive personal relationships with teachers, colleagues, and students, enjoyment of the complex elements of academic work, and enjoyment of its lifestyle benefits, including a middle-class income and relative autonomy in working patterns. This echoed the blend of motivations described by Murlis and Hartle (1996) – both an "economic contract" and a "psychological contract" between academics and their universities, across all disciplines and university types. It also echoed Gladwell's (2008: 150) point that complexity, autonomy, and a relationship between reward and effort make work meaningful on a practical level. Participants spent much more time speaking of the intrinsic pleasures of academic work than its extrinsic rewards of and benefits, indicating that they value the pursuit of academic work for its own sake,[44] which reflects previous research from Britain and North America (*e.g.* Levin 2006, Murlis and Hartle 1996, Thorne and Cuthbert 1996).

Nearly all participants spoke explicitly or implicitly about social conscience (though none used the phrase), whether discussing their own motivations or observing the apparent motivations of colleagues, and whether praising the expression of social conscience in an academic setting or criticising it. Rather than constituting a discrete entity, for most participants, elements of social conscience ran throughout their discussion of experiencing academia. It also lent a deeper sense of meaning to their work, which helped to transcend the sometimes tedious routines of everyday academic labour.

[44] This may be partly linked with a cultural uneasiness in discussing money with strangers in developed countries (*e.g.* Wilson 1999, Chapters Two and Four). However, the research cited above indicates that salary is genuinely not a top motivating force for those who work in academia, and many participants explicitly stated this.

A Note on Gratitude

While some participants took the above pleasures for granted, many expressed a strong sense of gratitude to have the opportunity to engage in academic work:

> The job of being an academic is very enjoyable. It's got a hell of a lot of privileges and [...] it beats having to work down a coal mine. *(senior lecturer C, ancient university)*
>
> You compare [the university] to a place like the building sites across the road. I've worked in those building sites, and I know where I would rather be. *(early-stage PhD student B, modern university)*

Of course, these kinds of privileges are earned at a price: an academic career requires a significant investment of time, energy, emotion, and often money prior to doctoral qualification, with no guarantees for employment after (Gregg 2009, Lamm 2004: 8-9, Lee and Williams 1999, Mendoza 2007: 89-91, Philips and Pugh 1987: 71-93). One senior lecturer had only recently finished paying back student loans, and even with full-time permanent employment, academia demands challenging lifestyle compromises, which some participants detailed at length, and which I will discuss in the next chapter.

For staff participants, the sacrifices and compromises were worth it, in exchange for professional identity, expression of social conscience, the pleasures of learning, stimulation, and mastery, and other elements of job satisfaction (*e.g.* Neafsey 2006: 146-157, Pink 2009, Teske 1997, Vallerand *et al.* 1992). They also valued the financial rewards and lifestyle benefits of academic work, though most insisted that such extrinsic factors were not their primary motivations – an interesting pattern, which I will discuss in more depth below. Most PhD student participants expressed similar sentiments, though many were less aware of the challenges ahead if they should pursue academic careers. They were more focused on the privilege of pursuing a PhD as a discrete experience, while staff participants were more focused on the privilege of academic work as an ongoing practice. Either way, there was a strong sense that participants felt grateful that they could pursue interesting and enjoyable work.

Positive Work Relationships

In this section, I will focus on relationships with teachers and colleagues, while the next will include relationships with students and research participants. In speaking about their 'journeys' into academia and sociology, nearly all participants (four staff excepted) mentioned influential people – encouraging teachers and supervisors, enthusiastic research participants, engaged students, supportive colleagues, influential authors, networks of interest, etc:

> The reason that I was based here to do my doctoral work was particularly due to individual members of staff in this department who had been very supportive. I think often rather than some kind of abstract allegiance to the discipline, it's much more about those very real social connections. *(lecturer B, ancient university)*

While most participants did express "abstract allegiance to the discipline," as I will discuss below, it was usually combined with positive interpersonal experiences. For many, influential teachers brought them into the discipline, and colleagues supported them through the PhD process and helped maintain their interest in pursuing academic careers. These kinds of relationships were usually described as pleasurable, worthwhile, and meaningful, giving participants a sense of connection, belonging, or purpose, which I will discuss in more depth below. In many ways, work relationships helped to fulfil participants' basic human needs for belonging and esteem, or participation and identity (Maslow 1943, 1968, Max-Neef *et al.* 1991). They are also likely an important element in career success, as highlighted by previous research (*e.g.* Lamm 2004: 15-19, Lindholm 2004: 624-628, Steger 2009). Conversely, the lack of such relationships are an important factor in leaving academia (Rothblum 1988).

Inspiring Teachers & Personal Encouragement

Almost two-thirds of participants (thirteen PhD students and eight staff) spoke about convivial relationships with influential teachers who "brought sociology to life" for them at an early stage or encouraged them along the way. Many expressed the belief that without

these influential teachers, they would not have chosen an academic path, highlighting the importance of personal relationships to intellectual work (*e.g.* Lamm 2004: 15-19, Lindholm 2004: 615-617, Mendoza 2007: 89-92). Even participants near retirement fondly recalled undergraduate lecturers and tutors, and those newer to academia shared similar reflections. In recalling influential teachers, participants emphasised the passion and clarity with which lecturers spoke, enhancing their growing fascination with the subject matter:

> I had the good fortune to have a sociologist as my tutor […] he was a great tutor, and he was a charismatic teacher, and I guess that was the main influence. *(professor C, ancient university)*

> As my undergraduate career progressed, I really fell in love with the discipline, I had a couple of inspirational teachers, who were just fantastic, switched me on to the discipline. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

> My experience of academia is connected to specific lecturers […] two very very brilliant women who I had […] I thought, these women are great. *(early-stage PhD student F, ancient university)*

Many participants used similarly emotional language to describe experiences with secondary school or undergraduate teachers: passion, inspiration, enthusiasm, excitement, etc. Participants made it clear that emotion played a significant role in drawing them to intellectual work, where they could engage not only mind, but heart as well (*e.g.* hooks 1994, Lamm 2004, Neafsey 2007). However, clarity of both emotional and intellectual expression was fundamental in igniting students' interest:

> It was a charismatic teacher [who brought me into sociology]. He had such an enthusiasm for the subject, and he made it clear, he made it interesting. […] If he'd been teaching history, I would probably have gone to be a historian. *(senior lecturer C, ancient university)*

> I came across certain lecturers or tutors who have demystified [sociology] for me. And they did inspire me to go further, otherwise I wouldn't be starting a PhD. *(early-stage PhD student A, ancient university)*

As noted above, participants experienced enthusiasm not just for sociology, but for *sociologists.* They valued learning, but also the human contact that came with that learning.

The discipline 'came alive' through contact with practitioners, giving students the opportunity to see an appealing role model at the podium or in the tutorial room, and to a certain extent, project their own developing academic identities onto those individuals. Some participants described this process explicitly:

> Strangely enough, I asked my tutor at the time – the one that really brought sociology to life, who was actually based in this office – I said, 'how do I get to where you are?' *(laughs)* And actually, literally, I'm sitting where he was when I asked that question. *(early-stage PhD student C, ancient university)*

Even without this kind of conscious identity-projection, most participants saw lecturers and tutors as catalysts or facilitators for their own deeper engagement with the discipline. They usually found the material interesting in itself (see below), but contact with stimulating teachers provided extra motivation and energy in tandem with their individual reading and thinking.[45] Later in undergraduate study and into postgraduate study, a number of participants received direct encouragement from teaching staff that would become a guidepost along to path into an academic career, emphasising the significance of an enthusiastic teacher-student relationship:

> A lot of it is people taking an interest in you, and you taking an interest in what they do. *(early-stage PhD student H, modern university)*

> [A lecturer] encouraged me to develop [my particular research interest], so when I graduated I did a masters in sociology. […] And in the course of that, I got interested in doing a PhD. *(lecturer G, modern university)*

> Academics are remarkably busy, so trying to pin them down is really hard. So if you get one who is willing to take time out and go for a coffee or get a sandwich, that's brilliant. Doesn't happen often. *(early-stage PhD student A, ancient university)*

Previous research has noted the importance of mentoring for the success of postgraduate students (*e.g.* Austin 2002: 111, Helsi *et al.* 2003, Lindholm 2004: 615-617), along with for early-career academics (Dixon-Reeves 2003). Obviously, there are limits to the time that

---

[45] Sharpe (2009) argues that staff-student contact hours are less important than independent study time for undergraduates' success, but participants' narratives about both learning and teaching suggest the opposite (also see Attwood 2009a, Lindholm 2004, Pascarella 1980, Szafran 1982).

lecturers and tutors can give, especially with increases in student numbers and other demands. But the kinds of sentiments above, coupled with participants' broader reflections on the importance of personal encouragement, provide an argument against the micro-management of academics' time. Participants made it clear that even small amounts of personal attention had a significant impact, particularly when it was un-timetabled or informal, with teachers in roles that Kameen (1995: 449) describes as "masters and mentors, as gate-keepers and door-openers." In many cases, these informal moments provided an opportunity to begin learning what it means to be an academic on a personal level, helping to demystify academia (Lindholm 2004), especially for students from less privileged backgrounds (Dixon-Reeves 2003).

The Human Element

Among both interview and survey participants, a significant minority (a quarter and a fifth, respectively – see Appendix for the latter) chose to study undergraduate sociology after a suggestion from a tutor or friend. On the other hand, only two participants mentioned choosing sociology due to the course description, two mentioned influential authors (in conjunction with influential teachers), and aside from a few experiences with honours dissertations, none mentioned significant assignments or IT work. This emphasises the importance of the 'human element' not only in subject choice, but in academic engagement more broadly, and challenges the current paradigm of increasing technology-based learning.[46]

After completing undergraduate degrees, nearly half of interview participants chose to pursue postgraduate degrees at least partly due to encouragement from staff. Nuehring and Fein (1978) explain how we develop into our chosen identities by a series of 'tacit choices' which seem insignificant by themselves, but eventually build into a particular role or identity. This resonates strongly with the way participants described the development of their

[46] As a tutor, informal conversations with undergraduates indicated that they value face-to-face interaction much more than web-based forums: they consider in-person tutorials more helpful to 'getting' the material, and their questions can be answered immediately, with attention to context and nuance. Web-based instruction, on the other hand, was considered detached, impersonal, and clumsy, both for students and myself in the role of tutor.

academic identities, especially the amount they attributed to luck. In a study of academic career choice across several disciplines, Lindholm (2004: 620) notes that a third of participating academics saw luck as a major factor in their career paths, including "critical incidents during their [post]graduate training that 'redirected' them to an academic career path." Where Lindholm argues that 'accidental academics' most often completed their studies when jobs were scarce, nearly all participants in my research considered their career path 'accidental' in some way, regardless of when their careers began.[47] Still, several participants actually experienced serendipitous chance encounters:[48]

> After my undergraduate degree, I […] didn't have particularly strong plans. […] But I bumped into [a lecturer] on the street, and she talked me into thinking about applying, and I did. *(lecturer, ancient university)*
>
> I bumped into my [future] supervisor in [a supermarket], and he said, 'have you applied yet?' At the time, I was dithering [but] I said, 'okay, I'll get the application out.' *(early-stage PhD student, modern university)*
>
> I took a gap year [and] ran into a sociology professor [at a] hostel, and started chatting. He told me I should come over here. I figured there's nothing really waiting for me in [my home country], so I might as well come to Britain. *(early-stage PhD student, ancient university)*
>
> I was hitchhiking […] and I got picked up by this person who knew people in the sociology department [nearby], and they started asking me about my career. […] It's just one of these bizarre conversations you never expect to have. *(lecturer, modern university)*

Beyond these truly accidental encounters, 'accidents' usually took the form of suggestions from teachers or colleagues, emphasising the social context in which vocational decisions take place. Participants saw their career choices within broader social spheres, even to the point of denying their own agency by attributing their choices to luck. There may be an element of 'impostor syndrome' here (Clance and O'Toole 1988), where feelings of

---

[47] It is worth noting that Lindholm's interviews took place in the United States during 2000-01, at the end of an economic boom, while my interviews took place in Scotland during 2008, at the start of a recession. When thousands are losing their jobs, it is not surprising that academics in a discipline focused on social inequality should subtly apologise for comfortable employment, even if insecure.

[48] I have not identified these participants with pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity in light of their unusual stories.

inadequacy outweigh a sense of personal competence, and acknowledging a sense of drive might be seen as arrogant. More broadly, it is interesting that participants took for granted the social capital of relationships with teachers and colleagues, indicating both its invisibility and importance within middle-class social networks (*e.g.* Power and Whitty 2002, Szreter 2001).

Other scholars have pointed out the importance of social capital within higher education, especially social interaction between teachers and students (*e.g.* Austin 2002, Kameen 1995, Lamm 2004, Mendoza 2007). In a study of postgraduate student retention, Girves and Wemmerus (1988: 185) write that relationships with teaching staff can "indirectly predict doctoral degree progress." In addition to past relationships with lecturers and tutors, most of the PhD students spoke positively about their current relationships with supervisors, describing different styles of motivation and support. Some emphasised warmth, availability, and a sense of emotional support, while others emphasised a lively energy that encouraged their best work, or a sense of being positively challenged or pushed. It was clear that participants had experienced significant investment of time from teachers and supervisors, giving them validation, encouragement, and support. Lamm (2004: 9-10) considers this kind of investment crucial for PhD students across a wide range of disciplines, both for motivation and to develop a sense of an "academic self." Furthermore, Mendoza (2007: 76) and Girves and Wemmerus (1988: 185) argue that positive relationships with supervisors are a primary factor in completion of a PhD, particularly "being treated as a junior colleague."

Where participants described difficulties with their supervisors, such as mismatched communication styles, expectations, or modes of working, they generally spoke about navigating and negotiating the relationships rather than flatly criticising them. A key lesson for these PhD students was recognising the need to take a particular type of active role in their learning, rather than uncritically accepting every element of their supervisory experience. In many ways, this represents part of the transition from student to teacher (Hall 1968, Lee and Williams 1999). As one PhD student put it, the PhD is "an apprenticeship of being an academic" (*e.g.* Austin 2002, Kameen 1995, Mendoza 2007, Philips and Pugh 1987).

Beyond the supervisory relationship, most PhD students also turned to colleagues in their departments and wider intellectual networks for support.

Supportive Colleagues and Positive Departmental Atmosphere (PhD Students)

For many participants, interaction with departmental colleagues and other intellectual networks has been nearly as important as work with influential teachers. More than three-quarters of PhD student participants spoke about experiencing intellectual, practical and emotional support from their department as a whole, both staff and fellow students, along with enjoyment of the collegial atmosphere and a sense of belonging. These kinds of comments varied in their intensity, and the women PhD students spoke more freely about their emotional experience than the men:

> I feel quite comfortable, like I've found a home. I've […] found a niche, where I want to be. […] I think it's kind of nice that we can all be so different yet belong to one department. […] It's supportive, it's inspirational. *(female early-stage PhD student, ancient university)*

> They always talk about isolation and loneliness.[49] And I think I'm quite lucky here, that's not really been too much of an issue. *(female late-stage PhD student, ancient university)*

There is no doubt that the PhD process is an enormous emotional challenge. Lee and Williams (1999), for example, write of the "trauma" of the PhD process as a rite of passage, and Philips and Pugh (1987: 70) characterise a PhD as comprising "periods of higher or lower anxiety" which students are "never completely free of." In their handbook for doctoral students, they detail other common emotions of the process – enthusiasm, isolation, boredom, frustration, the desire to finish, etc (*ibid.* 63-71). Given the emotional challenges, it is unsurprising to see cohorts of PhD students bonding and supporting each other, and expressing gratitude for relationships with peers either explicitly or by speaking positively and enthusiastically of them. In my own experience, encouragement and emotional

[49] To clarify, this participant was referring to undesired isolation, rather than the necessary self-enforced isolation that occurs during the final stages of a PhD, which is not necessarily lonely.

mirroring from peers was hugely valuable, even though I lived a considerable distance away from the university: quality of contact made up for quantity. Mendoza (2007: 76) describes peers as an important "source of the tacit knowledge that students must acquire to survive and thrive in the culture of the department."

PhD students also turned to supervisors and other teaching staff for additional support – in many ways, their accounts of supportive departmental atmospheres reflect staff participants' descriptions of positive and enriching relationships with postgraduate students, as I will discuss below. Girves and Wemmerus (1988: 185-186) consider involvement in a department, both with peers and with staff, an important indicator of doctoral progress, and Lamm (2004: 14) describes it as crucial to students' ability to "continue efficiently and productively." Golde (2005) points out that academic and social integration are two sides of the same coin, and in the context of academic departments they both contribute to a PhD student's professional networking and sense of disciplinary belonging, even – or perhaps especially – in the context of an intensely solitary process.

Interestingly, the four PhD students who did not mention a supportive departmental atmosphere were all based in the same university. For them, the stereotype of "isolation and loneliness" mentioned above might have been more of a reality than for participants at the other five universities. To give a typical example of their similar narratives, one expressed difficulty adjusting to the change in status that came with the shift from masters to PhD level, where PhD students are treated more as equals by teaching staff, expected to contribute to seminars and conversations at a much higher level, and much more vigorously challenged (*e.g.* Hall 1968). This student spoke of adjusting to the change as a solitary process based on individual emotional strength, making no mention of supportive peers. However, this student, and the other three based at the same university, did speak about support from supervisors, partners, friends, and external networks. They saw these sources of support as adequate for their needs, and indeed, Lamm (2004), Lee and Williams (1999), and Philips and Pugh (1987) all note the importance of friends and family for the emotional health of PhD students. At the same time, several studies have shown that poor social integration

within a department is a factor in student attrition or underperformance, both for undergraduates and postgraduates (*e.g.* Girves and Wemmerus 1988, Golde 2005, Tinto 1997, de Valero 2001).

While satisfaction with supportive environments was conspicuously absent at one university, dissatisfaction with conflict and competition was evenly spread across all six. Mixed with positive comments about supportive colleagues, some participants felt that important elements of community were lacking, and several criticised what they perceived as power games and competitiveness within their departments:

> I know that people support each other, but they might not be as loud or out emphatic in their support of each other as they are in their critique of each other. *(late-stage PhD student E, ancient university)*
>
> It's quite a hard environment, quite a competitive environment. […] There are still elements here that are very helpful. One of my supervisors in particular, he's a fantastic, helpful person. […] And there's other people in the department who are very helpful. *(pause)* But I think there's also an element of competitiveness. *(late-stage PhD student B, ancient university)*

As seen here, those who were critical of their departments were still appreciative of the support they did receive, whether from supervisors or from the departmental community as a whole. With critique and challenge being a key part of intellectual inquiry (Kameen 1995, Lamm 2004, Philips and Pugh 1987), especially in the increasingly competitive sphere of academia, it was clear that PhD students saw these elements of their experience as to be expected, even if they found them disturbing or distressing – part of the 'price' of obtaining a doctoral degree (Lee and Williams 1999). Broadly speaking, the interpersonal politics encountered by PhD students is a common feature of 'working life' in most fields, and indeed most spheres of human activity. However, some PhD students, even with previous work experience outside of academia, were disturbed by the intensity and visibility of interpersonal conflict and competition. The tension between cooperation and competition was a strong theme among both PhD students and staff, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Regardless of departmental politics, some PhD students were hard-pressed to find others with similar research interests, so by necessity they formed what one PhD student called "communities of knowledge:"

> There's no one that I have an educated discussion about [my topic] with. […] So, I've had to establish my working networks mostly through the internet all over the world. […] It's a virtual environment that I've created for myself […] But if there had been no internet, this would have been quite dispiriting. *(late-stage PhD student, modern university)*

> I think there's no real postgraduate community. […] But that's a good thing because it means that I get out of the department a lot more and go and take part in other academic communities, which I think is helpful. *(late-stage PhD student A, ancient university)*

Four other PhD students engaged with similar networks, and several studies have noted the importance of such networks to doctoral progress and satisfaction (*e.g.* Lindholm 2004, Mendoza 2007, Lamm 2004, and Kameen 1995). As noted above, support and assistance are crucial in the PhD process, even when it comes from online communities. In my own experience, an online forum for postgraduates has been a source of emotional support, intellectual stimulation, practical assistance, and a sense of belonging – especially important because I have lived far away from my university for much of my PhD. Reading the personal reflections of PhD students in other departments and disciplines around the world has helped me to contextualise my own experience, and given me a space to share my own personal reflections. Additionally, speaking with people at universities across Scotland has allowed me to contextualise observations at my own university, and recognise the broader social patterns at work.

Emphasising the importance of social and intellectual exchange between different institutions and disciplines, several participants spoke positively about postgraduate conferences, workshops, and other events. One professor proposed "a possible model" for postgraduate networks within sociology, based on a joint doctoral programme for economics students, and a PhD student at another institution presented a good argument for it:

> It's encouraging when courses or events are run for the benefit of multiple universities. I think networks of universities are very strong, because that helps use all the resources. […] Also, it means that you actually talk to people […] at other Scottish universities. *(early-stage PhD student H, modern university)*

This student's mention of resources is significant, because rifts often occur between departments, institutions, and individuals because of competition for limited resources, as I will discuss in the next chapter. As implied above, this often leads to plenty in some areas with scarcity in others – for example, two-thirds of research grants in the UK are concentrated in twenty Russell Group universities (Russell Group 2009). Greater cooperation would not only use resources more effectively, but also can help provide the social context for less resentment and greater collaboration, while also adding another layer of social support for postgraduates.

Intellectual Excitement, Collegiality, and "Tacit Socialisation" (Staff)

In contrast to the PhD students, none of the staff participants spoke about personally depending on supportive departmental communities. While some lecturers spoke about feeling 'at home' within the discipline, this was linked more with the subject matter and the work itself than emotional connections with colleagues. For staff who mentioned their departmental atmospheres, emotions other than a sense of being supported came to the fore[50] – mainly the excitement and pleasure of intellectual engagement:

> We're able to engage in worthwhile debates with colleagues. […] There's tremendous job satisfaction in that. *(senior lecturer C, ancient university)*

> Wow, what a privileged thing to do, to be allowed to sit here and speak with very intelligent people who've got a lot of experience. […] It's about communicating with

[50] Gender balance might have skewed participants' responses in this area – women are socialised to speak about their emotions more than men, particularly with other women (Gilligan 1982, hooks 2000). As PhD student participants were two-thirds women and staff participants were nearly two-thirds men, it is unsurprising that the PhD students interviewed were more likely to speak about their emotional experience, especially to a female peer, while staff (including women, who have arguably been successfully socialised into the "masculine" oriented world of academia – see Clark 1977, de Groot 1997, hooks 1994, Keller and Moglen 1987, Kirschner 1987, Lee and Williams 1999, Bellas 1999, Philips and Pugh 1987: Chapter Eleven, Rothblum 1988, Wennerås and Wold 1997) were more likely to use action-oriented language when describing their experience.

> other people, getting stuff out and talked about. And we have one seminar group here that I really enjoy […] people just come along and it's almost like a musical performance because everyone's expected to participate. *(lecturer C, modern university)*

As mentioned earlier, this sense of gratitude for the 'privilege' of intellectual engagement was a common theme for many participants, especially those from less privileged backgrounds, as I will discuss below. The pleasure of engagement with colleagues was another common theme: as Gersick *et al.* (2000) note, building positive relationships with colleagues is an important element of professional success in academia – or indeed, any other field. Law and Work (2007: 143-144) argue that a sense of academic competence has traditionally been "a collegiate function of the horizontal relationships of peer groups from the intellectual community." In other words, academics feel as competent as their colleagues consider them to be, which may contribute to the emphasis on social relationships rather than personal agency in career trajectories, as discussed above. Austin (2002: 99) argues that a desire for collegiality is a key part of what attracts people to academia, to the point where a lack of collegiality can cause new lecturers to consider leaving the profession. For the majority of participants, this was not an issue on a personal level, though several spoke about the issue more broadly.

In addition to pleasure, staff participants also spoke with pride about other academics with whom they had worked, and the excitement of working with them:

> They had a number of extremely good people who have since gone on to make distinguished careers. [It was a] group of people who were very passionate about their subject, and very distinguished in their abilities. *(professor A, ancient university)*

> It was a very exciting time. […] When I worked with people who were also committed to the stuff, that it meant that we really did burn the midnight oil, […] we didn't stint ourselves, and we didn't look at the clock, and we just did what we felt needed to be done, to the best of our ability. *(professor C, ancient university)*[51]

[51] Interestingly, among staff it was only professors (four out of seven) who used words like "exciting" or "fun" to describe research-based work and collaboration, though nearly all participants expressed enjoyment of research and spoke animatedly about it, as with the lecturer above. Whether professorship attracts people who seek excitement from their research, or the position confers more freedom to seek such excitement – or a comfortable social position from which to express it – would be an interesting question for another study.

Whether for pleasure, excitement, or pride – or the opportunity to "make a contribution" – it was clear that staff participants valued open intellectual engagement with colleagues, taking place among equals. Bland *et al.* (2006: 92) identify "positive group climate" as one element that facilitates productivity and commitment from lecturers, and both Steger (2009) and Neafsey (2007) consider enjoyable relationships with colleagues part of what makes work meaningful. Nixon (2001: 182) argues that "collegiality in higher education is anything but collegial," masking sinister horizontal power blocs, but this kind of dynamic was not described by participants in this research. Scott (2003: 304) notes that cultures of autonomy and collegiality are being undermined by structural changes university management, as I will discuss in the next chapter, but the desire for – and appreciation of – collegiality remains.[52]

In addition to collegiality within departments, two-thirds of staff participants spoke about the "fresh energy" that came from participating in wider intellectual networks, extending into sectors beyond higher education. These included scholarly networks organised around particular research areas, third-sector organisations, etc, and they often aligned with the critical and social change facets of sociology discussed in the previous chapter. Of course, increased pressures on lecturers' time also contribute to the erosion of informal contact among academics, as I will discuss in the next chapter. As academic work takes on more administrative and managerial qualities, opportunities for stimulating and satisfying interaction with peers become more limited, making emotional support less of a priority.[53] More broadly, as individual careers progress, a sense of isolation would not be so acute (*e.g.* Austin 2002). However, 'impostor syndrome' still exists, especially for women (*e.g.* Harvey

---

[52] It should be noted that staff participants did not speak of *disliking* working with their colleagues. Interpersonal conflicts are inevitable in any work environment, so their silence on this was likely from a reluctance to 'air dirty laundry' to a stranger, even anonymously, along with awareness of the public realm in which the research would eventually be shared.

[53] This is another area where participants' responses might have been biased due to my own position as a PhD student. Lecturers might have been reluctant to confide feelings of inadequacy and a need for support to someone of a lower status than themselves, because doing so might have introduced a sense of vulnerability and disrupted the subtle power dynamic. With some lecturers, this dynamic took the form of a wise expert sharing advice with a novice academic, and talk of emotional needs would have been especially 'mismatched.' On the other hand, in my experience, emotional struggle is a common theme for conversations amongst PhD students of all disciplines (*e.g.* Lee and Williams 1999), so it might have been seen as a natural topic to mention in an interview with someone of the same status. Where fellow PhD students might have perceived our common status and experience as grounds for trust, lecturers might have taken my lower status as grounds for discretion (*e.g.* Alvesson 2003).

1985, Walkerdine 1989), manifesting as feelings of inadeqacy, incompetence and fear of being 'discovered' as an 'impostor' among more competent people (Clance and O'Toole 1988: 51).

In many ways, doing a PhD (particularly in social science) represents stepping away from mainstream values and embracing a different set of priorities, so bonding with other PhD students is a necessary part of the process (Austin 2002, Lamm 2004, Lindholm 2004, Phillips and Pugh 1987). But having been through the PhD, lecturers are less likely to see their day-to-day challenges as new and overwhelmingly difficult experiences. Even if they do need emotional support, they are likely to turn to family and friends rather than immediate colleagues, and to have priorities outside of work. They are also likely to be more fully socialised and integrated into academic life, taking its challenges as a matter of course and possessing the tools to cope with them.[54]

Indeed, a few staff participants took an analytical approach in describing what one lecturer called his "socialisation into the discipline itself." Some participants saw this process as largely passive, while others considered socialising *themselves* into sociology or academic work a conscious choice:

> I found myself very much at home not just with the content of those courses, but with the people who were teaching them. And so in retrospect, it seems now as if there was a tacit socialisation going on […] I was being socialised into sociology as a habitus. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> There is a sort of self-selection process. [Social researchers] who are attracted to academia reflect a particular outlook, not only politically but in terms of their social values. I suppose you get a slightly different mix in the private sector. […] I'm definitely more comfortable in this environment. *(lecturer G, modern university)*

These accounts connect with the importance of social interaction described above, and as Kain (2006: 335) puts it, "an individual's entire educational career can be seen as

[54] Obviously, ability to cope varies between individuals, and not everyone is left unscathed. There appears to be little research in this area, but a few studies have examined links between the academic profession and family struggles (Rothblum 1988, Mason and Goulden 2004) and alcoholism (Thoreson 1984).

developmental socialization." Austin (2002: 103-104) describes socialisation into academia as an "apprenticeship" where PhD students "strove to make sense of academic work and [academic] careers, how their interests and values fit with those they saw honored within the academy, and the kinds of future they envisioned." The notion of academic socialisation as a conscious choice emphasises that disciplinary boundaries are, of course, socially constructed. Several participants expressed opinions that the only 'real' difference between sociology and closely-related disciplines are what a person reads, the methods they choose, and where they publish. However, the kinds of attitudes above, and the importance placed on *intra*-disciplinary engagement indicate that there are ways of relating distinctive to particular disciplines: a discipline can be seen as a social and political sphere in itself.

Seeing the "tacit socialisation" present in academia also reflects the worldviews of self-reflexive academics moving within knowable social worlds. Their own narratives about their experience embody the sociological imagination they try to impart to their students, and it is interesting to see them extrapolate personal experience and observations into explanations of broader social patterns (*e.g.* Luck 2007, Mills 1959, Rex 1973). PhD students, at an earlier stage in their sociological training, were more focused on their own experiences and meeting their emotional needs, though a few did venture into theorising about the world around them. As the professor above put it, they are in the process of "being socialised into sociology as a habitus" rather than reflecting on the process after the fact. Part of the socialisation process is to connect with other students and with staff, at least partly in order to begin experiencing what it means to be a sociologist – an experience taken for granted by most members of staff.

Enjoyment of the Work and its Context

Lacy and Sheehan (1997: 305) found that in universities across six developed countries, "factors related to the environment in which academics work, including university atmosphere, morale, sense of community, and relationships with colleagues, are the greatest predictors of job satisfaction." However, participants in this research also expressed

satisfaction related to the various intellectual tasks that make up academic livelihoods. The social context of enjoyable relationships with colleagues reinforces enjoyment of the work itself, providing two levels of intrinsic motivation (*e.g.* Bénabou and Tirole 2003, Pink 2009, Steger 2009). Participants spoke about enjoying research, fieldwork, teaching, supervising, reading, writing, analysis, crafting theory, and the broad experience of these elements combined. For example:

> I'm motivated by coming to my work and enjoying what I do. *(early-stage PhD student B, modern university)*

> I really like the teaching. I enjoy lecturing very much and I enjoy the research. I'm sure that's what anyone you interview will be saying. *(lecturer B, ancient university)*

Indeed, two-thirds of participants explicitly mentioned that they enjoy research, more than eighty percent enjoyed teaching, and more than half enjoyed both. There were no participants who did not speak favourably about one or the other. This was unsurprising, given the hard work and low pay required in the early stages of academic careers (*e.g.* Lindholm 2004, Wilson 1991) – without some level of enjoyment, it would be difficult to remain motivated.[55] However, participants also spoke about the extrinsic rewards of academic work, including financial rewards. It would be naïve to argue that academics pursue their work for 'purely' for enjoyment or money alone, and it was clear from participants' explanations that the various intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were fundamentally intertwined.

Research & Fieldwork

Two-thirds of participants (twelve PhD students and eleven staff) spoke explicitly about enjoying research or fieldwork, and they were often enthusiastic in describing it – loud, fast speech, positive language and facial cues, animated movements, etc. (*e.g.* Hall 1959: 33-37, Tannen 1986: 27-36). Most were excited about the topics of their research, as I will discuss

---

[55] There might be some sample bias here – academics who do not enjoy at least some aspect of their work would be unlikely to volunteer for an interview about it, particularly with someone whose aim is to gather data rather than address grievances.

below, but they expressed clear pleasure in its methods as well: project design, fieldwork, analysis, background reading, writing-up. In particular, fieldwork was often considered a fun activity:

> If I was to say what I'm really passionate about, I really do love observational fieldwork. […] I really, really enjoy going out into the field, just getting out there and talking to people, learning from their experience, seeing what's going on and trying to analyse that and write it up in a way that conveys the insight that I think I've picked up, or what I've learned. […] I could happily do fieldwork all the time. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

There are several interconnected elements here, even in the single task of 'doing fieldwork' – this lecturer describes a complex set of activities, linked with the pleasures of learning and understanding (*e.g.* Max-Neef *et al.* 1991, Gladwell 2008). This was a common way of describing the work, as a series of interconnected tasks: speaking with participants, uncovering information or patterns, moving between details and the big picture, incorporating elements of different disciplines, engaging in problem-solving and lateral thinking, etc. Similar tasks are described by Mills (1959: 195-226) in his essay *On Intellectual Craftsmanship*, arguing that it is not any one task or skill that 'makes' a social scientist, but interconnected 'habits of mind' and the wisdom to move between them. Flyvbjerg (2001: 9-24) argues that social scientists in any discipline rely on a similar sense of "practical wisdom," improving through experience their ability to make intuitive decisions, balanced with analytical rationality.

In tandem with intellectually satisfying complexity, several female PhD students connected the 'joy' of research to building relationships with participants:

> That's what's really struck me, the amount of trust that people just give you, in what they say and how they talk to you and how they share their lives, and reveal these intimate details to you. *(female early-stage PhD student, ancient university)*
>
> People were really open and friendly and enthusiastic […] it's actually been largely due to their enthusiasm that I've got into doing it in the long-term. *(female late-stage PhD student, ancient university)*

Even though I asked all participants about their experience of doing research, it was only female PhD students who focused on relationships and emotional satisfaction in fieldwork. One male lecturer hinted at forming relationships with participants by spending a lot of time with them, but he called this "getting your hands dirty" rather than using emotional language. It is possible that other participants felt an emotional connection with their fieldwork participants and avoided speaking about it due to gender and status roles, consciously or unconsciously, as discussed in the footnotes above. However, other research has indicated that women are much more likely to take on 'emotional labour' within academia. Both Park (1996) and Bellas (1999) examine the gendered division of labour within academia, with a focus on the emotional labour of teaching and student support. In terms of ethnographic fieldwork, Kirschner discusses empathy and emotional connection:

> interpretivists' repudiation of the existence of interpersonal and emotional avenues to ethnographic insight conforms to a broader set of gender-linked conventions of intellectual discourse and self-disclosure. In this dominant 'masculine' tradition, the acquisition of knowledge via empathic and related forms of connection is deemed not only illegitimate and unreliable, but also dangerous and forbidden. (Kirschner 1987: 227)

Debates about the role of empathy and emotion in fieldwork are more commonly found in anthropology and feminist theory than sociology (*e.g.* Alvesson 2003b: 184-187, Jagger 1989: 145-171, Walkerdine 1989: 276), but are relevant in any discipline that uses qualitative methods. Kirschner (1987: 218) defines empathy as not simply an emotional process, but an "interplay of cognitive and affective processes," and raises a compelling question: "Are women really more empathically talented than men, or is it rather that they have more freedom to recognize and talk about the use of preverbal connections and cues?" In this research, the latter seems to be the case: male and staff participants spoke about emotional connections outside of fieldwork, so it is likely that emotional connection with the 'subjects' of research was downplayed because it can be considered a threat to objectivity, while emotional detachment seems more appropriately 'scientific' (*e.g.* Bruce 1999). Political engagement, as discussed in the previous chapter, poses less of a threat for participants, though is still criticised by proponents of the 'voice from nowhere' tradition (*ibid.*).

Where some female PhD students spoke explicitly about the emotional elements of their empirical work, female staff participants tended to be enthusiastic dilettantes:

> I'm an empirical sociologist. […] I've been very lucky, really, to have been able to look at so many interesting things. And always new things! There's always something new coming up. The good thing about sociology is it's never just the same, you see. […] So you've always got to be ready for the next research project, for the next issue that comes up. *(female professor, ancient university)*

> I'm a researcher, I'm a methodologist, I'm a good designer of projects. I would say a problem-solver. […] When I was doing my PhD, the emeritus professor in the department said to me, 'a good researcher is a detective,' and I was very fascinated by that. […] Sociology can take you to all sorts of places, and I very much enjoy that. *(female professor, modern university)*

In contrast with the female PhD students above, these female staff members used much more action-oriented language, and rather than valuing depth of emotional connection with one set of participants, they valued the ability to examine a broad range of topics and move between a number of different research areas. In many ways, this is a pragmatic approach, given the often-changing tides of funding availability, and many participants of both genders adopted it. Broadly speaking, three-quarters of staff participants valued autonomy in choice of research topics and strategy, and considered this crucial to their job satisfaction and motivation (see Gladwell 2008, Pink 2009, Steger 2009). Only four PhD students spoke about autonomy as a motivating force, though more did speak about the flexibility of the academic lifestyle. In general, PhD students were more concerned about being controlled or constrained in their work on a particular topic:

> I'm not going to spend three, four years of my life, if my research is going to be controlled. […] I want people to criticise me […] But not to control my ideas and my values. […] I'm not getting into academia to be institutionally polite. *(late-stage PhD student I, modern university)*

> In other places, students are very much controlled – even their reading lists are circumscribed, what they can do, all of that is enforced strictly. Whereas over here, there's that degree of trust. […] I've worked essentially in total freedom, which has been very useful for me. *(late-stage PhD student A, modern university)*

Both of these participants, based in the same department, expressed the view that their PhDs would have been impossible without the freedom to pursue their research without excessive interference. Not all PhD students experienced such freedom, and not all wanted to – as Lee and Williams (1999) point out in their study of trauma during the PhD process, there can be a very fine line between freedom and abandonment (also see Philips and Pugh 1987: 73-76). As one participant described, balance is key:

> I just appreciate being more flexible. Obviously, I still need the structure of support. […] But it's finding that balance, between somebody helping you, providing structure for you, but also you know that you're doing a PhD and you need freedom and space in which to experiment, get stuff wrong. *(early-stage PhD student H, modern university)*

Where PhD students valued freedom to pursue research in their own way, staff took this for granted. They were much more focused on freedom to choose research topics more broadly, which is unsurprising, given that PhD students are still 'learning the ropes' while working on a single project. Staff, on the other hand, embark on new research projects regularly, though funding constraints and other structural restrictions on research choices have been ongoing issue, as I will discuss in Chapter Six.[56] Despite these issues, staff participants spoke positively about the autonomy they experience in academia, including comparison with other sectors:

> As long as I continue to publish in journals that are defined by my peers as something to do with sociology, then I can write pretty much what I want on any given topic. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> You have the ability to dispose of your time in a way that is largely governed by you. Management pressures on academics are clearly increasing, but it's still much less stringent than any other kinds of job that I have experienced. […] The work that you do is in a sense your own work, you keep ownership of it, which is absolutely a unique thing in most situations. *(lecturer B, modern university)*

According to Scott (2003), autonomy is one of academia's 'traditional' values that has been eroded by increasing managerialism and micro-management. However, in this research,

---

[56] There is also an element of self-selection here – academics who are too deeply displeased with working in universities would likely seek employment in other settings.

while participants described a decrease of professional autonomy in recent decades, they still considered it a cherished value, under threat (*e.g.* Mills 1959: 11). Overall, there was a pattern of 'yes, but' – yes, the enjoyable parts of the job have been eroding, but the job is still enjoyable. As mentioned above, there was a persistent sense of gratitude in the way that participants described their work: despite increasing pressures, they were genuinely appreciative of its pleasures. Psychologically speaking, McCullough (2002: 303) argues that gratitude is often linked with an awareness of social interconnection: "grateful people tend to pay attention to the ways in which their lives are connected to other events [...] in the social [and] natural world." Obviously, participants varied widely in their expressions of gratitude, but this kind of theory resonates strongly with the discipline's core aims, and may provide a clue to why sociologists are not more vocal about their dissatisfaction with the changes of recent years.

Teaching & Relationship with Students

While some participants self-identified more as researchers and others more as teachers, nearly all (fourteen PhD students[57] and sixteen staff) expressed enjoyment of teaching – by any measure, one of the core activities of university departments. As discussed above, the self-selection and socialisation process for academics tends to include relationships with inspiring teachers, so for most participants, lecturing or tutoring has been an opportunity to experience that relationship from the opposite role. In contrast with research, where close relationships with fieldwork participants went unmentioned, many participants spoke explicitly about their enjoyment in building rewarding relationships with students:

> I love [teaching]. It's fantastic. [...] The engagement with students and dissemination of ideas, I think is really enjoyable. I just remember how enjoyable it was to be taught in sociology, and I hope I can impart that to students. *(lecturer D, ancient university)*

> I do think you learn a lot from the students as well. I really enjoy teaching. I'm surprised at how much I enjoy teaching. [...] I love when you can see that glimmer of recognition. *(late-stage PhD student C, modern university)*

---

[57] Three PhD students had not yet tried a lecturing/tutoring role, but anticipated a positive experience.

> I think you're very lucky if you like teaching, because if you don't it must be hell on wheels. *(laughs)* […] But I like it, in the Socratic sense, that there is a dialogue and a conversation. […] I've always thought teaching is a privilege. […] At its best, it's a real interchange, and it's a really exciting thing to be about. *(professor C, ancient university)*

As above, a sense of gratitude came through strongly – words like 'privilege' and 'lucky' were common, along with obvious enthusiasm and pleasure, expressed in tone of voice, facial expression, relaxed posture, and animated gestures (*e.g.* Hall 1959: 33-37, Tannen 1986: 27-36). In describing the actual process of teaching, some participants saw the role of lecturer or tutor as being primarily inspirational and supportive in the learning process – as one PhD student said, "just showing love of the subject." Indeed, in a study of undergraduate sociology students, Szafran (1982: 136) found that the most important factor in predicting "a student's overall reaction to sociology" was "their evaluation of the instructors as interesting." Their "evaluation of the subject matter as interesting" ranked second, and many participants seemed to grasp this intuitively:

> [Large lectures are] essentially about trying to pass on a kind of enthusiasm for the material, which hopefully stimulates people to go away and do the work for themselves. *(lecturer B, ancient university)*
>
> I think that people need to be encouraged, if they're interested, or if they want to carry on in education. *(late-stage PhD student B, ancient university)*

In a kind of transference (*e.g.* Britzman and Pitt 1996: 117-119, Frank 1995: 28-35), these participants recalled similar processes they experienced as students themselves: the first recalled developing enthusiasm for the discipline in early encounters with it, and the second spoke of encouragement playing a key role in his PhD process. As discussed above, postgraduate study resembles an academic apprenticeship, but it can also take place for undergraduates who choose to engage on that level. When staff are also available to engage, not just skills and ideas are passed from one generation to the next, but enthusiasm and dedication as well (*e.g.* Lamm 2004: 17-19, Lindholm 2004: 614-618, Pascarella 1980: 556-559, Tinto 1997). Most participants took pleasure in sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm, while in turn seeing enthusiasm, understanding, and curiosity reflected back to

them from students who 'get it,' effectively completing the cycle – a pattern also noted by Hockey (1996: 499-500) in a study on the motivations of PhD supervisors. Many participants spoke about the satisfaction of witnessing undergraduates grasp a new concept: one PhD student called it "light bulbs going off." As above, participants who were further along in their careers portrayed the teaching process in greater detail and complexity than PhD students with limited teaching experience:

> The enjoyment is in clearly communicating complex ideas to people who then can understand them and then make their own use of them. That to me is the great pleasure. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> I quite like that opportunity to get students thinking about [...] their lives in relation to other people's lives, and I quite like being provocative and forcing them to think about stuff that they wouldn't normally think about. *(senior lecturer A, modern university)*

> I think sociology in particular, because of the potential it has to change the way people think about themselves and the world in which they're placed, you can see that transformation taking place in students. It brings you closer to them. It's great! *(senior lecturer C, ancient university)*

In these kinds of accounts, participants did not speak about students passing exams or gaining qualifications – though these are certainly important elements of the university experience, and they did speak about 'transferable skills,' as discussed above.[58] They were most animated and enthusiastic, however, when describing the way that students begin to *think* sociologically, as communicated in classroom discussions and supervisory meetings: connecting personal troubles with public issues (Mills 1959), considering the social world and their place in it, questioning the conditions of that world, and perhaps beginning to wonder how they might change it. In many ways, educators can be seen as reproducing dominant hierarchies and ideologies (*e.g.* Althusser 1972, Foucault 1977), but a subject like sociology offers many opportunities to go beyond this role and help students develop critical

---

[58] Of course, the way lecturers and PhD students *speak* about teaching is not necessarily the way they actually *teach* – this is pointed out by Kane *et al.* 2002, and Murray and MacDonald 1997. Arguably, we could learn more about participants' unspoken values by seeing how they 'walk their talk' in the classroom, but the practical limitations to such an approach are obvious. Therefore, assessing actual teaching styles is beyond the scope of this project.

consciousness (*e.g.* Cancian 1995, Freire 1970, hooks 1994). It was clear that this part of the teaching role was what participants valued.

They also valued their own learning that took place in the context of teaching, especially PhD students. Two-thirds reflected that undergraduate tutoring has helped them consolidate and deepen their knowledge of sociology, as well as build their confidence in the discipline:

> You really get to know the theories. You really come to grips with them, and you can see their linkages. […] I'm forced to spend a lot more time with the material […] and really locate the broader arguments more firmly. *(early-stage PhD student F, ancient university)*

> It builds up your confidence. I realised I *have* learned something from being at uni, I can answer their questions. *(early-stage PhD student G, modern university)*

> It really helps you to be critical of your own work. Marking essays, for instance, or oral presentations […] has led me to be more critical of my own. […] It certainly draws my attention to the way that I write and present. *(early-stage PhD student I, ancient university)*

These accounts give a broad range of intellectual skills that PhD students were able to hone through teaching, despite complaints that excessive teaching loads took time away from research. In the 'academic apprenticeship' model, PhD students and new lecturers occupy a transitional space between student and teacher, and many identified with both roles simultaneously. Some carried their experience of this transitional space into their undergraduate teaching:

> I can remember what it's like to be in uni and to be in first year so I think I can relate to them quite well. […] I remember what it's like, I remember being in tutorials and being too frightened to say anything. *(early-stage PhD student G, modern university)*

> I can relate to first-years quite well. […] I think I have probably an easier ability to relate to them not knowing any sociology and getting them excited and interested in sociology, because it's a relatively recent process for me. *(senior lecturer without a background in sociology, modern university)*

While teaching was most often described in similar terms as positive learning experiences (*e.g.* Frank 1995), these participants also injected their teaching practice with memories of

negative experiences – feeling frightened in tutorials or confused about sociology – as a way of counteracting those kinds of experiences for their students (*e.g.* Lee and Williams 1999). Even though participants sought to reproduce or counteract their own undergraduate experiences, they were realistic about the level of enthusiasm they might expect from most undergraduates:

> I would love to think that we could get higher retention rates, but maybe [sociology] doesn't ring the bells for students the way it rings them for staff. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

> [Lecturers] overestimate the amount of time students spend actually thinking about their degree. Most of them don't think about it at all. They've got many other interests. *(lecturer D, ancient university)*

> Of course, I'm the one who loves sociology and finds all this stuff incredibly interesting, so it could be just that I don't understand why [first-year students] wouldn't be really excited about coming in. *(early-stage PhD student D, ancient university)*

These kinds of comments were conspicuously absent from participants who were late in their careers, and had experience of teaching in more favourable conditions: lower staff-student ratios, longer contact hours, higher levels of autonomy for staff, and much less financial pressure on students meant more of a chance for both students and staff to engage in a fulfilling pedagogical process.[59] Sociology student numbers in some universities have not changed dramatically in recent decades – several participants near retirement described first-year courses with four hundred or more students in the 1960s and 70s, and numbers "remained buoyant" since then. But other changes have taken their toll, with universities making cuts to improve short-term balance sheets at the expense of longer-term educational investments, as I will discuss in Chapter Six.

[59] According to the Times Higher Education Supplement, "Public funding per student fell by 40 per cent in real terms during the 1990s. [...] Student numbers have almost tripled in the past two decades, and [...] student-to-staff ratios have increased by at least 10-15 per cent in the past 15 years and contact hours have fallen" (Attwood 2009a). Additionally, a report from the Higher Education Statistics Agency states, "In 2004/05 some 17% fewer contact hours were reported compared with 2003/04" (Wild 2008).

Indeed, a recent cover of the *Times Higher Education Supplement* warns, "The UK is in danger of losing the intimate relationship between teacher and pupil" (Attwood 2009a). Tinto (1997: 599-600) points out that "the classroom is the crossroads where the social and the academic meet," and experience in the classroom plays an important role in shaping student persistence: "engagement [with teaching staff], both inside and outside the classroom, appears to be especially important in student development." Participants' descriptions of the teaching process indicate that increased pressures on both staff and students have eroded opportunities for that engagement, making both teaching and learning more often a chore. Grayling (2009) argues that any increase in contact hours, as advocated by Lord Mandelson, would be tantamount to "spoon-feeding" undergraduates and reducing their ability to think independently – but he does not take into account the dramatic cutbacks that have occurred in recent decades, or elements of the pedagogical process that require conversation and mutual challenge:

> I think students like being challenged, in my experience. They don't like it at first! *(laughs)* But [...] eventually they enjoy the experience of having their ideas challenged. [...] I think we don't do enough of that [...] And I think it's a bit sad if we lose faith in students, and think they're purely instrumental in their approach, when I think they don't want to be. It's just they often have to be. *(lecturer D, ancient university)*

> There is a danger in sociology, that sociologists talk about the sociological imagination as if it were a gift that we impart to students – which it is, we all had that experience of being enthused by it. But it's not just a one-way process. [...] You should think about education being a kind of mutual challenge, not just that we challenge students to rethink their own positions and presuppositions, but they also will challenge us to rethink ours. *(lecturer B, ancient university)*

At its best, teaching is a co-creative process between lecturers and students – as the professor quoted at the start of this section said, "a real interchange" (*e.g.* Attwood 2009a, Bellas 1999: 101-102, Freire 1970, Pascarella 1980, Tinto 1997). As discussed above, this kind of process takes time and protracted contact. In the experience of hooks (1994: 204), "Many [lecturers] remain unwilling to be involved with any pedagogical practices that emphasize mutual participation [...] because more time and effort are required." However, most participants in this study were willing to engage in "mutual challenge" as the lecturer above described, and

they took great pleasure in doing so. The barrier was not willingness, but structural limitations and time pressures, as I will discuss in the next chapter. Additionally, some types of students were seen as more willing to engage than others, whether because of age (*e.g.* Wolfgang and Dowling 1981), socioeconomic background, or interest in the discipline:

> The adults, since they come by choice, they tend to be much more engaged in the subject. I like that. I like to be challenged, I like to have questions raised. But with the youth, I found it very disappointing […] there's this reluctance to engage. *(late-stage PhD student A, modern university)*

> The students are great. They're pretty committed, their attendance is pretty good, most of them participate, they're confident middle-class kids. […] They've got all the cultural capital and social capital, so they're actually quite easy to teach and quite a joy to teach. *(late-stage PhD student G, ancient university)*

> In my experience […] maybe five or six students would seek more specific help, and those were the ones that you could see developments in from the beginning to the end, but […] some people are a lost cause. *(late-stage PhD student E, ancient university)*

It is interesting to see the third PhD student here 'losing faith' in some students, despite working at an ancient university with more resources available to invest in teaching hours than newer universities. However, this kind of attitude was unusual. Unsurprisingly, PhD and staff participants who self-identified as teachers or spoke of teaching as a 'vocation' spoke more favourably about students, and seemed more willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. There was only one who spoke ambivalently about undergraduate teaching:

> I've enjoyed teaching over the years, but I don't find it particularly stimulating. At masters level, I enjoy working with mature students, [but] I don't particularly enjoy undergraduate teaching any longer. It just doesn't do it for me. […] But somebody has to keep the larder stocked, the new students coming through, and that's a substantial amount of income in any university. […] But to me that's not what sociology is really about. *(professor D, modern university)*

This view stood in sharp contrast with the other participants, and came from someone who did not mention experiences with influential teachers. Others who did not mention positive relationships with influential teachers still described meaningful relationships with students

and pleasure in teaching. Several other participants expressed a preference for postgraduate teaching, but still saw undergraduate teaching as a fundamental part of the discipline and the role of an academic.

Pragmatic & Lifestyle Motivations

While all participants enjoyed particular aspects of academic work, half (nine PhD students and eight staff) also spoke about pragmatic and lifestyle-based motivations playing a role in their choices and approaches. Writing on class inequalities, Sayer (2005: 95) points out that experiences of class involve "not merely differences in wealth, income and economic security, but differences in access to valued circumstances, practices and ways of life." For participants, both elements were central to their understanding of the middle-class lifestyle that academic work gave them access to. Financial reward and stability were valued alongside the opportunity to engage in pleasurable work and maintain a relatively flexible 'work-life balance.' As mentioned at the start of this chapter, more than a third of participants (six PhD students and eight staff) expressed a sense of privilege for the opportunity to do academic work and maintain a middle-class lifestyle:

> I'm in a very privileged, luxurious position, to be able to come and get paid [...] I know there's not too many people in a position such as this. *(early-stage PhD student, self-identified working-class, modern university)*
>
> I think it's a very privileged job, in all kinds of ways. It has a lot of advantages over any other kind of employment that I've experienced [including food service and retail]. *(lecturer, self-identified lower middle-class, ancient university)*
>
> It's a good job compared to loads of other jobs. [...] Senior lectureship, you can't complain about the money. [...] And the lifestyle, you can't compare. *(senior lecturer, self-identified middle-class, modern university)*

With two exceptions (the senior lecturer above and a PhD student), all participants who spoke explicitly about academic work as privileged identified themselves as coming from working-class or lower middle-class backgrounds,[60] indicating that personal experience of

[60] Among participants who identified as working-class, more than 80% (nine out of eleven) spoke about academic work as a privilege. For lower middle-class participants, it was about 60% (seven out of eleven). For middle-class

upward mobility contributes to a sense of gratitude for a middle-class occupation.[61] Academia has traditionally been a privileged sphere, with limited access and pathways to elite professions. However, modern universities are not necessarily as elite as they once were, with the spectrum of prestige running from high-status ancient universities to low-status former polytechnics.[62] Still, as sites of middle-class social reproduction, universities are marked by self-direction, individualism and a focus on personal effort and achievement, in contrast to more working-class social norms like rule-following and solidarity (Kaufman 2005, Power and Whitty 2002: 599-603).

Educational institutions in general "tend to function as mechanisms for helping those with plentiful cultural capital convert it into the legitimate, indeed consecrated, form of educational capital, and for preventing those lacking in cultural capital from doing so" (Sayer 2005: 79, citing Bourdieu 1996). A generation ago, this tendency excluded most working-class students from higher education altogether, but today they often gain access through lower-prestige institutions. However, when it comes to studying within elite institutions or at postgraduate level, students from less privileged backgrounds must confront the challenges of navigating a counterintuitive cultural landscape alongside the academic challenges of their studies (*e.g.* Borkowski 2004, Jansen 1985, Rodriguez 1982, Tate 1996, Tokarczyk and Fay 1993). In describing the experience of academics from working class backgrounds, hooks (2000: 36) calls abandonment of one's class identity "the price of the ticket" into both the privileged classes and the academic establishment. Lynch and O'Neill (1994: 318) argue that academically successful working-class people must "abandon certain features of their background class habitus [...] Once educated they will cease to be working class." Of course,

participants, it was less than 20% (two out of eleven), and for the one upper middle-class participant, it was zero. One participant declined to give class background. Participants were free to choose how they defined the category of class – many asked whether I meant social class of origin or current class, and I made it clear that they should choose whichever they identified with, and some chose a dual identity – in which case I have identified them here with their class of origin.

[61] I would identify my own background as working-class, but most British people guess my background as middle-class or above because of the financial privilege implied by my extended stay (which is financed by student loans). This might have had a subtle effect on how participants chose to frame issues of privilege to me.

[62] Interestingly, an institution's prestige did not necessarily predict the state of its work spaces – academics at several prestigious institutions worked in cramped, poorly-lit buildings sorely in need of refurbishment, while others at much less prestigious universities worked in clean, comfortable, well-designed spaces.

the transition is never so straightforward, and negotiating a shifting class identity is a complex process, which is beyond the scope of this project. However, explicit recognition of a privileged position is one way for working-class and lower middle-class academics to resolve the dissonance of a dual identity, as well as impostor syndrome (*e.g.* Clance and O'Toole 1988, Harvey 1985), and sociology provides a disciplinary structure for talking about class and privilege:

> We're really aware that we're in a privileged position. Especially if we do research into disadvantaged groups […] we get a good rate of pay, we work in really nice places, we get to do a lovely job where we get to think and teach and talk and read interesting things. *(late-stage PhD student, self-identified lower middle-class, ancient university)*

Regardless of class background, most participants implicitly expressed gratitude for the pleasurable parts of their jobs, and a common theme was comparison of academic work with other kinds of less desirable work. Compared with both poorly-paid or low-prestige jobs (*i.e.* manual labour, service industry) and high-paid, high-prestige jobs that place tight constraints on autonomy or a sense of vocation (*i.e.* banking, government work), academic work was portrayed as highly desirable: as one lecturer said, "it gives you a comfortable middle-class lifestyle […] without many of the downsides of being in the private sector," both in terms of lost autonomy and a much weaker sense of belonging.[63] Even with increasing pressures and challenges, which I will discuss in the next chapter, academic work still offers a good wage, high prestige, high levels of autonomy, and enjoyable work – the 'yes, but' pattern described above. McCullough (2002) links this kind of gratitude to a sense of mindful awareness[64] – which on the level of self-awareness may also be called self-reflexivity, a hallmark of sociology and social science disciplines (*e.g.* Gubbay *et al.* 1997: 90-119, Bourdieu 1992), encouraging recognition of one's own biases and psychological processes. In this context, it is unsurprising that participants expressed gratitude for academic work, especially with much of the discipline focused on social deprivation.

---

[63] However, this lecturer also emphasised that most accademics are not primarily motivated by money: "Frankly, you could probably pay people even less, and they would still do it."
[64] McCullough also draws on research linking job satisfaction and academic success to the propensity for gratitude: grateful people tend to perform better academically and be happier with their jobs.

Along these lines, a third of participants (three PhD students and eight staff) praised the flexibility of the academic lifestyle, leaving time for other interests, particularly parenting:

> Studying worked really well, actually, with having kids. So I thought doing a PhD would just be an extension of that. […] I can work around my children, their school and everything like that […] I have an idyllic life. *(female early-stage PhD student, ancient university)*

> I became pregnant, and I looked around and I thought, 'this lecturing malarkey looks quite good and seems very flexible with lots of holidays,' and that's how I got into it. *(female professor, modern university)*

Contrary to these views, a female PhD student described an intensely difficult time completing her PhD in the midst of pregnancy, childbirth, and caring for an infant – "I wouldn't recommend getting pregnant during your thesis!" – but she was proud to have still finished on time. The professor above also described the hard work of balancing work and family life, and two female participants near retirement reflected on the increasing difficulty of finding that balance. Interestingly, the four male participants who mentioned parenting spoke of it in terms of providing a steady income to support their families, or making work-related choices to accommodate their families, rather than praising the academic lifestyle as particularly compatible with family life:[65]

> I had a son, and I thought, 'I've got to find some way of bringing money in.' […] I chose [this city] because I was living here, and […] because my son had started school [here]. *(male lecturer, modern university)*

> [After having a baby], your circumstances obviously change, so then I was looking to try to extend the kind of work I was doing. *(male lecturer, modern university)*

The contrast between male and female descriptions of parenting and academic work align with previous research showing very different work/family patterns and role expectations for male and female academics (*e.g.* Hamovitch 1977, Jacobs 1996, Mason and Goulden 2004,

---

[65] Of the ten participants who mentioned their children, one was a male PhD student, three were female PhD students, three were male staff, and three were female staff. Three female PhD students also mentioned family considerations as daughters rather than mothers.

Perna 2001, Rothblum 1988). But for both men and women participants, the academic lifestyle was portrayed as more flexible than lifestyles offered in other kinds of work. It was seen as more accommodating than other fields to both family life and other outside activities (volunteer work, political work, etc.), even though many participants described periods of total immersion in their work, often to meet deadlines: as one PhD student put it, "[the PhD] has eaten my life."

The level of flexibility inherent in the academic lifestyle – despite being significantly constrained over the past two decades – can be seen as another reward for the level of dedication demanded by academic work. Several studies have found that academics and other intellectual workers tend to value non-financial rewards equally with – or more than – financial rewards (*e.g.* Hockey 1996: 499-502, Lacy and Sheehan 1997: 321). Several participants reflected that it would be near-impossible to pursue research on purely instrumental grounds or study an area that holds no inherent attraction, simply due to the level of intellectual and emotional energy required. However, participants often found a compromise between personal interests and pragmatic considerations of funding, job availability, etc:

> [My research area] seemed halfway between what would make me employable and what I was actually interested in. So it was kind of instrumental, […] partly mercenary, there was possibilities of getting a job in it, rather than say, pure abstract philosophy or something. *(lecturer G, modern university)*
>
> A lot of it has been quite pragmatic. […] I think a lot of people use their PhD as a vehicle to do really exploratory stuff, and […] I think, 'maybe you should save that until after the PhD.' *(laughs) (early-stage PhD student H, modern university)*

These two participants had initial interest in their research areas, but pragmatic considerations contributed to their choice of pursuing them, and the same was true for several others.[66] A number of participants recalled attraction to academic work during their

---

[66] The exception to this pattern was one PhD student who was almost entirely instrumental in his approach, treating the PhD as a job and prioritising other areas (employment, hobbies, socialising, etc):

> I get by on doing the minimum. […] On average, I must have done two hours a day [and] I've never done any work at weekends. […] I'm not going to push myself too hard, because […] it's really tiring. […] There's

undergraduate or postgraduate years, and financial or employment considerations 'closed the deal.' For many, PhDs or even undergraduate degrees would have been impossible without funding or grants, and when the time came to pursue employment, participants followed the jobs – whether in terms of discipline, research area, or geographic location (*e.g.* Murlis and Hartle 1996: 46-49, Welch 1998: 8-10, Wilson 1991: 257-260). Several saw social research training, a PhD, or a degree from a prestigious institution as a boon for employability, but emphasised that these were "icing on the cake," as one PhD student put it. Most participants described their primary motivations as the intrinsic pleasures of the work, while financial motivations were described more as mundane necessity. As mentioned above, this may reflect a discomfort with discussing financial matters or admitting to such 'vulgar' motivations (Wilson 1999), or be a subtle apology for reaping the benefits of a middle-class lifestyle while much of the world lives in poverty. However, it is also in line with Gouldner's (1979: 32, 48) description of intellectuals as less concerned with financial ownership and more concerned with abstract ideas, critical thinking, and emancipatory practice.

Beyond financial and lifestyle motivations, nearly a third of participants (four PhD students and six staff) 'slipped' into a PhD or an academic career as the path of least resistance:

> You just kind of do it by default. It would have been harder for me to give up than to carry on. […] Maybe I would have dropped out and done something better if I'd had the imagination and the guts. *(late-stage PhD student H, ancient university)*

> I really enjoyed doing my dissertation as an undergraduate, and did well at that, and finished my degree and really didn't know what the hell I was going to do with myself. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

Parallel to the process of coincidence and encouragement described above, the sense of inevitability here follows Nuehring and Fein's (1978) "tacit choice process," where identities are shaped not only by grand, conscious choices, but also by small, less conscious and seemingly less consequential ones. As mentioned above, many participants reached the end of an undergraduate or postgraduate degree with no plan for what to do next. A PhD or an

---

a lot of pressure to be a high achiever, [but] I don't want to become caught up in something where I have to work really hard. *(late-stage PhD student F, modern university)*

academic job represented the next logical step, with further steps following as they came up – not as conscious choices or planned actions.[67] Adding to a sense of inevitability and denial of agency, several participants felt unqualified or overqualified for non-academic work:[68]

> [I chose to work in academia] because I couldn't do anything else. *(laughs)* The way it happened, I fell into everything. *(senior lecturer A, ancient university)*

> [Some people] perhaps have just made themselves unqualified for work in any other area. That's kind of how I regard it, actually, I painted myself into a corner. *(lecturer G, modern university)*

Emotional & Moral Motivations

Even where academics 'slipped' into their roles, higher education is a sector that demands dedication and lengthy training. Unsurprisingly, many academics meet those demands by drawing on inner emotional and moral resources, especially during the low-paid or unpaid years of a PhD, and years of precarious contract employment. In this sense, curiosity, enthusiasm, perseverance, and social conscience are some of the unacknowledged raw materials in higher education, keeping academics going when the going gets tough.[69] While the emotional demands and rewards of teaching and supervising are widely recognised (*e.g.* Hockey 1996, and films such as *Dead Poets Society*, *The Freedom Writers*, and *Mona Lisa Smile*), Bellas (1999: 96) notes that research also involves emotional labour, but the "emotional aspects [of research] are largely ignored, while intellectual, technical, or leadership skills are emphasized and highly compensated." However, in this research, participants did acknowledge emotional and moral motivations for their work, both research and teaching:

---

[67] As a foreigner living in the UK, it strikes me that denial of agency is a particularly British trait – British people are often embarrassed to be seen making an effort, and this has been mentioned in several popular publications (*e.g.* Mikes 1986, Walmsley 2003). All ten participants who "slipped" into academic roles were British.
[68] Obviously, people with PhDs who did not choose an academic career would not have been part of this project.
[69] The same can be said for other demanding professions, such as medicine, counselling, law, politics, etc – the pleasure of serving, and emotional or moral dedication to patients, clients, or constituents provides an important motivating force alongside dedication to career advancement (see above).

> You have the ability […] to work in a field that you find interesting and stimulating. And that would be very hard to trace, personal senses of where you get joy, and what things you liked doing. *(lecturer B, ancient university)*

As stated here, subjective experiences of pleasure and enjoyment are "hard to trace" – the focus of participants' emotional and moral motivations arose in a number of ways, including broad-based curiosity about the social world, enjoyment of sociology as a discipline, fascination with particular ideas or questions, dedication to a particular group of people, concern with particular problems, and dedication to social change more generally. Of course, elements were often intertwined, and participants described different levels of emotional investment during different phases of their careers. As noted earlier, a balance must be found between total dedication to work and creating space for family life and other endeavours, and participants' enthusiasm for their work ebbed and flowed over the courses of their PhDs or academic careers.

Curiosity and Enthusiasm for the Discipline

Nearly half of participants (ten PhD students and seven staff) spoke about curiosity as a motivating force in their work – a desire to make sense of the social world, or some aspect of it, as discussed in the previous chapter:

> I had a thirst to understand the world a bit more. […] And that was me on the road to doing a PhD. *(late-stage PhD student F, ancient university)*

> I decided I would [study sociology for] absolutely no other reason than just curiosity. *(late-stage PhD student C, modern university)*

> Understanding the world around you is in itself a worthwhile goal to have. […] Something comes along and I say, 'that'd be interesting.' I'm just curious to know, why is it that people do that? Why is it like that? *(professor F, ancient university)*

According to Max-Neef *et al.* (1991), understanding is a fundamental human need, and Maslow (1943) considers knowledge and understanding basic human needs beyond self-actualisation. Far from pointless intellectual gratification, the pursuit of curiosity led several participants to research topics that they would work on for years, in the same way that

chance encounters or spur-of-the-moment choices held long-term influence. For one lecturer, it was "a process of half accident, half opportunity," and another described research interests arising when she became annoyed at gaps in the literature, which she then sought to fill. The pleasurable fulfilment of curiosity also provided motivation to pursue research more generally. Even when the demands of academic employment limit the amount of time that sociologists can devote to pursuing their curiosity, the desire remains. In many ways, people choose academic careers because they do not wish to stop being active learners:

> My hope is that now I'm retired, and I don't have to do specific things on my own courses any longer, I should be able to go back to being a student, and I can read whatever I like to read. *(professor A, ancient university)*

In addition to curiosity, several participants expressed dedication to the pursuit of truth, often in response to misrepresentation of an issue. The strong desire to 'set the record straight' on issues of concern highlights the importance of critically questioning the social world, as discussed in the previous chapter. As Mills (1959: 224-226) insists in his essay *On Intellectual Craftsmanship*, sociologists cannot passively accept the prevailing understanding of the social world – they must constantly question the status quo and seek truth in the connections between personal troubles and public issues. For many participants, this approach adds an element of urgency and moral force to the process of research:

> It was obvious to everyone that what was being presented was just a complete alternate reality. […] So I thought, 'that is something that needs to be challenged.' *(late-stage PhD student A, modern university)*

> Day after day, we were being lied to […] and I wanted to be able to investigate that and analyse why that was. *(professor E, modern university)*

Of course, intellectual curiosity and a desire for truth do not lead to any particular discipline – but participants enjoyed satisfying their curiosity through sociological study.[70] Nearly

[70] Additionally, in the undergraduate surveys, more than three-quarters of respondents indicated that they liked studying sociology (see Appendix). It should come as no surprise that the students who did not like studying sociology were predominantly first and second year students for whom sociology was not a main subject.

three-quarters of participants (fourteen PhD students and eleven staff) explicitly expressed pleasure and excitement with sociology as a discipline:

> I love sociology, I really really love it. *(late-stage PhD student B, ancient university)*

> I think [sociology] just excites me, it interests me, reading old stuff, reading new stuff, thinking about the world and how it works, thinking about policy, thinking about theory. *(early-stage PhD student I, ancient university)*

> I've never really lost that love of sociology that I acquired that very first year. *(near retirement, ancient university)*

Participants were enthusiastic about the discipline's breadth of topics, interdisciplinary potential, and as a way of understanding the world. The words "love" and "passion" were used during several interviews, and many participants were visibly animated and enthusiastic while discussing the discipline, even if they did not explicitly mention emotional connection to sociology (*e.g.* Hall 1959: 33-37, Tannen 1986: 27-36). Positive regard for sociology was evenly spread across all age groups, both genders, and all universities. Those who did not mention emotional connection to the discipline expressed strong connections to a particular research area, as I will discuss below, and of course there was significant overlap.

Enthusiasm for a discipline can be seen, in part, as enthusiasm for a sense of belonging to that discipline. As Välimaa (1998: 131) points out, cultural differences between disciplines help "furnish academics with an identity," with intra-disciplinary connections providing practical structures of belonging – departments, disciplinary networks, conferences, publication and funding channels, etc. (also see Lindholm 2004, Teske 1997). Along these lines, several participants described their love of sociology in the context of frustration with other disciplines:

> I liked sociology because I was doing philosophy at the same time, and the way they tried to answer the questions about what we should do [...] were rubbish, completely a-societal. I just found them really empty. *(late-stage PhD student H, ancient university)*

> Right from practically the first day of lectures, I found that I enjoyed sociology so much more [than politics]. […] it just seemed more dynamic, more intellectually exciting, and above all, more intellectually broad than what politics was. [Sociology] really captured my imagination. *(professor G, ancient university)*

These participants highlight elements of sociology with which they identify by contrasting it with what they consider less favourable parts of other disciplines, drawing a boundary between self and other, valued and rejected. Some participants expressed discrete identities within sociology in a similar way, by naming 'good' and 'bad' elements of the discipline, and nearly a third of participants (five PhD students and five staff) described a clarification of identity when they 'discovered' sociology:

> I did first-year sociology and first-year philosophy […] and that's when I suddenly realised that I wasn't mad! *(professor E, modern university)*

> Sociology seemed to confirm things I had been thinking but hadn't been able to verbalise, so it really appealed to me. *(late-stage PhD student B, ancient university)*

> Thinking about it retrospectively […] I've always been a sociologist, I just never knew it. *(early-stage PhD student B, modern university)*

These participants considered the discipline both a mode of thinking and a collection of concerns, and they described their initial exposure to sociology as resonating with their existing views, approaches, and concerns. For example, a participant near retirement recalled an early awareness of peace and conflict issues when a close family member described the destruction of Hiroshima. Five participants linked their interest in sociology to family backgrounds of trade unionism or left-wing politics, and seven out of the eleven participants who self-identified as coming from a working-class background linked their interest in sociology to their own experience of class:

> Increasingly from my early twenties […] I felt quite frustrated by what I seen, but I couldn't quite articulate or describe or analyse what was taking place. *(early-stage PhD student, modern university)*

This sense of pre-determination or inevitability complements both the sense of having found the discipline through luck or good fortune and the sense of having been socialised into the

culture of sociology, as discussed above. Rational and instrumental considerations worked in tandem with feelings of attraction, excitement, and belonging. In many ways, the descriptions above outline the self-selection process inherent in any discipline (*e.g.* Austin 2002, Gerholm 1990, Mendoza 2007, Nuehring and Fein 1978), where innate or personal interests are developed and drawn out through contact with influential books, teachers, and colleagues.[71]

Fascination with a Research Topic

Beyond enthusiasm for the discipline as a whole, almost two-thirds of participants (eleven PhD students and eleven staff) explicitly spoke enthusiastically about their research topic. As with reflection on the discipline itself, body language and tone of voice also indicated enthusiasm (*e.g.* Hall 1959: 33-37, Tannen 1986: 27-36). PhD students tended to speak more about the narrow topics of their PhDs, whereas staff were broader in their areas of interest – though some staff did express excitement for small, 'niche' areas, and some PhD students were passionate about broad fields of inquiry. Whatever the area of focus, participants expressed pleasure and a sense of gratitude at being able to pursue the area of their interest, with enthusiasm as a motivating force:

> I'm still trying to work out what it is that drives me to do this. It is an obsession. *(early-stage PhD student I, ancient university)*

> [The topic] gives me a great deal of pleasure, and whenever things get me down [...] I can escape back into that work, and it really cheers me up. Because that's what I like doing, and I find it totally intellectually interesting. So it's kind of like retreating into a realm where I'm intellectually happy. *(professor G, ancient university)*

With increasing pressures on academics, this kind of intellectual 'retreat' becomes increasingly important to maintain the intrinsic motivations of the job (*e.g.* Steger 2009, Pink 2009), and most staff participants spoke with pleasure about their research topics. For some, those topics evolved from personal or political interests as they gained exposure to the discipline, often in a series of small choices (*e.g.* Nuehring and Fein 1978), but for others, it

[71] This also reflects the Latin roots of the word education – *educare*, to draw out.

was the other way around – enthusiasm for their research area led them to choose sociology as a discipline:

> I don't think I chose sociology as a subject. It was more like, 'I'm interested in certain topics, and let's see […] where I can find people who will allow me to do the research I'm interested in.' *(late-stage PhD student I, modern university)*

> Though I didn't have a qualification in sociology, I did have a very strong, passionate attachment to [a particular theorist]. […] So one of the things that started my own project, doing a PhD, was that […] it would give me a kind of grounding [in my area of interest]. *(lecturer C, modern university)*

> I decided to do my PhD […] to look at the broader perspectives of the issues I was researching. […] I could just see the inequalities deepening, particularly around [my PhD research topic]. *(professor D, modern university)*

In speaking of the personal interests or concerns that led them to sociology, these participants also described personal experiences that led to their research interests in the first place – a pattern shared by about half of participants (twelve PhD students and seven staff). Of these, eight had previous non-academic work experience in an area related to their research topic, and five had research interests related to their family background and personal history:

> There's always something about a project that identifies with the person, it's about them somehow. […] I'm slightly worried about [my topic], what that says about me! *(early-stage PhD student I, ancient university)*

Doubtlessly, some participants held personal and biographical motivations for their research which they chose not to share, or of which they were unaware. But for some, the connection was conscious and they spoke openly about it, valuing the personal perspective they could bring to their topics. Questioning their experiences led them to develop research topics, bridging the personal and intellectual, and linking their own biographies with their study of "biography and history within social structures" (Mills 1959). In many ways, development of research topics from personal concerns was the next step of moving into a discipline that resonated with existing views, and both, along with other elements discussed above,

contributed to a sense of inevitability about their role as academics.[72] Just as feminists maintain that the personal is political – and vice-versa – the process of choosing research topics indicates that the intellectual is often personal, and even emotional (see Bellas 1999, Lamm 2004, Staw 1994), especially in a discipline where human experience is its subject matter.[73]

In addition to describing personal engagement with research topics, several participants (mostly PhD students) contrasted their experiences with stories of peers' *lack* of enthusiasm, again defining a self-identity by its difference from an Other, in a different kind of projection from that described above:

> I think the research I'm doing is really interesting. Some of the people I know who are doing research get quite tired of [their topics], but I never run out of things to be interested in. *(late-stage PhD student E, ancient university)*
>
> The themes that were associated with the PhD that really kept me inspired by it. I never wanted to stop, I never wanted to not have it going, and I never wanted to not finish it. And having spoken to friends who have done PhDs, that's quite a privileged experience. *(late-stage PhD student D, ancient university)*

Of course, enthusiasm ebbs and flows over the process of a PhD (Phillips and Pugh 1987: 71-90) or in the rhythms of academic life, but most participants clearly valued enthusiasm over apathy, so distanced themselves from the latter.[74] The two exceptions were both male PhD students who had treated their research as a 'job' from the start:

> I'm not going to claim to be as fascinated by my subject as perhaps everyone. Some people are really really intense, 'I adore this subject.' No, for me, I like this subject, I find it interesting. But […] a lot of it has been quite pragmatic. *(early-stage PhD student H, modern university)*

---

[72] Obviously, funding and other practical matters must also be present in order for personal interests to develop into intellectual work.

[73] Arguably, the role of personal experience in fueling research interests makes self-reflexivity all the more important, and this touches on debates about 'objectivity' in social research. However, these issues are beyond the scope of this project.

[74] Selection bias might be a factor here – people in the stage of disillusionment or apathy are unlikely to volunteer for an interview.

> I don't get obsessed by [research]. And that's something I feel is a little bit different to some [other PhD students], because understandably, people really get so caught up in it. *(late-stage PhD student F, modern university)*

One of the many implicit lessons of the PhD process is finding a balance between pragmatism and emotion, given one's personality and working style. For most PhD students, the emotional energy of personal engagement launches and sustains the work, while pragmatism takes over when emotional energy wanes (Phillips and Pugh 1987: 71-90, Lamm 2004: 8-10, Lee and Williams 1999: 16-19). Certainly, this has been the case in my experience, and for most of the PhD students I have spoken with both in this research and more broadly. In some ways, the two students above are 'the exception that proves the rule,' especially with their sense of being different from their peers.

Beyond enthusiasm for their research topics, several PhD students formed personal connections with their fieldwork participants. Late-stage PhD students often spoke with warmth and gratitude about those they worked with, and three described remaining personally involved long after their official fieldwork was complete, with intentions to maintain those connections long-term:

> I can't see how to do it any other way, I can't really see how people just [metaphorically] walk away from the site. *(late-stage PhD student H, ancient university)*

Unsurprisingly, those who carried out intensive ethnographic fieldwork, including the three mentioned above, expressed much greater involvement with those they researched, while students with projects based on interview, content analysis, or statistics tended to be less personally involved. However, the same was not necessarily true for staff.[75] Broadly speaking, the PhD is an emotionally intense process (*ibid.*), often dealing with topics of personal significance, and it is usually students' first experience of a research project of such a scale – so it makes sense that some would form emotional connections with their participants. On

[75] As above, this might reflect some selection bias: while speaking with a fellow PhD student, PhD-level participants might have been more willing than staff to express vulnerability by revealing personal connections to their research areas and participants.

the other hand, staff who had carried out a number of research projects were not so attached to the participants of any one study, though some expressed dedication to the broad communities of their research areas. One exception described his long-term personal involvement with the community of his research participants, and criticised his colleagues' reluctance to "get [their] hands dirty" by connecting personally with (or even being willing to speak with) the subjects of their own research. Because of this stance, he believed that his colleagues consider him "a bit odd" – and indeed, most staff I spoke with did not express personal connection to their research participants, so his attitude was unusual in that sense.

However, even setting aside debates over the importance of objectivity and detachment, given the fickle nature of academic funding, it would be difficult to work with the same group over an entire career, let alone sustain emotional involvement with them. And given the increasing responsibilities of work and family life over the course of an academic career, it would be emotionally draining to maintain close connections with research participants over many years or decades – for nearly all staff participants, other relationships took priority. A certain 'professional distance' is one way to preserve personal boundaries and avoid burnout, but there is a balance to be found (*e.g.* Powdermaker 1966). Still, it should be noted that many participants, staff and PhD students alike, expressed dedication to improving social conditions for broad publics, including particular populations and humankind as a whole.

Dedication to Social Change

Beyond enthusiasm for a particular research topic was a dedication to social change, whether for a particular social group or more broadly. Most participants were not only interested in their areas of study, but hoped to 'make a difference' in those areas. Many believed that the study of the social world brings a moral obligation to challenge the status quo, to help others understand their own social conditions, and to seek social change for greater equality. Wolfe (1989: 210) writes that "sociology [...] ought to be the guilty conscience of economics and politics," and many participants would likely agree. As discussed in the previous chapter, a desire to change the social world is a key element of the discipline's self-image, and all

participants except two first-year PhD students expressed concern about social issues and desire to help victims of injustice, engage with political causes, or generally contribute to positive social change:

> I think everyone who does sociology to a certain extent sees something wrong with the world. They look out the window and regardless of their political persuasion, they see something that's wrong. *(early-stage PhD student C, ancient university)*

> At the end of the day, my reason [for studying sociology] would be similar to that of Marx: it's not enough just to know the world, it's important to change it too. And I think that sociology, partly because of its historical and comparative reference points, allows you an excellent epistemological basis from which to change the world. So that's my principal concern. *(professor A, ancient university)*

As discussed above, sociology often attracts people for whom social conscience is a strong motivator, and Cancian (1995: 348) finds a similar attitude among American sociologists, who seek to challenge inequality and injustice by exposing its inner workings. Broadly speaking, nearly half of participants (nine PhD students and six staff) felt that contributing to social change was a moral obligation for academics, or for citizens more broadly:

> I think it's a core element of citizenship as much as anything else. […] As a thinking agent, as a human in the world, I think we should be concerned with these things. It's self-evident to me. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

> It's a basic intellectual responsibility. […] We are funded from taxation, and we ought to be using whatever professional skills we've got to further public interests, by […] producing research which is true and which can consider how the world really operates, and consider how it can be changed to make [it] operate more fairly. *(professor E, modern university)*

There was a wide range of issues that concerned participants, but some key themes emerged. Social inequality was by far the issue of most concern, including social, economic and environmental injustice, along with related issues of addiction, disability, poverty, discrimination, and social exclusion. On a wider scale, the effects of war and conflict, exploitation, environmental destruction, and the erosion of democracy were cause for concern. Wolfe (1989: Chapter Three) identifies a distinction between intimate and distant moral obligations, and argues that fulfilment of one obligation will often subvert fulfilment

of others. However, on the whole participants expressed a balance of carrying out moral obligations on a range of different levels, from students and local communities to far-away populations and the world at large. These obligations were seen as interconnected rather than mutually exclusive – for example, helping students develop critical citizenship might contribute to matters of local and global justice. In this sense, even a narrow focus on a small range of moral obligations was justified in the face of global social problems.

In speaking about the issues that concerned them, participants used language of urgency and strong emotion. Words like worried, passionate, outraged, afraid, and anxious were common, with body language to match (*e.g.* Hall 1959: 33-37, Tannen 1986: 27-36):

> My interest [is based on] concerns about inequality. And I think [my topic] encapsulates that to such a huge extent. […] I don't think there is as sharp an example [as my topic] of the inequities of the world in which we live today. *(early-stage PhD student B, modern university)*

> I think it's important that sociology contributes to a dialogue about the nature of society, about the potential of humanity, and also it can provide a break on the runaway hysteria that as a society were very prone to. *(lecturer D, ancient university)*

> I think that a critical sociology should be looking toward this notion of emancipatory practice, that we should be thinking down the line about how society could be better. […] We seem to have accommodated ourselves to perpetual inequality. That's quite worrying. So, maybe the mission of sociology is to agitate about these core issues again. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

In this sense, participants' practice of Mills's (1959) sociological imagination not only entails understanding the connections between biography and history within social structures, and anticipating the future direction of those structures (*ibid.* 6-7), but also imagining how that future may become more socially just. As Galbraith (1996: 2) points out, "there is no chance for the better society unless the good and achievable society is clearly defined." Rather than maintaining a passive and detached position of simply describing and explaining social structures, most participants saw themselves taking an active role in shaping those structures, at least to a small degree. And indeed, many backed up their abstract ideas by describing concrete actions, in the form of their research itself, volunteer work, or civic engagement:

> [It's been important to do] something creative with the people, for the people […] something beneficial and practical. [I made] a film with them for example, [and got] involved in direct actions with them if it [was] needed. Using [my] role as a researcher to benefit the people. *(late-stage PhD student I, modern university)*

> We went out and talked about [our research]. […] We went out with the stuff, and we didn't just speak to academics but we spoke to all kinds of groups, trade unions and churches, this kind of thing. That's the sociology that is not for the powerful – it's for publics. […] And that's worth the effort. *(professor C, ancient university)*

> I do a lot of public meetings, and talk at a lot of events and that kind of thing. I'm engaged with some social movement organisations. *(professor E, modern university)*

According to Bond and Paterson (2005), academics in Scotland tend to value civic engagement more than their English counterparts, and also tend to be more engaged themselves – the accounts above illustrate some of the ways this kind of engagement was expressed among participants. Cancian (1995: 350-352) points out that for scholars, the task of being 'activist sociologists' entails two distinct careers: "one directed to their social change projects and one focusing on academic contacts and publications." Despite the challenges of this dual role, which I will discuss in the next chapter, many participants 'walked their talk,' and defied the stereotype of the ivory-tower academic. Instead they took on the role of the engaged public intellectual (*e.g.* Becker 1950, Bourdieu 1998, Burawoy 2005, Flyvbjerg 2001, Gouldner 1968, Mills 1959). For others, teaching was their primary site for influencing social change, by helping students develop critical consciousness, as discussed in the previous chapter. The potential that graduates might eventually contribute to a more equitable society was a strong motivating force, mirroring approaches to critical pedagogy (*e.g.* Chow *et al.* 2003, Freire 1970, hooks 1994).

Whether expressed through research or teaching, participants sought to influence social change, partly from a desire to pursue a 'worthwhile' vocation:

> I want to be able to look at myself in the mirror most days and think, 'at least you're trying, at least you're making a small contribution in some small way to make this a better place.' *(early-stage PhD student B, modern university)*

Many psychologists (*e.g.* Neafsey 2006, Pink 2009, Steger 2009) link job satisfaction and motivation with a sense of meaning or purpose in one's work. As above, given the emotional and intellectual demands of academia, moral motivations and a sense of purpose are important resources to carry on through difficult moments. In speaking about what might make the world 'a better place,' participants fulfilled the stereotype of the left-wing sociologist, embracing equality, democracy, citizenship, sustainability, justice, diversity, freedom, peace, etc: values that Lakoff (2002), Krugman (2007), and others identify at the liberal end of the spectrum. They most often took the side of the 'underdog' – groups with limited power over their social conditions – and as discussed in Chapter Four, they were critical of more powerful groups, including political and business leaders. They also expressed aversion to inequality and human suffering, whether they had directly experienced it or not:

> I moved to [...] an industrial city, where there were [...] large numbers of working-class areas where people [...] were extremely poor. That poverty was something that I hadn't encountered ever before, I'd only read about. So I was forced to question why some people found themselves in that situation. *(professor, self-identified upper middle-class, ancient university)*

> [Sociology] was a chance to really explore the stuff that I had experienced and seen around me, [...] problems which I knew that people from my background were facing [...] such as mass unemployment and relative lack of opportunities. *(lecturer, self-identified working-class, modern university)*

These descriptions define what is morally right by contrasting it with what participants considered morally wrong: suffering, poverty, discrimination, unemployment, lack of opportunity, etc. Paradoxically, they distance themselves from perpetuating injustice by choosing to study it, rejecting it by drawing it near. Perhaps it is mostly for appearances: the social pressures of a traditionally left-wing discipline, along with political correctness and self-justification, would demand concern about injustice (*e.g.* Kluger 2007). But moral codes play an important role in self-selection. As discussed above, participants were drawn to academia and sociology in part because they 'fit' with their existing value systems – a well-documented pattern that added to participants' sense of vocational inevitability (*e.g.* Schwarzweller 1960, Steger 2009, Werts and Watley 1968). Of course, people's values

continue to develop throughout their lives, and those whose values grew in directions contrary to academic sociology would not have been part of this study. While the discipline does not have a single established moral code, it is clear that in Scotland at least, certain norms do prevail, including the desire to transform injustice, whether through research, teaching, publishing, civic/political engagement, or some combination of these.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that both the broad pleasures of academic work and the specific drive to understand, challenge, and change the social world are at the heart of why participants engage with academic sociology. In particular, participants valued the complexity and intellectual challenge of academic work, the ability to satisfy their curiosity, and the ability to pursue their research and teaching interests in a relatively autonomous way. They expressed enthusiasm for both the discipline and their chosen research areas, and while financial rewards were not their primary motivation, the opportunity to have a middle-class lifestyle was one motivating factor in pursuing work in higher education.

A strong theme was the importance of academia's 'human element:' inspiring teachers often drew participants into sociological study and practice, and over time they valued the chance to become teachers themselves and 'bring sociology alive' for undergraduates. Relationships with colleagues were also important sources of both emotional support for PhD students and intellectual stimulation for staff. Morally speaking, participants expressed dedication to the people connected to their research, along with students and humankind more broadly. For most, working to understand the social world imparts a moral obligation to work for social justice and equality on some level, and to help students become critical citizens.

Now that the values at the root of participants' understanding and experience of sociology have been established, I will turn to the threats to those values posed by the marketisation of Scottish universities. I will also examine the strategies that participants have developed to survive and resist the changes to higher education, and defend their cherished values.

Chapter Six
Imposing Market Values on Academia

In the previous two chapters, I have explored what sociology means to participants and what motivates them to pursue academic work, particularly examining the values they seek to express in their work. Now we turn to the barriers that challenge and constrict the expression of those values. As discussed above, the academic sector in the UK has been rapidly evolving from an elite system to a mass system during the twentieth century. In recent decades that process has intensified, changing the nature of universities, and the working conditions for academics in all disciplines.

In this chapter, I will examine several interconnected patterns that have arisen from the centralisation of control and fragmentation of funding in higher education. These patterns include increasing bureaucratic and administrative demands on academics, the speeding-up of academic production, fragmentation of the academic labour process, increasing reliance on short-term contracts, and increasingly competitive conditions between both individuals and institutions. All of these patterns have the potential to negatively affect academics' mental health and family lives, and they represent a significant shift in the values that underpin higher education, moving from 'traditional' academic values to a much more neoliberal, market-based set of values and assumptions about what higher education means. Of course, these patterns are not unique to academia or the UK, but are a microcosm of the changes imposed by neoliberalism around the world, in nearly all areas of human endeavour (*e.g.* Berezin 2009, Harvey 2007, Jurik 2004), and are especially indicative of the changes in public service work (*e.g.* Mooney and Law 2007).

In the second section, I will explore the effects of these patterns on participants' experience of academic labour, along with its 'products,' including research, teaching, and public engagement. In particular, I am critical of the ways in which a shift to neoliberal values constricts academics' ability to express social conscience in their work. In the final section, I will note several strategies that participants have developed in response to the systemic

changes in higher education, both in order to survive those changes and to resist them. Throughout, I will highlight the connections between structural changes and personal experiences – public issues and personal troubles (Mills 1959) – with a particular eye towards values, their expression, and threats to that expression.

Changing Models of Production

Fundamentally, financial and political pressures have led universities to shift away from an 'artisanal' model of production, where independent producers or guilds hold autonomous control over the labour process, making central management and 'efficiency' difficult. When Mills wrote *The Sociological Imagination* in 1959, academic work was seen as (ideally) a form of intellectual craftsmanship, and he warned against the dangers of shifting intellectual work to a production-line model. But Mills's fears have been realised: today academics have been reclassified as 'human resources,' and Bertelsen (1998: 147) urges us to consider "the way resources are routinely handled in the culture of business." Intellectual processes are closely overseen by managers, often themselves academics who have adopted the values of the market; elements of intellectual processes are separated, interchangeable and becoming increasingly standardised; and there is constant pressure to increase the speed at which knowledge, degrees, and grant money are 'produced.' These are hallmarks of Fordist industrial organisation (Brehony and Deem 2005: 397-8, Prichard and Willimott 1997: 290), but the shift is more complex than a move from artisanal production to an intellectual factory line.

While there are also elements of post-Fordism (*e.g.* heavy reliance on information technology and flexible employment patterns), Brehony and Deem (2005: 404) argue that New Managerialism is the best model for understanding the contemporary structures of higher education: "New Managerialism […] entails interrelated organisational, financial, managerial and cultural changes accompanied by a tightly integrated regime of managerial discipline and control over employee performance." Hartley (1995: 409) links a trend of 'McDonaldization' with trends towards "efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control," but argues that older forms of bureaucracy still hold sway. Bertelsen (1998: 131-3) describes

the transition as a move from a Fordist production-line mentality to a postmodern form of flexible, indirect control through audits and assessment. As will be explored below, different areas of academic labour are subject to different types of changes, with variations between institutions and disciplines. As with any structure in transition, higher education in Scotland is currently a hybrid system, where elements of several different structures uncomfortably co-exist (Deem *et al.* 2007: 18).

Deem *et al.* (*ibid.* 79) argue that newer staff are more likely than more established staff to take the new conditions and contradictions of academia for granted, but in this research both groups were equally likely to complain about the intensification of pressures. Even those who were fairly new to the system (PhD students and newer lecturers) were aware of the changes taking place, though some early-stage PhD students did not mention them. A few PhD students – particularly those who had studied for their undergraduate degrees after grants were abolished in 1998 – took the business-based model for granted, and considered it obvious that universities should make a profit. Other new academics and all later-career participants blamed what they saw as the negative changes on inadequate government investment in higher education, and they spoke at length about the secondary effects of the changing university structures and priorities, as will be discussed throughout this chapter. One example of this trend is the increasing status of profitable research, and a parallel decline in the status of undergraduate teaching.

Broadly speaking, participants were troubled by the move towards neoliberal, market-driven, and new managerialist values, particularly because the burden of balancing the contradictions between different sets of values ultimately falls on academics. But as Bertelsen (1998: 142) writes, "When universities uncritically adopt the crude mechanisms of market supply-and-demand they yield their own right to define the nature and goals of higher education and surrender their institutions to the laws of the market economy." Participants wished to maintain some hold on defining the 'nature and goals' of their work, as discussed in Chapter Four, and many described struggling as their valued definitions became marginalised. Imposing market values on universities echoes similar trends in school-level

education, where "the dominant neoliberal policy effectively obscures the other stated functions of education" (Maitles 2007: 121). And indeed, both follow the broader patterns of neoliberalism, which seeks to turn all endeavours into profitable ventures, ignoring all forms of logic but its own:

> academic labor is increasingly based on corporate needs rather than the demands of research for the public good or on education designed to improve public life. […] Sacrificed in this transformation is any notion of higher education as a crucial public sphere in which critical citizens and democratic agents are formed. (Giroux 2007: 103-104)

Consequences of Inadequate Funding

A third of PhD students and more than two-thirds of staff participants at all university types spoke about financial constriction on an institutional level, and their experiences with it on departmental and individual levels. Participants felt that their departments were under-funded and left too reliant on outside sources of grant money, and many felt that academics' personal commitment has effectively subsidised an under-funded system:

> I see cost-cutting going on, I see budgets being slashed, I see university lecturers and others expected to do much more work now as other staff are being cut. […] But, I think here we have […] a committed staff who try to alleviate the consequences of that as much as possible. But they can only do that for so long. *(early-stage PhD student B, modern university)*

> What I have seen over the last 20 years [is that] universities are challenged to be more efficient, and that is because they're getting less and less funding. *(professor C, ancient university)*

Indeed, in the late 1970s, universities received 80 percent of their income from core public funding, while today the figure is only 51 percent: "institutions raise almost half [of their own funding] on the strength of their performance and reputation both nationally and internationally in the form of international tuition fees, research contracts, consultancy and other services" (Universities Scotland 2008: 1). At the same time, the past half-century has seen a ten-fold increase in student numbers across the UK, and an increase from less than

10% of the age group to nearly 50% in Scotland (ONS 2002, NUS 2010, Bryson 2004: 38, Deem *et al.* 2007: 38-9).[76] Additionally, between 1980 and 2000, the ratio of students to staff nearly doubled, from 9:1 to 17:1 (Bryson 2004: 38).

With the rapid expansion of higher education has come an increasing centralisation of power. Despite the Dearing Report's (1997) insistence that higher education should "play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilised, inclusive society," most participants were deeply troubled by the structural imperatives that directed universities' limited money in ways that clashed with the values they considered inherent to academia or sociology:

> The ethos of academia is changing. Instrumental rationality is taking an effect. We're run by managers – it's cliché but it's true – we're run by managers whose basic concern is the bottom line. *(near retirement, ancient university)*

However, as Weber argues, bureaucratic administration is necessary for large capitalist and state organisations because of its predictability, uniformity, and centralised control, which "develops the more perfectly the more bureaucracy is 'dehumanized,' the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business […] all purely personal, irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation" (Thompson and Tunstall 1971: 77). However, as discussed in the chapters above, personal and emotional elements play an important role in sociologists' work, so it is unsurprising that ongoing efforts to strip the human element from university operations spark frustration and resistance. More broadly, the need to 'dehumanise' operations stands in direct conflict with the social sciences and humanities, which are rooted in context and meaning.

---

[76] According to the Office for National Statistics (2002), there were 216,000 students enrolled at UK universities in 1962/3, and according to the National Union of Students (2010), there were 2.3 million enrolled in 2009/10. Deem *et al.* (2007: 38-9) cite the figure of 1.9 million for 2004/05. They write that 8.9% of 18- to 20-year olds were attending university in 1965/6; by 2004/05, 49% of 17- to 30-year-olds in Scotland were attending university (*ibid.*). Part of this expansion is due to an expansion of what 'counts' as a university (*e.g.* former polytechnics and colleges which became or joined universities in the 1960s and 1990s) and who 'counts' as a student (in the 1960s, only full-time students were counted, and age-group statistics are much more limited than today; it is also unclear whether international students are factored into the percentage calculations).

The Burdens of Bureaucracy

Weber praises bureaucracy as faster, more precise and more efficient than other forms of administration, comparing its standardised and de-personalised methods to machine-based mass production, which he considers superior to small-scale craft production (Coser 1977: 230). However, despite Conservative and New Labour efforts to improve management at 'wasteful' universities (Deem *et al.* 2007: 31, Law and Work 2007: 140-142), participants described university bureaucracies as anything but efficient:

> It's a bureaucratic nightmare. You sometimes land in totally Kafka-esque situations, because […] finance doesn't speak to research services, etc, etc. And that I find very very irritating. *(professor D, modern university)*

> It just feels like a big hassle to do anything, sometimes it can take your whole day just to get through the paperwork to register for something. *(early-stage PhD student G, modern university)*

Nearly all participants (with the exception of five PhD students)[77] spoke about the frustrations of university bureaucratic procedures, using words like time-consuming, difficult, heavy, baffling, depressing, crushing, and tedious. Those at ancient universities attributed their frustrations to the age of their institutions, but participants at modern universities also experienced bureaucratic burdens, attributing them to greed, misplaced priorities, or incompetence. There was no significant difference between institutional types when it came to complaints about bureaucracy, but PhD students were somewhat insulated from the pressures they will face later in academic careers:[78]

---

[77] Interestingly, three of the PhD students who did not mention bureaucratic pressures were first-year PhD students who were ambivalent about sociology's critical and social change dimensions, as discussed in Chapter Four, indicating a generally under-developed view of academia to go with their limited view of the discipline. The two later-stage PhD students who did not experience bureaucratic pressures were aware of their existence for others, and credited their supervisors and departments with helping hold those pressures at bay. All five PhD students who did not experience bureaucratic pressures received full ESRC funding, and all had relatively smooth application processes with strong support, which can be seen as one element of the 'protection' mentioned above. This adds another layer of importance to the personal relationships outlined in Chapter Five – as a counterweight to heavy bureaucracy, allowing PhD students to focus more on their work and have a less stressful experience.
[78] While most PhD students mentioned bureaucratic pressures, staff spoke at much greater length about them – 2,835 and 9,066 words in the interview transcripts, respectively.

> At this stage, I feel very much that you're in a bubble, you're kind of protected from all those really grinding, everyday, nitty-gritty things. [...] It's kind of a nice calm before the storm. [...] Academics [are] trying to do all their teaching and their research at the same time, so it's probably much more a juggling act. *(early-stage PhD student F, ancient university)*

Many newer staff and PhD students experienced confusing and lengthy periods trying to learn bureaucratic procedures, in addition to their other work, because "administrative skills are expected to develop spontaneously" (Johnson 1996: 105). However, while junior staff and PhD students share the weight of increased bureaucracy with senior staff, it was usually the latter who spoke of the broad patterns of bureaucratic control, in addition to their own personal experiences – throughout this section I will seek to balance these perspectives.

Where Weber's ideal bureaucracy is expressed in large-scale capitalist production (Thompson and Tunstall 1971: 76), it is an awkward fit with academic work, which is ultimately produced on a small scale (Thorne and Cuthbert 1996: 174-6). For Galbraith (1996: 105), in large and bureaucratic organisations, "discipline is substituted for thought" – the source of tension between bureaucracy and academic labour is obvious. One participant gave a compelling example of the stress that arises from imposing large-scale procedures on work that must be carried out by an individual "intellectual craftsman" (Mills 1959):

> I've just got so many different forms to fill in now, before the semester starts, which I probably should have done during the summer, but you try to do other things during the summer, so you end up with this moment that I'm reaching now where I've got four or five different handbooks to finish off, checking regulations on them, dealing with last-minute applications, students who have problems in terms of getting their curriculum together. All that kind of shite occupies a lot of my day at the moment. So the notion that you get into this so you can do a lot of reading, writing and thinking – well, you do a lot of writing, but that's filling in forms and sending emergency e-mails and stuff. But moments of thinking and intellectual work, they're few and far between. I only read one new book over the summer. I read a lot of other people's work, I read a lot of postgraduates' work, which is interesting. I read a lot of undergraduate stuff, and have been commenting on other people's work solidly since the end of April *[interview was in late September]*. Marking, now that takes up a huge amount of your time, and is very unrewarding work that will break your heart. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

This account highlights a number of the competing pressures faced by academics, which were often described as having a mechanistic, factory-line quality: 'processing' hundreds of essays or exams in short periods of time, 'producing' publications, 'delivering' modular courses. This represents a shift from what Law and Work (2007: 147) call an "artisanal labour process" in academic work, towards a more standardised, mass-produced form which values "material *quantities* – publication output, numbers of students taught, or funds generated – rather than intellectual or educational *qualities*" (de Groot 1997: 134-135, original emphasis). The most noteworthy example of this pattern is the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), launched in 1986 and most recently conducted in 2008:

> The RAE an explicit and formalised assessment process of [*sic*] the quality of research. […] The RAE is the principal means by which institutions assure themselves of the quality of the research undertaken in the [higher education] sector. […] Funding bodies intend to use the quality profiles to determine their grant for research to the institutions which they fund. (RAE website)

Despite the RAE's alleged focus on quality, in practice it encourages the mass-production of research 'output,' as will be discussed below. However, structures like the RAE are not surprising, given the expansion of higher education and government demands for accountability across all public sector services (Mooney and Law 2007: 35-7, Morgan 2010). Some participants saw this as an inevitable part of higher education's evolution:

> The more complex organisations become, the more inevitably they become bureaucratised, and that requires standardisation and routinisation. […] The administration of universities has had to become more professionalised. There's no way of avoiding that, and it's had its consequences. *(senior lecturer C, ancient university)*

For Weber, this inevitability is to be embraced (Thompson and Tunstall 1971: 75-78), but as Deem *et al.* (2007: 42) insightfully point out, "academics are trained as critical thinkers and can and do apply this to anyone attempting to manage them." In an international study, Lacy and Sheehan (1997: 311) found that only 21% of UK academics surveyed were satisfied with

the way their universities were managed.[79] Among those I interviewed, most resented bureaucratic management as unnecessary interference, with excessive administrative tasks hampering their 'real' work:

> I think the part of the job that people tend not to enjoy is the administrative fiddle-faddle […] it's easy to feel dragged down by some of the admin stuff that you've got to do. *(professor B, ancient university)*

> Everything is increasingly bureaucratised and increasingly people do feel an iron cage of regulation and lack of time coming in to restrict what they're doing. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> People spend so much time on these endless bureaucratic demands. […] It's a psychological thing, too. It's not just exactly 'how much time does all this take,' it's the fact that you do it, and then it comes back because there's two lines that shouldn't be there and then you do it again and it's these kinds of things. *(lecturer E, modern university)*

Heavy workloads in general were cause for stress and frustration, as will be discussed below. But bureaucratic procedures like audits and excessive paperwork were seen as *actively* counterproductive, serving the needs of university managers, politicians, and funding councils, while failing to meet – or working against – the needs of students, staff, research participants, and wider society. For Maskell and Robinson (2001: 120), "the real problem is not a kind for which there can be an administrative solution." They argue that politicians and managers cannot control the intellectual process through force of policy, and top-down adjustments often do more harm than good (*ibid.* 117-21, 177). For example, an increasing volume of paperwork cuts into the time available for actually working with students.

Law and Work (2007: 148-9) are less generous to managers and politicians; they argue that managerialism is an "attempt to control, direct and regulate academic labour by quantitative abstractions" in order to force down its price. Similarly, Kenway (cited in Levin 2006: 81) argues that the state seeks to inflict stress and crisis by centralising authority and decentralising responsibility through accountability measures. Trow (cited in Thorne and

---

[79] In all countries, less than half of academics surveyed were satisfied with university management – figures for this element ranged from 10.7% in Germany to 43.5% in Mexico.

Cuthbert 1996: 174) takes a middle path, arguing that "hard managerialism is a substitute for government's former trust in the ability of universities to govern themselves." It is not difficult to imagine how a backlash against perceived excesses of the 1960s and 70s (*e.g.* Bradbury's *The History Man*) would combine with expanding student numbers and a neoliberal agenda to create a 'perfect storm' for elements of all three explanations to take hold: well-meaning blunders, calculated re-engineering, and overcompensation for loss of trust.

Beyond resentment and a general sense that academics know better than managers how to organise academic work, what was striking throughout the interviews was a sharp contrast in values. Levin (2006: 76) writes that among community college lecturers in California, "the actions of the institution are seen as antithetical to [staff] values" (also see Ylijoki 2003). There appears to be a similar pattern in Scotland:

> It's become more centrally managerial over time. […] I think that democratic structures have been weakened, and it's not entirely clear whether they've become more efficient. *(professor A, ancient university)*

> The word deficit has entered the lexicon, […] which never was the case before, in the late 80s, early 90s. You wouldn't have any conception of what was being spent. […] So there's the imposition of all these financial management models across all the universities. *(professor E, modern university)*

> The way of judging what is important and what academics should be spending their time doing, those decisions are being made largely in terms of university finances. *(lecturer B, ancient university)*

> Performance indicators, effectiveness, efficiency and so on – 'let's do more with less' – there's a whole language which develops. […] You can redefine the productiveness of particular parts of the university. And if you're not careful, you can organise them out of existence. We have a department here, which over the years has produced hundreds of well-qualified students […] it's been well-attested to by external examiners, everything they ask. And yet […] it's told it's losing money. *(professor C, ancient university)*

In the "new common sense" of neoliberalism, social and mental habits required for the market are produced and reproduced by imposing market conditions on an increasingly

broad range of situations, instigating a feedback loop where new patterns of thought leave little space for alternative social organisations (Bertelsen 1998: 132). A similar language shift is occurring at the level of primary and secondary education in the UK, where "the language is constntly one of worry about competitiveness and being left behind" (Maitles 2007: 120). But language helps to shape reality: there is an intimate connection between "the word and the world" (Appadurai 1996: 12, Mulkay 1985) – between discourse, material reality, and human action. For Fairclough (1992: 64), discourse "is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning." A growing use of business-oriented language in university management, designed to 'speak' to those in power, indicates a shift to business-oriented structures – social, mental and moral.

However, as seen in the previous chapters, participants expressed 'traditional' academic values like critical inquiry, commitment to truth, academic freedom, democratic governance, and professional autonomy, along with broader civic values (*e.g.* Bryson 2004: 52-5, Collier 2005, Paterson 2003a: 90-92, Scott 2003: 296). These are in direct conflict with the neoliberal, market-based values imposed by university managers, leading to a subtle form of stress – what Mills (1959: 11) calls "uneasiness" or "panic." So not only do academics face increasing demands of bureaucracy, they also must deal with a disconnection between their ideals and their institutions. For example, Weber explains that success within bureaucratic structures depends on obedience becoming habit (Thomson and Tunstall 1971: 78, Coser 1977: 233), but obviously, strict obedience and critical questioning are difficult to reconcile. So which leads to academic success? Law and Work (2007: 143) argue that "managerialism inhibits self-directed autonomy and independent thinking," but it is more complex than that. Academics must master both obedience and independent thinking, and the subtleties of when to employ each, practicing what Goffman (1959: 210-212) calls "dramaturgical discipline."

Of course, some measure of obedience has always been required from academics, but traditionally loyalty and accountability have centred on disciplines or departments, in the manner of a craft guild, rather than universities at large (Bourdieu 1988). Centralised

bureaucratic control requires the opposite, at least in practice. While participants described being able to maintain their interests despite bureaucratic pressures (see Ylijoki 2003: 323) it is important to remember that all participants in this project were able to navigate university bureaucracies well enough to maintain their studies or employment; those for whom bureaucratic demands were too heavy have necessarily been excluded. As the weight of bureaucracy within universities increases, it has inevitable effects on the "varieties of men and women who now prevail" within academia (Mills 1959: 7). Law and Work (2007: 147-9) argue that the core practices of academic labour have remained beyond the grasp of managerialism, but the space in which to conduct those core practices is being continually squeezed.

Fundamentally, the problem of bureaucracy in higher education is a problem of balance between hierarchy and democracy or collegiality – when to impose centralised authority, and when to allow autonomy for individuals, departments, and disciplines; when to demand accountability, and when to give trust. In recent decades, the balance of power has become centralised with university managers, rendering departments subservient to the demands of funding councils and outside agencies. One major way that centralised power is imposed is to change the way that time is controlled.

Speeding Up Production: Time Pressures & 'Efficiency'

As Virginia Woolf (1929) points out, money can buy a person time and space to engage in creative work – with the converse that financial pressures can force people to do more work with less time. Also in the 1920s, Weber noted that increases in the speed of communication and the press had exerted "a steady and sharp pressure in the direction of speeding up the tempo" of bureaucratic administrative work (Thompson and Tunstall 1971: 76). The same has become true for academic work, despite Bourdieu's (1988: 87) praise of academia's *gravitas*, or "healthy slowness."

> For the past twenty years, time as a value and the value of time have been refined through the dictates of neoliberal economics, which have largely undermined any

> notion of public time guided by the noncommodified values central to a political and social democracy. (Giroux 2007: 121)
>
> Time is fragmented into semesters and modules and only counted as productive when it came be measured and recorded by reporting systems like the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC), which measures the 'full economic cost' of each unit of academic working time. (Law and Work 2007: 145)

The volume of work has increased, whether in students taught, research 'output' or administrative tasks, leading to long hours (Enders and Teichler 1997, Law and Work 2007: 143-8, Tysome 2006). According to the Universities and Colleges Union, academics earn significantly less than other professionals and work an extra fifty-two days of unpaid overtime per year (Ashley 2007, 2009).

> Higher education has achieved a 6 percent per annum increase in productivity between 1991 and 1995 compared with 2 percent per annum in the service sector generally (Bett Report 1999). Government funding per student has fallen by over 36 percent since 1989, and government continues to seek annual 1 percent efficiency gains in university budgets. (Shattock 2001: 28)[80]

These "efficiency gains" are bought, in part, with the time compromises of academic staff (Giroux 2007: 121). There is evidence that long working hours contribute to increased research productivity (Jacobs and Winslow 2004: 125-7) and given that academic jobs and funding are increasingly dependent on publications, growing hours are no surprise. In the mid-1990s, an average working week for academics in England was reported as 50-52 hours (Enders and Teichler 1997), and in the United States during the late 1990s it was nearly 54 hours, with a third of survey respondents working 60 hours per week or more (Jacobs 2004: 8). As these figures are based on self-reporting in an era before widespread e-mail use and the practice of UK universities extending lecture hours (Tysome 2006), it is almost certain that academics work even longer hours today. Broadly speaking, the UK has the longest working week in Europe, but studies have shown that consistently working more than 45 hours per week damages physical and psychological health (Gillian 2005, Wolff 2009). Academics are

[80] More decent data on productivity was unavailable because the most recent widespread report on higher education was the Bett Report in 1999. Lord Browne's independent report on higher education funding is currently in progress (Morgan 2009), but its results have not been published as of summer 2010.

also among the most likely to work unpaid overtime, and skip their entitled holidays in order to get work done (Ashley 2009, Swain 2006).[81] Unsurprisingly, concerns about long working hours and increasing time pressures were expressed by both retirement-stage participants and newer staff:

> There is much less leisure now for young academics than there used to be. […] Young lecturers now, in sociology and other disciplines, have forcibly to be more accountable through these various bureaucratic channels, like the Research Assessment Exercise, and I do think that is a bad thing. *(professor A, ancient university)*

> I think academics in the olden days used to get away with doing their teaching and having long holidays, and everyone still perceives academics as doing that. [But] the mythical long summer holiday […] doesn't really exist. *(senior lecturer A, modern university)*

Frustration with growing time pressures were also expressed by PhD students. They face stricter limits on dissertation deadlines, and financial penalties for late submission can affect entire faculties: since 2001, the Economic and Social Research Council has refused to give PhD funding to universities with average on-time[82] submission rates of less than sixty percent. According to their guidelines,

> One of the results of the sanctions policy is that institutions tend to exert some control over which [departments] are put forward for recognition [for ESRC awards]. In addition, where [a department] is seen to be falling short of the ESRC's requirements there is an institutional pressure to improve performance. (ESRC 2005,[83] C.19)

---

[81] The cynical view of these kinds of figures is that academics inflate their reported working hours, or else work long hours purely by choice. Bassnett (2007), a Vice-Chancellor, calls academics who complain of long hours "infuriating," and argues that "somehow, without working all day every day, most of us have managed to keep our research and teaching going, alongside our administrative duties and still have time [for domestic and leisure activities]." As evidence, she points to students' complaints of unavailable lecturers and lengthy turnaround times for marking, and claims that activities like reading, conversations with students and colleagues, and travel to conferences do not count as 'real' work for academics – despite the status of similar activities as work in other sectors. However, as demonstrated by participants and works cited throughout this chapter, Bassnett's view is not supported by any tangible evidence.

[82] Four years for full-time PhDs, and seven years for part-time. The institutional requirement for submission within these time frames has increased from twenty-five percent in 1987 and forty percent in 1989 (Philips and Pugh 1987: 26).

[83] The sanctions policy is upheld in the 2009 version of the Guidelines (p. 16), but the paragraph quoted above has been omitted. According to the ESRC website, "The fourth edition of the Guidelines [2005] is valid for the current

Broadly speaking there has been a push to be productive in ways that are measurable. Academics are expected to 'consume' relevant materials to keep current in their fields, but many feel there is inadequate time for this unmeasured activity (Jacobs 2004: 13), even though it is beneficial for both research and teaching. This pattern was expressed by the lecturer on page 189, who was too busy 'processing' (marking) student work to read much else. On the other hand, academics are pressured to continually 'produce' books, journal articles, conference presentations, and other 'academic currency,' as I will discuss below. The paradox is that intellectual work "operates quietly, in private," needing "time for incubation" (Salwak 2009). The complexity of intellectual work requires "quality time" – significant periods of intense and uninterrupted concentration (Johnson 1996: 104-6). But such nebulous phenomena are difficult to measure for university or funding council managers who value visible 'performance indicators,' so both staff and PhD students felt that 'quality time' was in short supply.

Time with students has been another casualty of changing academic structures. Contact hours with students have been cut, both in hours per week and weeks per year spent in lectures and seminars.[84] A survey by the National Union of Students indicates that students' top motivation for learning is an inspirational lecturer (Halsey 2008: 13), and such personal inspiration is a central part of the UK's higher education culture (Attwood 2009a). As discussed in Chapter Five, forming personal connections – particularly through informal contact – is also important for staff satisfaction. However, participants felt forced to sacrifice time with students under increased bureaucratic and productive demands:[85]

---

recognition exercise until the end of the academic year 2010/11. The new version of the Guidelines [2009] relates to all future accreditation."

[84] I was unable to locate data from a Scottish context, but a report on the Sustainability of Learning and Teaching in English Higher Education indicated that contact hours have fallen across all disciplines. While figures were not given for all departments examined, the one example given was that first-year contact fell from 524 hours in 1990-91 to 320 hours in 2007-08 (FSSG 2008: 21-3).

[85] According to a study by the National Union of Students, 'social studies' students report an average of 11 hours per week contact with staff – seven hours of lectures, three hours of tutorials, and an hour of other contact (honours supervision, personal tutor sessions, office hours, etc.) (NUS 2009: 6).

> There is a trade-off. If a lot of energy has to go into the administration of courses, then that energy is not going to go into spending time with students. [...] Sometimes I wish they would just trust teachers more to know what they're doing and give them more time to do it in a more relaxed space with the students, doing face-to-face teaching. *(senior lecturer B, ancient university)*

> Relations with students have become far more formalised. You can't rely on one-to-one, face-to-face interaction. There are set procedures for dealing with various aspects of the student's experience, and you have to follow those procedures. It may sound strange, but it was possible at one time to have fairly elastic lectures, especially at honours level, where you could keep a class going for as long as everyone wanted. You can't do that now, obviously. Demands on students' time, demands on classroom availability is such that you have to stick to what you're scheduled and timetabled. *(near retirement, ancient university)*

This is not to say that given looser schedules, all lecturers would devote more time to students – but at present, even those who wish to are struggling (Attwood 2009a). Efforts to force academics to be more available for students have led to conflict and resentment (Attwood 2008, 2009b), indicating that casual contact is not easily timetabled.[86] As discussed in Chapter Five, academics value their autonomy, so micromanagement is a poor strategy to increase dedication from staff – especially when time pressures have been problematic for at least a decade. In the late 1990s, staff at a range of North American universities reported having increased their working hours and the amount of time they spent on teaching and research, but having cut back on informal interaction with undergraduates (Milem *et al.* 2000: 471). More recently in the UK, the loss of informal social contact has extended to interactions among staff (Bryson 2004: 52, Law and Work 2007: 149), which troubled participants:

> There was a staff club [where] nearly all the staff went for lunch. So, you got to know people. You talked to people from different departments. You had a degree of social intercourse that is totally missing now. Unless you're on a faculty board [where] you might meet some people from other departments, but in the highly structured context of formal meetings. [...] People tend to eat in their offices and have a lot

[86] In response to a recent move to guarantee undergraduates access to lecturers during set hours, Blake (quoted in Attwood 2008) defined quality time for students as "small group or individual tuition with experienced and fully qualified permanent members of staff, not 20:1 'seminars' led by nervous research students." Ironically, a significant proportion of "fully qualified" teaching staff are employed on short-term contracts (UCU 2007a), and the qualification of a PhD does not necessarily include training in teaching methods.

> more time pressures. […] People don't talk to each other across departments in [a] relaxed, creative way anymore. *(near retirement, modern university)*

Law and Work (2007) attribute this trend to a growing instrumentalism and the need to be 'efficient' with time. While organisational change does not necessarily lead to cultural change (Brehony and Deem 2005: 399), and participants are strongly supportive of 'traditional' academic and social values, there are two interconnected pressures – institutional and individual – that threaten both the practice of academic work and its underlying values. Increased accountability to university managers[87] means that academics must carefully 'account' for their 'expenditures' of time – and difficulties are seen as individual rather than systemic problems. Meanwhile, academics must carve out time to meet the increased and multifaceted demands of their jobs:

> It's becoming very difficult for academics to be teachers, researchers, and administrators, all at the same time. […] Therefore you feel inadequate in all fields, or you let one area slide and that may lead to tensions with colleagues. So […] it's a certain kind of cognitive or psychic stress that's characteristic of academics these days […] that has to do with that ramping up of demands on our time, in various different areas of activity that are really quite different and hard to switch back and forth between. *(senior lecturer B, ancient university)*

> One of the problems with the academic job is that actually, all of the jobs could be even better with just a little bit more effort. […] But actually you've only got one life and 24 hours in a day, and it's very easy to end up feeling that you never do anything well. […] It's possible for the satisfaction to get driven out by a sense of overload. *(professor B, ancient university)*

Combined, these pressures erode the autonomy that has been a source of motivation and satisfaction, and risk "killing the goose that lays the golden egg" (Law and Work 2007: 149). As academic work is extremely self-directed, personal motivation provides much of the energy that keeps the system going, so there is a limit to the extent more can be done with less (Thorne and Cuthbert 1996: 187). In addition to increasing demands on full-time staff, university managers have sought to overcome financial shortfalls with a fragmented division of labour increasingly dependent on part-time and temporary staff.

[87] Academics also face increasing demands from students who see themselves as consumers in receipt of a 'product.'

Fragmentation & Short-Term Contracts

In line with New Managerialism trends (Brehony and Deem 2005), there has been a shift from individual autonomy to team working and hierarchies of accountability, particularly in research. In teaching, despite bureaucratic requirements for course approval and external audits, participants indicated that what happens in the classroom has remained largely under the control of lecturers and tutors, reflecting a pattern that has remained relatively constant over the past forty years – though I will discuss the increasing use of information technology below. For research, in addition to speeding up the metaphorical production line, there has been pressure to fragment the production process itself, borrowing a model from large-scale studies in the physical sciences where an individual or team designs a project and applies for funding, then hires assistants on short-term contracts to actually carry out the research. As discussed in Chapter Five, participants enjoyed the complexity of the research process and its multiple interconnected tasks[88] – but it is becoming increasingly difficult to carry out that process as an individual while also attending to increased administrative duties (Bryson 2004: 40-46). For example, fieldwork was often a favourite part of the research process, but was one of its more frequently 'outsourced' elements:

> I prefer getting out there and doing the fieldwork myself. But […] you end up inevitably going down that route of project manager. But academics are rubbish managers, we're not trained to do that, and we're not good at that. Our strength lies in autonomy and managing ourselves and our own time […] And I feel that the commercial stuff of bringing in big grants all the time is then about managing people. *(senior lecturer A, modern university)*

Enders and Teichler (1997: 348) argue that moving away from the 'both-and' model of academia with the rise of research- or teaching-only contracts "might challenge any common core of the [academic] profession." Indeed, they point out that differentiation in roles, working conditions and salaries is so great that academics of differing ranks can hardly be considered in a single professional group (*ibid.* 370). Prior research (*e.g.* Bland *et al.* 2006, Fulton 1996, Jacobs 2004: 14-17, Ylijoki 2003: 315) and participants' concerns indicates that

[88] With the exception of time-consuming, repetitive tasks like transcription.

the balance between tasks tends to shift according to status in the academic hierarchy. Postgraduate tutors, newer lecturers, and those on short-term contracts tend to be responsible for repetitive large-scale tasks like marking students' work (particularly for introductory courses) and pastoral care, while more established lecturers and professors spend more time on high-status work like university governance and grant proposals – though junior staff are also frequently expected to contribute to funding bids. Often this division of academic labour is gendered, with women predominating in lower-status roles (Deem *et al.* 2007: 91, de Groot 1997, Park 1992), resulting in an "intellectual proletariat" (Park 1996: 46) whether divided by gender or contract type. This necessarily changes the nature of academic work:

> What worries me about the profession [...] is the way in which junior staff are treated. We used to honestly see academia as a profession in the old-fashioned sense. A lifetime commitment. The growth of short-term contracts, temporary lectureships, those I think are undermining the sense of a professional identity. *(near retirement, ancient university)*

> In academia, [...] we're exploited in a way that we would not accept elsewhere. [...] People are kept on temporary contracts for years. [...] It's teaching as being a contractor, every year. You might get exploited while you're doing your PhD. But after you finish? [...] I think that affects the way you see yourself and it affects the way you see the world, because you're always in a position of insecurity [...] that feeling that if you say the wrong thing, you just don't get invited back. *(late-stage PhD student C, modern university)*

While many of the pressures on academics can be measured in hours worked or growing responsibilities, these accounts point to some of the more subtle effects of speeding-up and fragmenting academic production, many of which will be discussed below (also see Goldberg 2008a). Contrary to Weber's vision of an ideal bureaucracy, deepening the division of labour in academia has not lightened the burden on academics, but has increased insecurity and anxiety (Allen-Collinson and Hockey 1998). Even in the absence of a direct threat, the *possibility* of a threat to academic livelihoods, and a lack of faith in the structural protections available, can invoke a deep sense of vulnerability and fear (Bauman 2006: 3).

While part-time teachers can create more space for research, they cannot ease the pressures of administration (Abbas and McLean 2001: 342, Morgan 2010). More compelling are the obvious advantages of this model to university finances and management: a 'track record' of large research projects help to attract large grants, team working is more subject to administrative control than individual autonomy, and the use of part-time and fixed-term contracts allows more flexibility than permanent contracts. Law and Work (2007: 151) argue that the exploitation of part-time, fixed-term and hourly academic workers "helps keep afloat the vestiges of professional autonomy for the 'core' workforce." But even among permanent employees, the tradition of tenure for new staff was ended by the Education Reform Act 1988, so the number of truly permanent posts shrinks each year (Bryson 2004: 39, Deem *et al.* 2007: 45).

In 2005-06, academics with fixed-term contracts were more than 40% of the academic labour force in the UK, and those in part-time positions more than 30%, with significant overlap between the two (UCU 2007a: 1, Deem *et al.* 2007: 39).[89] Between bureaucratic control and new employment patterns, the shift of power to centralised management has caused insecurity and anxiety for academic workers. The Universities and Colleges Union reports that casualised and insecure employment is the top concern among early-career academics (Bailey 2009: 18). A strong indication of its prevalence is an anonymous blog launched in 2009 in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, "on the daily struggles, petty indignities and insecurities of an academic life on casual contracts" (The Insecure Scholar 2009). The blog covers topics such as navigating the academic job market, deciphering meaning in subtle markers of prestige, principle versus practice, the importance of mentoring, and "the burden of trying to generate enthusiasm."

[89] From the Universities and Colleges Union's (2007a: 1) report, *Use of fixed-term contracts in the employment of UK academic staff 1995-6 to 2005-6:* "In 1995-6, 57% of academics were employed on a permanent contract; the proportion in 2004-5 was the same. [...] The proportion of teaching-only academics on a permanent contract in 1995-6 was 64%; by 2004-5, that had fallen to 39%. The proportion of research-only academics on a permanent contract in 1995-6 was 6%; by 2004-5, that proportion had risen to 11%, with a sharp rise from 2003-4 [...] For the main group of academics, employed to do teaching and research, the proportion on a permanent contract in 1995-6 was 82%, rising to 86% in 2004-5."

Jacobs (2004: 15) argues that part-time and fixed-contract academics constitute an "underclass" who work nearly full-time hours for poor wages and no job security,[90] and Enders and Teichler (1997: 348) argue that "there is no other occupation in which its members are treated so long as not yet matured." Regulations introduced in 2006 designed to help those on short-term contracts by giving them the right to permanent posts after four years may actually be working against them, as institutions become reluctant to renew contracts (The Insecure Scholar 2009b, UCU 2007b: 2). This can be seen as lengthening academia's intellectual 'apprenticeship,' for good or ill:

> It's about the Research Assessment Exercise, it's about income generation, it's also about the fact that you tend to go through a kind of apprenticeship, even though people don't call it that. You have to get your PhD, then you maybe get a research job, then you have to have a lecturing job [before gaining access to permanent employment]. *(professor D, modern university)*

> I think a lot of younger people going into academic work today are under an awful lot of pressure. […] I see too many people in their 20s, into their 30s, hanging around, doing bits of this, bits of that, at very low earnings, no stable income, and the prospect, if they're lucky, of a one-year contract, from which something else might come. And that is after all those years of study. *(near retirement, modern university)*

As discussed above, many academics "hang around" because they enjoy academic work despite its increasing pressures, and many consider themselves overqualified to work in other sectors. Also, there is likely an element of the 'sunk cost dilemma' (Arkes and Blumer 1985) – an aversion to 'wasting' the time and expense of academic training – though four out of five people with social science PhDs do eventually leave academia (Graham 2010). For those who seek to stay, more than two-thirds of academics entering new posts in 2005 were on fixed-term or part-time contracts (UCU 2007b: 1), several mid-career participants and those near retirement recalled gaining permanent contracts immediately following their PhDs, or after masters degrees and one or two research jobs:

---

[90] The union representing university management boasts that the minimum wage for all workers in higher education has risen to seventeen percent above the National Minimum Wage (UCEU 2008: 7), but as a postgraduate tutor I have repeatedly been invited to invigilate exams for an hourly rate that was less than the minimum wage, so UCEU standards are not necessarily applied to hourly-paid workers.

> There were people who were saying, 'why don't you apply for lectureships right away, after undergraduate?' *(laughs)* Yes, you must think that's very odd! It's so different from the situation now. *(near retirement, ancient university)*

Generally those with quick access to permanent employment were entering the labour market during periods of rapid university expansion during the late 1960s or early 1990s, when demand for sociology lecturers was relatively high and the supply of qualified candidates relatively low. Albert (2003: 164) describes a similar trend in Québec, noting that lecturers in the late 1960s were often hired without PhDs and had "a considerable degree of freedom as far as choosing the thrust of their academic production was concerned." Today, the opposite is true: low demand and a 'reserve army' of qualified labour due to the massive increase in postgraduate education. Additionally, new staff are much more constrained in their career choices, as I will discuss below.

Between 1970 and 2005, the number of postgraduate students in the UK rose from 61,000 to 545,370 (ONS 2002, Ramsden 2007: 13).[91] Part of this increase has been due to funding shortfalls within universities: postgraduate students pay double the tuition fees of undergraduates, and international postgraduates more than three times undergraduate fees – currently £10,000 per year on average (Shepherd 2009b).[92] So postgraduates are doubly profitable for universities, providing both income and cheap, flexible labour which prepares them for long periods of insecure employment after they complete PhDs.[93] While this is

---

[91] The office of National Statistics gives the following figures for postgraduate students in the UK (both genders, full-time and part-time): 1970/71 – 61,000; 1980/81 – 107,000; 1990/91 – 170,000; 1997/98 – 348,000. Universities UK reports 545,370 postgraduates in 2005/06.

[92] Overseas students (undergraduate and postgraduate) contribute more than 8% of university income, UK-wide (Shepherd 2009b); £189 million in Scotland alone (Universities Scotland 2008: 2). Enrolment of non-EU students has more than doubled between 1996 and 2005, and they now comprise nearly ten percent of all students in the UK (Ramsden 2007: 24).

[93] In this sense, overseas postgraduates are triply profitable: high fees, cheap labour, and less expectation than their local counterparts of employment afterwards, as complex and expensive visa procedures ensure that many will return to their home countries. For example, after paying £1600 for visas to study and live in the UK for seven years, obtaining permanent residence (not citizenship) will be a four-stage process over seven more years, costing £3000 if fees do not increase, and requiring 150 pages of applications, obtaining a foreign national ID card with biometric data, passing a 'Life in the UK' test, and earning more than £35,000 per year within a year of completing the PhD. This process is near-impossible on an early-career academic salary given the time frames imposed, and realistically speaking, I can only stay in the UK because I intend to marry a UK citizen. The practice of importing cheap temporary labour is a form of reverse outsourcing, or 'off-shoring on-shore' – a phenomenon that is beyond the scope of this project.

sustainable in a strictly economic sense (there will always be postdoctoral researchers eager to apply for new posts) and while the pressures described above have been common across many other sectors, from law and medicine to aviation and public service (Gillian 2005, McGreal 2010, Mooney and Law 2007: 8), shortfalls in funding and jobs combine with a large supply of willing and qualified labour to create intense competition.

Competition for All

More than half of participants (nine PhD students and ten staff) were concerned about unhealthy levels of competition between individuals, departments and universities, all of which arise directly and indirectly from funding shortages. On the level of individual competition, the number of potential candidates far outstrips the number of academic jobs available. For example, the ESRC offers over seven hundred new studentships per year (PhD or MRes/PhD), but only eighty-five to ninety postdoctoral fellowships (ESRC 2010, 2007). This kind of situation was reflected in participants' concerns:

> I'm currently applying for jobs, and every single job seems to get loads of applicants. […] At my friend's place, they had a post going there in sociology [...] and they got 60 applications! And that's a really new university, not necessarily a good reputation place. *(late-stage PhD student G, ancient university)*
>
> Given the competition for jobs, basically anybody will go anywhere. *(laughs)* So it's not like people can pick and choose to the extent that they might have done back in the 60s or 70s. *(lecturer G, modern university)*
>
> You've got a certain amount of money with more and more people chasing that money […] and that means relations of increased competition. *(professor G, ancient university)*

One major effect of individual competition has been a rapid escalation over the past decade of requirements for entry-level jobs and promotions: "junior scholars are asked to prove their worth to universities in ways that those hiring them never had to" (Gregg 2009). While published job requirements[94] vary between institutions and tend to be more stringent at

---

[94] Between November 2009 and March 2010, advertised in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* and jobs.ac.uk, for entry-level sociology jobs including research assistant, research associate and teaching fellow.

more prestigious universities, the sheer number of potential candidates means that the true criteria will be inflated, especially in a recession when the number of potential jobs is more limited than usual:

> In comparison to maybe ten, fifteen years ago, I think the hoops that PhD students have got to jump through, in terms of publications, conference papers, and teaching, the expectations are a lot harder. They're a lot tougher if you want to get a job at the end of it. *(early-stage PhD student C, ancient university)*

Of course, competition among highly-qualified candidates is not a new phenomenon in academia. According to Bourdieu (1988: 89), the mechanism that allows academic advancement requires competition – but among a small enough number of competitors that each can reasonably aspire to a post, and a large enough number that success is not guaranteed. In the social sciences, the past decade has skewed the balance much more towards the latter, and effectively, the moral or vocational convictions of individuals subsidise an exploitative system:

> [Academic work] just means so much to people. I think it's a job that people really, really want to do. […] People want it so much, it's so important to them. […] I think that's probably why it is so competitive. *(late-stage PhD student B, ancient university)*

In terms of competition for jobs,[95] new PhDs are not the only group affected: "despite claims to meritocracy, the nature of the academic environment […] seems to create widespread inequality of opportunity" (Bryson 2004: 51, 53, also see Scott and Bereman 1992). Advancement opportunities at the lower levels are constricted by the use of short-term research contracts (*ibid.* 51), and at higher levels by increasing demands to become managers and fundraisers (Enders and Teichler 1997: 348, Law and Work 2007: 140-46, Ylijoki 2003: 315). Both tend to skew the selection and self-selection process for particular priorities. As Mills (1959: 103) points out, "Like other institutions, [a university] selects certain types of mind, and […] places a premium upon the development of certain mental qualities," which I will discuss below.

---

[95] In addition to competition for jobs, intense personal and intellectual conflicts were a concern for several PhD students, but were not mentioned by staff.

As with other trends discussed above, increased competition for jobs represents a shift away from an artisanal model, based on 'traditional' academic values, where recent apprentices can reasonably expect to find work, and those who have been accepted into the system have a clear and straightforward career path, along with a reasonable level of job security (Giroux 2007: 118). These patterns have all but disappeared within academia (Huisman *et al.* 2002), and another casualty has been a sense of vocational unity (Hellström 2004: 511):

> A colleague of mine who recently retired [...] used to talk at great length about the way in which collegiality was being undermined by the managerialism of the universities. At one time, academics thought of themselves as colleagues, engaged in similar activity, and working together to achieve common goals. [...] Well that changed a long time ago. [Now] academics are employees like any other employees. *(near retirement, ancient university)*

> Unfortunately, the different universities see themselves as being in competition, and the different academic units, including sociology, see themselves as being in competition. And so, instead of seeing our enterprises as a collective enterprise, we see them as individual units competing against each other. *(professor, ancient university)*

Alongside individual competition, both staff and PhD students spoke at length about competition between universities for funding, students, prestige, and 'star' lecturers, especially directly before a Research Assessment Exercise. While some also mentioned competition between different parts of their own universities, it was clear that their main concern was much broader. In keeping with the neoliberal model of creating markets where none existed before (Harvey 2007: 22-3, Schöller and Groh-Samberg 2006: 180-184), new priorities and pressures challenge the core values of academia. While universities have always competed to a certain extent, Thorne and Cuthbert (1997: 176) argue that Britain has embraced a market-style model much more wholeheartedly than its European neighbours, leading to more intense competition and explicit accountability to a much larger and more diverse 'customer' base than before, including government, students, parents, funding councils, employers, and wider society. This is another case where the use of business-oriented language reveals a shift to business-based values: with 'stakeholders' advocating for

their own sets of interests, “values expressed in terms of teaching or research are no longer congruent” with the necessities of competition (Deem *et al.* 2007: 147).

With finite resources available to a growing number of universities, institutions or departments might join forces to seek funding and use it more efficiently. And indeed, one retirement-stage participant explained that Scotland was able to resist the worst cuts of the Thatcher administration because Scottish university faculties were much more interdependent than their English counterparts, so individual departments were not so easily eliminated.[96] However, schemes like the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) have placed them into relationships of competition – more funding for one university, discipline or department means less funding for another, and a sense of scarcity has discouraged the flow of resources between competitors. Competition is not simply horizontal rivalry between equals – there are hierarchies according to age, wealth, prestige and research intensiveness. By any measure, the top comprises the twenty universities of the Russell Group, which some participants saw as hoarding resources:

> [The Russell Group] sit down and hand out the money and go, ‘aren’t we great? Look at us, we’ve got all the money. […] And nobody gets a look in edgewise.’ It’s like one of those Masonic, closed-handshake clubs. *(late-stage PhD student, Russell Group university)*

According to the Russell Group’s website, this opinion is fairly accurate:

> In 2006/07, Russell Group Universities accounted for 66% (over £2.2 billion) of UK Universities’ research grant and contract income, 68% of total Research Council income, 56% of all doctorates awarded in the United Kingdom, and over 30% of all students studying in the United Kingdom from outside the EU. […] In 2007/08 Russell Group Universities were allocated approximately 66% of the total quality-related research funding allocated by the Funding Councils. (Russell Group 2009)

[96] Herman (2001: 58-59) describes the Scottish university system as combining the study of multiple disciplines, where “the enlightened [person] was expected to understand both [science and the humanities].” While the ‘liberal arts’ style of study had faded in Scotland by the mid-twentieth century (*e.g.* Davie 1961), interdisciplinary courses are still common, and are becoming more popular to cut costs (Murray 2010).

Distinct tiers are not only based on the age and prestige of the university, but also on rationalised financial factors and 'performance indicators' (Henkel 1999: 105, Deem *et al.* 2007: 96). As a professor at a modern university noted, "there was a kind of crunching together of the hierarchy of the universities in the post-war period [...] and now they're going to stretch out again." Managerial surveillance and control create hierarchies of 'excellence' in teaching and research (Law and Work 2007: 142, Morgan 2010). The most significant example is the RAE, which determines funds awarded by the higher education funding councils along with outside agencies (Henkel 1999: 110-11). In a damaging feedback loop, departments and universities with high RAE scores can attract research funding and employ staff to focus exclusively on research (*ibid.*), while those with lower scores must struggle for funding, and sometimes to remain active at all:

> In many ways, the Research Assessment Exercise has been a divide and rule strategy [...] Prior to the RAE, there wasn't a feeling that the different universities competed against each other. But [...] as we know, competition has all sorts of unintended consequences. And the RAE was deliberately meant to set one university against another, to create a sort of Hobbesian situation where everybody was against everyone else. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> [Competition for funding] has created a bit of a jungle, an economic jungle, and it leads to some subjects [...] which are valuable intrinsically in their own right, they have cultural value, that they can be lost. [...] It isn't just small subjects, it can be departments which in other contexts might be thought to be important, like physics or chemistry, and those departments can be closed down too. *(professor C, ancient university)*

Ultimately, what has 'opened the door' for the process of closing departments has been the abolition of tenure – when forcing redundancy (or coercing 'voluntary' redundancy) on individuals becomes possible, eliminating whole groups of 'unproductive' employees becomes possible as well (Deem *et al.* 2007: 64, Law and Work 2007: 152, Shattock 2001: 35-8). Combined with the growing use of fixed-term contracts, this leads to a situation of insecurity and isolation, which not only hampers creativity and insight, but also the expression of social conscience, as I will discuss below. While participants still held 'traditional' academic values and even a sense of collegiality, despite the structural biases towards competitiveness and the pursuit of individual or institutional self-interest, increasing

pressures will inevitably take their toll somewhere in the system. The pressures of competition, fragmentation, accountability and speed are increasingly leaking into the personal lives of individual academics.

Personal Consequences of Structural Pressures

The issues discussed above are worthy of concern in themselves, but there is evidence that increasing pressures have had consequences on the mental health of academics. At its core, academic work is creative work, and while deadlines and a certain amount of pressure foster a creative atmosphere (van Yperen and Hagedoorn 2003), excessive speed, stress or long hours reduce both productivity and work quality (Gillian 2005, Jacobs 2004, Morgan 2010, Thorsen 1996). On the other hand, positive emotions and relationships at work enhance performance and work quality (Gersick *et al.* 2000, Staw *et al.* 1994). As discussed in the previous chapter, scholarly labour can be emotionally involved (also see Bellas 1999, Neumann 2006), making mental well-being even more important in academia.

A recent study of more than 10,000 academic workers in the UK found that they are experiencing levels of work-related stress that exceed standards laid down by the Heath and Safety Executive (Corbyn 2010, also see Hill *et al.* 2001). In another UK-based study, 59% of surveyed academics reported that their workloads create unacceptable levels of stress, negative interference with their lives outside of work, or both (Bryson 2004: 46). On a more subtle level, lack of trust in an 'audit overload' culture undermines academics' identities and self-worth as professionals (Morgan 2010).[97] The feelings of inadequacy and overload expressed above (page 199) were common among participants, though they do not necessarily indicate more serious mental health issues. While issues of overload and inadequacy have been identified in other studies (*e.g.* Bryson 2004: 45-6, Jacobs and Winslow 2004, Milem *et al.* 2000), there appears to be extremely limited scholarly work that explicitly

[97] Additionally, sociologists' attention to injustice and its causes may affect their mental health: a negative correlation between belief in a "just world" and depression means that individuals who believe that 'good' people experience good fortune and 'bad' people experience misfortune are less likely to experience depression (Ritter *et al.* 1990: 235-7).

deals with depression among postgraduates and academic staff.[98] However, a number of blogs offer anecdotal accounts of depression and anxiety in academia (*e.g.* Anonymous 2006, 2008, 2009, Madsen-Brooks 2005), and mental health issues are a common discussion topic on postgraduate online forums.

While only one PhD student explicitly spoke about experiencing depression, several others hinted at mental health challenges – passing mention of "running home in tears" in response to criticism, being "quite frazzled" or "pretty wrecked," feeling "bogged down" with work, calling the PhD process "damn lonely" or "overwhelming." With the stigma connected to depression (Rottenberg 2009)[99] and its relatively high prevalence – fifteen percent of adults will experience mental health issues during their lives (NHS 2007, 2010) – it is likely that participants chose not to mention such private matters to a stranger (and I did not ask directly). However, more than half of the PhD student participants spoke about strong feelings of inadequacy or low confidence, a third spoke about feeling lonely or isolated, and nearly all participants, PhD students and staff, spoke about job-related stress. Academic success is strongly correlated with perfectionism, which can contribute to a tendency for mental health issues like depression, eating disorders and insomnia (Reisz 2009, Parker 1997: 545-6). Increasing pressures and declining support structures can only make matters worse:

> Trends in the sector mean that there's bound to be less joy involved, given the kind of efficiencies they're trying to squeeze out of staff. [...] [Time for enjoyable work] just seems to be compressed all the time now. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

---

[98] In an extensive search of available journals and books, I found only two articles that offered percentages of postgraduates struggling with depression and related mental health issues. In a study at a highly-competitive US university during the late 1990s, 74% of postgraduates reported experiencing emotional problems that interfered with their daily functioning (Benedict *et al.* 2001, also see Hyun *et al.* 2006). In a more recent study at another prestigious American university, nearly half of surveyed postgraduate students reported having experienced emotional or stress-related problems during the past twelve months that had significantly affected "their emotional wellbeing and/or academic performance," and more than half reported having a colleague who experienced such problems. PhD students were more likely to report mental health issues than masters students, and the top three factors associated with poor mental health were high levels of competition, a long period of study, and being female. Exhaustion and overwhelm also affected more than 40% of postgraduates (Hyun *et al.* 2006).

[99] A 2009 poll conducted by the mental health charity Time To Change indicated that 92% of Britons said that admitting a mental disorder would damage their career.

Alongside mental health, several participants explained that the consequences of time pressures extend to family life. As discussed above, academic employment structures tend to require long hours and constant 'productivity,' making it challenging for lecturers – especially women – who wish to raise families. Half of the female staff participants reflected that the current situation makes a 'work/life balance' difficult:

> I think now in order to get a senior lectureship […] you actually have to really undermine your commitments in other areas and become almost obsessive. […] My generation of women were the first to fight to be able to have lectureships and have children. […] Some people still do that, but I do notice quite a number of women whom I suspect have said to themselves, 'it's not worth it, we won't have children because it's just too much work [and] will interfere with us getting on in our jobs.' And I don't think it should be in either-or like that. *(female, near retirement, ancient university)*

While job-related pressures on men have limited their ability to take on increased domestic responsibilities that women hoped for in the 1960s,[100] this participant argued that men do not generally face a choice between career and family. Coltrane (2004: 214) supports this observation, arguing that elite professions present a "career advancement double standard,[101] in which professional women who marry or have children are considered less serious about their careers, whereas professional men who marry or become fathers are considered more likely candidates for promotion." In academia, this is undoubtedly the case. For example, in a large-scale study of American academics, Mason and Goulden (2004: 90-93) find that married men with children are the most likely group to hold tenure-track positions, while the least likely are married women with children – though they are also the most likely to hold 'second tier' positions, including fixed-term and part-time roles. They also find that women are also much more likely than men to experience "a great deal of tension or stress in their

---

[100] Press and Townsley (1998: 213) find that "more privileged husbands with egalitarian gender attitudes" are the least likely to do a high level of housework, and they tend to over-estimate the amount of housework they actually do more than any other group, over-reporting by more than 220 percent. On average, men over-report by 149 percent, while women over-report by 68 percent.

[101] Another 'double standard' can be found in expectations of productivity: a 1997 study in *Nature* found that female postdoctoral researchers must be 2.5 times more productive than their male counterparts to be judged equally competent – the equivalent of publishing three extra papers in a top-rated journal, or twenty extra papers in middle-range journals (Wennerås and Wold 1997: 342).

parenting" resulting from their job obligations,[102] and that academic mothers spend an average of 14 hours per week longer than their colleagues who are fathers on caring and housekeeping responsibilities (*ibid.* 99-100). These elements mirror the account of the woman quoted above, who argued that many of feminism's gains for gender equality have been compromised or diluted by the increasing pressures across academia as a whole:

> Rather than blatant discrimination against women, it is the long work hours and the required travel, precisely at the time when most women with advanced degrees have children and begin families, that force women to leave the fast-track professions. (*ibid.* 90)

Similar observations have been made by a range of other scholars in the UK and US (*e.g.* Bryson 2004: 45-46, Corbyn 2010, Gillian 2005, Hill *et al.* 2001, Jacobs and Winslow 2004, Milem *et al.* 2000, Milkie and Peltola 1999, Perna 2001). In total, less than a quarter of participants (three PhD students and five staff – two men and six women) spoke about the difficulty of balancing domestic and academic responsibilities. This would appear to be a low proportion, given the high levels of work/family tensions reported in other studies. However, as with other personal matters, it is likely that some participants were unwilling to speak to a stranger about domestic challenges or difficult choices related to their academic careers. It is also likely that academics for whom the pressure was too great may have left academia (*e.g.* Rothblum 1988). That eight were willing to speak about these challenges indicates their prevalence and importance.

Interestingly, participants who praised academia's flexibility, as discussed in the previous chapter, did not speak about its potential to interfere with family life, indicating that the perceived severity of pressures depends largely on individual experience. However, this may also indicate a loyalty to the profession and a desire to 'keep up appearances' about its desirability (*e.g.* Goffman 1959: 207-210). Still, enough participants were willing to speak

---

[102] 47% of women and 27% of men experience stress in their parenting because of fieldwork or field research away from home, 48% of women and 29% of men because of writing and publishing, and 46% of women and 22% of men because of attending conferences (Mason and Goulden 2004: 100).

about their own struggles to show that the pressures of marketisation have had real and troubling consequences on the mental health and family lives of academics.

Quantification and Commodification

The constellation of pressures examined above has combined to induce profound changes in the ways that different types of intellectual work are valued and rewarded. Neoliberal and market values have imposed what one professor called "punishment by counting [that] undermines the possibility of a public role, of an engaged role." According to participants, metrics like the Research Assessment Exercise privilege certain forms of intellectual work that can be easily quantified, such as publications, citations, and research grants. Because these types of work 'count,' the value of less quantifiable pursuits is distorted, and activities like high-quality teaching, socially-significant research and public engagement are sidelined. While the increasing role of 'knowledge exchange' and the new Research Excellence Framework's measuring of 'impact' appear to make space for the latter two, there is a real danger that the culture of quantification and commodification can transform them negatively.

Research Funding & Quantifying 'Impact'

More than half of participants spoke about structural biases problematically favouring certain types of research over others. As discussed above, insecure employment and dependence on research grants means not only that academics are constantly seeking funding, but also that their research is increasingly 'pitched' to the priorities of funding councils and other grant-making bodies:

> We live in a market economy. When there's money being thrown in the trough, if you don't jump in, you're left penniless. *(lecturer C, modern university)*
>
> It's very difficult for people, however they start within the context of institutions, not to find the direction of their work dictated by […] economic pressures: […] 'What is it the research councils would like to fund? […] Well, let's try to fit in with it.' And

> that can readily undermine [...] the integrity of what you're seeking to do. *(lecturer E, modern university)*

Ylijoki (2003: 315) describes a similar trend among historians in Finland, where senior academics spend a large proportion of their time in search of funding, and junior academics on short-term contracts must often work on funded projects rather than pursuing their research interests. While academic instrumentalism is nothing new – Bourdieu (1988) describes it in *Homo Academicus* – structural pressures have intensified the need to prioritise financial values over intellectual or social values. The importance of RAE scores means that 'poorly-performing' departments can be financially penalised by university management, so they are likely to see much less funding (Law and Work 2007: 152). So where academic departments could once rely on the state covering most of their operating expenses, today academics must help to fundraise their own salaries.

In a reversal of the traditional welfare-state pattern of subsidising public 'goods' (Bertelsen 1998: 130), and parallel to the use of overseas postgraduates for cheap labour, the state has externalised much of the cost of knowledge-creation not only by forcing academics to 'sell' their work on the open market, but also building into the process the necessity to demonstrate that their work is 'value-added.' For example, the ESRC explicitly expects academics to "exploit results [of funded research] in order to secure social and economic return to the UK" (ESRC 2010: 45). It is a lucrative venture, with returns of up to £10 for every £1 of public funding invested, according to Universities Scotland (2006: 1). But there are hidden costs and inevitable consequences: "the principles of emancipationist humanism which until now have guided our activities are being superseded by a commercial preference for cost-efficiency, functional skills and performance" (Bertelsen 1998: 141).

With the new requirement to demonstrate 'impact' in the 2013 Research Excellence Framework (REF), this process is likely to become even more entrenched. Interviews were carried out in 2008, so there were only a few mentions of the REF, but consultation papers released in 2009 indicate that the REF will seek to reward "demonstrable benefits to the wider economy and society," arguing that "an excellent department or unit should meet the highest

standards in both of these elements" (HEFCE 2009b: 13-14). What is problematic here is the assumption that all 'excellent' research necessarily has social *and* economic 'impacts,' that such impacts are measurable, and that they must be centrally tallied and managed, rather than being left to the discretion of disciplines, departments and individual academics. The 'menu' of thirty-seven impact indicators focuses mainly on financial and policy matters, but does include "application of new ideas to improve social equity, inclusion or cohesion" and "measures of improved social equity, inclusion or cohesion" (*ibid.* 42). However, as discussed throughout this dissertation, the 'impacts' of sociological research are not necessarily easy to measure – and the necessity to identify and quantify them only adds to academic workloads.

While HEFCE (*ibid.* 15) insists that "expert panels [...] will not seek to quantify the impacts" of research, the requirement of compiling an 'impact statement' for each submission, to be graded based on a set of indicators, effectively does just this. Additionally, "submissions will be scrutinised by expert panels (including users) who will be well placed to make judgements about the credibility of the evidence provided." (*ibid.*) – but nothing has yet been written about how these panels will be selected, and to whom they are accountable. A number of concerns have been raised in the press about the role that 'impact factors' will play in shaping research agendas (*e.g.* Collini 2009a, Derbyshire 2009, Mitchell 2009, Morgan 2010, Moriarty 2009, Shepherd 2009a). The main concerns deal with potential (further) marginalisation of humanities and social science research, but there is also the danger that 'basic' scientific research and other areas with long-term benefit will also suffer. O'Gorman (2009) warns that transformative "blue skies thinking" is under threat: "Research contributes to the quality of life. But measuring it is a fool's errand." It is clear that a balance must be found between complete autonomy and complete control, but limited resources and ascendant neoliberal values are tilting the balance worryingly towards the latter.

Even prior to much news about the REF, many participants saw research funding increasingly directed by commercial and political priorities, rather than what sociologists themselves considered valuable and worthy of study (also see Law and Work 2007: 150, Brown and Scott 2009: 9). While there will inevitably be much overlap, linking funding to

political and commercial agendas becomes problematic when scholars seek to critique or challenge those agendas – an issue of particular relevance for sociologists. While higher education has always had connections with politics and business (Kerevan 2004, Steck 2003: 72), "a new intimacy" (Giroux 2007: 111) has developed between corporate interests, political interests, and the structures of higher education. Entwined with concerns about fragmenting the intellectual labour process in order to favour large-scale projects, participants were troubled by a shift to consider the monetary or political value of research over its social value:

> The pressure is to get money in, to do big grants. And if you're spending all your time getting money in big grants, where does the research – which is about giving voice to those who don't have a voice – where does that fit? *(lecturer C, modern university)*

> Research is being pushed more and more towards monetary rather than intellectual issues. And that is the biggest threat to the field over the next ten to fifteen years. *(professor A, ancient university)*

University publications support these kinds of observations – it is clear that institutions prioritise the financial aspects of research above other considerations. In the University of Strathclyde's 2007-2011 Strategic Plan, for example, the "objective" for "excellence in research" hints at intellectually and socially relevant work, but subordinates these goals to building the institution's reputation (UoS Planning Team 2007: 8).[103] The five "targets" for research are entirely financial, and make no mention of social or intellectual value at all (*ibid.*).[104] The websites of other Scottish universities use similarly commercial language, but this is unsurprising given that in many cases, academics are expected by government to consider the needs of business in their research choices (Deem *et al.* 2007: 70). However, a strong focus on market values and particular political agendas leads to the system becoming increasingly 'rigged' for certain types of research:

---

[103] The actual "objective" reads: "To build our reputation as a research-led institution generating, through excellence in research and scholarship, new ideas, knowledge and skills to create opportunities for individuals and society" (UoS Planning Team 2007: 8).

[104] The "targets" are to increase RAE scores; research income; postgraduate student numbers; strategic partnerships with "rolling financial commitments;" and successful funding bids over £1.5 million (UoS Planning Team 2007: 8).

> The money can only be got if you bow down to what the funding bodies want to hear, which is to say, it's policy-relevant, it's quantitative, and it's quite technocratic research. Careers, increasingly, will be about how much money you get, rather than the quality of the work you produce. […] So a whole swathe of sociological investigation will suffer [including] sociology as a critical and questioning exercise. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> It's hard to extrapolate from my fairly limited experience [but] you hear that the ESRC funds, to a huge extent, the expansion of fairly limited kinds of quantitative sociology, while the kind of [qualitative] studies that I'm interested in […] there's really fierce competition to get funding to support them. *(lecturer B, modern university)*

While the situation might not be as dire as these participants believe, their opinions are verified, at least partly, by published ESRC materials. While guidelines for grants and other funding tend to be unspecific in terms of methods, the ESRC does offer an "enhanced stipend" for postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers engaged in quantitative research, as part of its Quantitative Methods Initiative (ESRC 2009b). More broadly, the ESRC Strategic Plan for 2009-2014 – *Delivering Impact Through Social Science* – is written in strongly business-oriented language, and explicitly sets out seven "areas of strategic challenge" in which it aims to "stimulate and steer the creation of knowledge" (ESRC 2009a: 3).[105] These areas of focus are as business-oriented as the Plan's language; for example, well-being and justice are portrayed as important because they contribute to economic stability and growth, not as valuable aims in themselves (*ibid.* 23).

The Scottish Funding Council has a somewhat less business-oriented vision, with familiar themes from the Scottish Government's agenda: sustainability, civic participation, personal development and cultural prosperity (SFC 2009). However, embedded in the strategies of both the ESRC and the Scottish Funding Council is the assumption that academics must constantly prove to managers that they are meeting appropriate goals and targets, rather than autonomously deciding whether their work meets their own (or their discipline's) standards of intellectual and ethical value (Law and Work 2007: 141, Morgan 2010, O'Gorman 2009).

---

[105] The seven areas are: Global Economic Performance, Policy and Management; Health and Wellbeing; Understanding Individual Behaviour; New Technology, Innovation and Skills; Environment, Energy and Resilience; Security, Conflict and Justice; Social Diversity and Population Dynamics (ESRC 2009: 3).

As with other issues above, a balance is needed, but the current system considers strict control more valuable than autonomy. But the difficulty of justifying or ‘selling’ research based values that conflict with the values of funding agencies and university managers means that certain types of research can become marginalised (Mitchell 2009). On the other hand, vaguely-worded or contradictory funding criteria[106] leave scope for ‘bending’ research priorities to particular agendas (Giroux 2007). Given the possibilities for abuse here, along with precarious and pressured working conditions for academics, it is unsurprising that many participants were sceptical of the values expressed by university managers and funding councils, which diverge considerably from ‘traditional’ academic and sociological values:

> Under New Labour there’s been lots of money, but there’s been so many strings attached to that money. […] And if a spectre haunts the field, it’s the spectre of constantly having to apply for research grants from the ESRC and other bodies. There’s a kind of tacit censorship that goes on through increasing pressure to apply for research funding. *(professor C, ancient university)*

> That philosophy of turning this institution into a business, that has to run on a business model and we have to have a business case for everything we want to do, I’m inherently uncomfortable with that kind of language, because it comes with a whole load of meanings and assumptions associated with it that I reject. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

However, participants were quick to point out that ‘unpopular’ research is not explicitly forbidden. Some areas of research are simply much harder to finance than others, but academics may choose which type of work they pursue. Still, as discussed above, the role of the academic is taking on the character of employees or civil servants – the latter groups do not have much say in the content of their work and must follow management directives

[106] According to the ESRC Research Funding Guide, decisions are taken through a peer-review system, and are based on “quality, timeliness, potential impact [and] value for money” (ESRC 2010: 4). However, grounds on which the ESRC judges these criteria are not specified. To be successful, an application must be considered “internationally competitive and of such merit, timeliness and novelty that it is likely to make a significant contribution to knowledge and the development of the research area” (*ibid.* 14). Projects are rejected that are “unlikely to have significant impact” or are “not deemed worthy of pursuit” (*ibid.*). However, the Guide also states that “Excellent research without obvious or immediate societal or economic impact will not be disadvantaged in the assessment process” (*ibid.* 45). Throughout the Guide, there are no definitions for ‘slippery’ words like excellence, worthy, significant, timely, and merit.

(Thorne and Cuthbert 1997: 184-5). Inevitably, then, certain types of research that contradict these priorities must be subsidised by individual dedication and sacrifice:

> If you want to do research on [an unpopular topic that you consider morally valuable] there's not going to be money available. [...] Which means you're doing it at weekends, doing it during the evenings, and you're spending a lot of time not applying for big research grants. And then your report comes out, and there may be flak from particular interested parties which might embarrass the university a bit, so there's all these internal pressures. [...] In today's culture, it's very difficult to develop that kind of work. Although it is possible. *(lecturer C, modern university)*

In many ways, the current system resembles the 'soft' conditioning of Huxley's *Brave New World* more than the 'hard' centralised control of Orwell's *1984*. However, we can actually detect a subtle blend of the two: an illusion of choice appeals to neoliberal values of individual freedom within efficient markets (Hull 2006: 141-2), but the power of institutions like the ESRC and the Scottish Funding Council indicate that the 'rules' are largely determined centrally, by government agencies in 'partnership' with business interests. It is a delicate balance – and as Deem *et al.* (2007: 18) argue, any hybrid structure is inherently fragmented and unstable. Among both participants and other scholars, there has been considerable concern about the sustainability and effectiveness of seeking to run public services like universities using the logic of privatisation and the market (*e.g.* Bertelsen 1998, Hartley 1995, Mooney and Law 2007, Steck 2003, Sutherland 2004, Ylijoki 2003).

Publish or Perish

A quarter of PhD students and more than half of staff participants spoke about intense pressure to publish articles in peer-reviewed journals, in order to improve RAE scores and attract funding.[107] Among staff, there was a marked difference here between institutional types – all eight staff at 1960s and 1990s universities spoke about high pressure to publish, and they spoke at much greater length than their peers at ancient universities, where only

---

[107] While the RAE accepts any form of "publicly available assessable output" (RAE 2005: 30), all participants who mentioned the RAE believed that peer-reviewed articles in 'top' journals are the most highly-valued form of 'output.' Whether this belief reflects the realities of the RAE process or other pressures experienced by participants is not relevant in the context of this project.

two out of nine mentioned the issue. The latter group was outspoken on several other issues of bureaucracy and power, so it is unlikely that they simply took publication pressures for granted. As discussed above, the institutional prestige associated with ancient universities, along with the wealth to hire research-only staff, makes it more likely that publication pressures were less of a concern for staff at ancient than modern universities.

Of course, the 'publish or perish' dictum has existed at least since the 1940s (McDonagh 1943: 717). However, in previous generations the focus was on scholarly books rather than journal articles, and publications were considered necessary to 'get ahead;' today, they are necessary just to keep pace with job requirements. As with other trends above, the need to publish is not a new development, but recent decades have brought an increased focus on speed, quantity and quality as defined by metrics. For Bourdieu (1988: 93-5), the 'rules' of the promotion 'game' prior to the 1990s were largely about loyalty to prestigious superiors, who could impart some of their 'academic capital' on PhD candidates and junior staff, while simultaneously building such capital by mentoring. Today, academic promotion is much more routinised and bureaucratised – loyalty and personal relationships are important still, but there is enormous pressure to amass countable 'performance indicators' and 'prestige indicators.' Participants experienced this pressure in part through strong expectations to 'produce' for certain publications:

> You have to publish in journals which are mostly dull, irrelevant, hostile to critical thought, and these are thought to be the highest pinnacle of academic achievement. *(professor E, modern university)*
>
> If you come as a younger researcher into an environment where you have no weight at all, your head of department can come and say, 'what the hell are you doing, publishing in that journal? Because that's not a peer-reviewed journal, that's a rag.' *(lecturer C, modern university)*

Both of these participants – along with others who were critical of the publishing paradigm – talked about publishing their own work in these journals, so their critiques are not necessarily a case of 'sour grapes' from rejected researchers. And they are not the only ones with concerns that ranking journals in a hierarchy makes the most prestigious journals

highly competitive, while masking the range of quality found across the spectrum. According to a sociology panel critiquing the new REF structure, "world-leading" work can be "found in unrefereed outlets," while "articles in well-respected international journals do not always meet the highest standards" (Gill 2009). Research quantification and commodification is a problem across all disciplines, but is especially acute in the humanities and social sciences, which struggle to be taken seriously (Newman 2008, Moses 1990). Paradoxically, the effort to increase publication may be contributing to an overall *decrease* in quality, with a corresponding increase in the anxiety associated with an already difficult and time-consuming process:

> [The RAE] has produced a huge expansion […] in mediocre work, […] and work with exciting titles. And then you read it and think, 'well, what has that actually said that was new?' [They're not] big ideas that might last. But UK academics have got themselves caught in this, and it's put a lot of psychological pressure, particularly on younger staff, who can't hope to get academic promotion unless they've published *x*, *y* and *z*. […] It's being a bit purist, but one should want to *do* work, have something to say before you try and publish. [But] with many people, […] they've got to tick these boxes. *(near retirement, modern university)*

Effectively, academics are "caught in a set of institutional and professional expectations" (Jacobs and Winslow 2004: 109) to publish in peer-reviewed journals, but many participants were concerned about the recent shift to further quantify those publications. And they are not alone: in a 2006 survey by the Universities and Colleges Union, eighty percent of responding academics were against using metrics to help determine research funding (UCU 2006: 2). Moving from the peer-review-based RAE to a much more metrics-based Research Excellence Framework (REF), citation counts and other 'bibliometrics' will play a central role – and this role is expected to grow over time (Technopolis 2009: 40). The expansion of higher education and academic research over the past forty years means that ever more knowledge is being produced, and policymakers demand a straightforward way of understanding and assessing it. However, while quotas and balance sheets are effective ways of tracking the production of tangible objects, they are less useful when applied to intellectual production, where both the process and products are messier, less predictable, and less easily

categorised. Collini (2009b) points out that Socrates, with "no measurable output at all," would be hard-pressed to get research funding in the current climate.

The intensification of pressure to publish is another case of universities emulating the logic of the market: intellectual work is reduced to a series of objects that can be bought and sold – or hoarded, measured, and priced. This creates a paradox: the RAE, REF and other metrics are intended to simplify the way we understand and assess large quantities of academic knowledge, but in a competitive environment, ever-larger quantities must be produced to 'stay competitive:'

> The system has become very loaded. Now, those who perform well in terms of research have much more in the way of career opportunities. I've sat on both sides of interview panels, and increasingly we're into a quantification culture, where people are looking at the number of research grants people have got, the number of publications they've got. *(professor D, modern university)*

While there is ample research on factors contributing to research productivity (for example, rank: Bland *et al.* 2006, Tien and Blackburn 1997; and gender: Hamovitch and Morganstern 1977, Leahey 2006), I have been unable to locate statistics on academic publication rates over time. However, a number of anecdotal accounts are consistent with the sense that the quantity of journals and publications has increased in recent decades (*e.g.* Deem *et al.* 2007: 74-6, Maskell and Robinson 2001: 108-113), adding to the strain of other time pressures. Not only are writing and seeking to publish journal articles time-consuming for academics, but they must also prepare periodic reports for assessment. In a pilot for the new REF, the labour of compiling a university-wide submission ranged from between ten 'person-days' of work to over two hundred, with an average of sixty-five (Technopolis 2009: 9). The report sets out a series of expectations for institutions, indicating that data on publications will need to be stored and managed centrally, and that the "onus on maintaining accurate research information […] is already on researchers – but the pilot has highlighted the need to integrate this task as part of our academic colleagues' standard routine" (*ibid.* 40). In other words, the quantification of research adds still another series of tasks to academics' expected duties.

There are significant intellectual problems with the quantification of research: the use of metrics is likely to further concentrate research in established areas and stifle dissent, rather than encouraging innovation and critical inquiry (Corbyn 2008). The high volume of research being produced makes it impossible to remain 'on top' of a discipline in any broad sense, further fragmenting the labour force. Time is diverted from teaching and public engagement, which will be discussed below. But the main concern expressed by participants was that peer-reviewed journals are read almost exclusively by academics – and not many, at that. Many participants wanted their work to influence social change beyond what a late-stage PhD student called "the weird corridors of academia," and PhD students found it particularly difficult to reconcile a critical or public intellectual orientation with the need to publish in certain kinds of journals:

> Staff, they're just absolutely busy with teaching and administrative stuff, and their own research and their own pressure for publications, which personally I don't really care that much about. I care about the issues, I don't care about having ten or twenty or thirty publications. But I guess when you are a staff member you have this pressure. […] Sometimes I think by doing a PhD in this academic setting, are we contributing to this craziness of creating machines of people with publications? This is so far from what I want to become. *(late-stage PhD student I, modern university)*

It was clear that PhD students were only beginning to encounter the contradictions of working in academia, and some responded quite emotionally (*e.g.* Austin 2002, Lamm 2004). Lecturers, on the other hand, tended to have a more nuanced view, based on more experience with academic contradictions and pressures:

> When I first came here, I struggled […] with this notion that things you publish were not worth anything unless they were in an academic peer-reviewed journal. I just didn't understand that. […] Why wouldn't I publish in [a trade journal] which I know is read by something like 60% of [people working in the] field? […] And that was regarded as a fairly bizarre and naïve argument. And it was naïve. We have a system that we play to the tune of. *(lecturer A, modern university)*

This view is reflected in a study by Park (1996: 48), who found that publishing for a popular or even a targeted audience is "typically deemed utterly insignificant" when it comes to

academic promotion. In the same way that participants critiqued the necessity to pursue research topics at the whims of the funding councils, they critiqued the necessity to publish in the 'correct' journals. But while work beyond these mandates was seen as difficult, staff participants did not see it as impossible – it was generally portrayed as a challenge to be undertaken once official obligations were met. Given the strong social conscience motivations many participants expressed, such a view would help give a sense of personal validation, despite an inability to pursue the kinds of social change goals that might have initially drawn them to the discipline. There was a strong sense that even with its inconvenient rules and frustrating procedures, staff participants saw the academic system as making possible the pursuit of research that they considered worthwhile – even if the time and institutional space for the worthwhile parts of the job were being constricted:

> It's really down to what you can minimally do to satisfy your university. […] Obviously part of it's a job, and you have to satisfy that. But the [more committed] aspect is something that you hope you would do, whether you were an academic or not. But being an academic allows you a certain amount of privilege to have time to study and develop [particular interests]. I suppose it is a compromise with existing reality, trying to find a way to be able to have some influence over what direction you go. *(lecturer C, modern university)*

The fetish for counting and commodifying publications is just another element of the speeding-up of academic production. From a craftsman-like model, where academics produced publications because they believed they had something worthwhile to say and were judged by the quality of their work, academics are now encouraged to produce for the sake of meeting quotas. They still strive for quality and depth within these parameters, but substantive work is harder to produce, given time pressures, limitations on acceptable research topics, and tighter restrictions on the kinds of publications that 'count.' Additionally, the need to amass publications in academic journals limits time for engagement both in socially relevant writing and in undergraduate teaching – both of which can limit the expression of academics' social conscience.

Teaching's Diminishing Role

In the growing demand for academic 'output,' easily-countable research articles are the preferred product, with less prestigious teaching sidelined (Enders and Teichler 1997: 348, Gottlieb and Keith 1997: 398, Jacobs 2004: 8). The shift to commercial priorities means that undergraduate students become raw materials to be 'processed,' alongside obtaining research grants and producing academic articles. On some levels, this represents a financial necessity for university managers. With government targets for participation and application numbers growing each year, the fees generated for local undergraduates (currently paid by the Scottish government) are likely to remain at roughly the same level, year-on-year – and there is always the possibility of cuts (BBC 2009c, 2010c, Eason 2010). On the other hand, income from overseas students, postgraduates, and especially research grants can be seen as essentially unlimited, and less restricted by government directives. In a climate of major funding shortfalls, it is unsurprising that university managers would encourage activities with the highest possible profit margins.[108]

However, as with the patterns described above, a focus on profit comes at a price. Park (1996: 68) cites an American study where a majority of academics surveyed believe that "the pressure to publish reduces the quality of teaching," and the situation in Scotland is similar.[109] Three-quarters of staff participants[110] were troubled by the much lower status accorded to teaching and the need to 'do more with less,' and they experienced strong pressure to spend as little time as possible on their teaching duties:

> I really hate that teaching is downgraded. You get all the discussions all the time in meetings about, 'how can we streamline our teaching, so that we're more efficient and we do it quicker and we have more time for research?' […] You're made to feel that [teaching] is a secondary activity, that you should actually be bringing in money and doing your research. *(senior lecturer A, modern university)*

---

[108] One lecturer at a modern university argued that teaching could "potentially give you huge profit margins" by delivering lectures to larger groups of students, but this view was the exception.
[109] In England, where tuition fees are capped, academics experience similar pressures (*e.g.* Morgan 2010).
[110] With less experience, only three PhD mentioned the prioritising of research over teaching.

There was a strong sense that focusing on research at the expense of teaching undermines teaching quality overall, both by overburdening existing lecturers and by selecting for researchers rather than teachers to fill new posts:

> There's this bizarre contradiction in the way universities are run. You get hired to do a lecturing job, not on the basis of your ability to lecture, but on the basis of what you can do research-wise. […] And the teaching is kind of a secondary thing. […] I've seen it, in terms of people I came through with, my PhD cohort, who were passionate about teaching and less passionate about research. […] And they have been systematically weeded out of the system. […] I think [the RAE]'s had a huge unanticipated shake-out in possibly getting rid of some of the best teachers. Because not every brilliant researcher is going to be a brilliant teacher. And I think possibly the student experience might be negatively affected by that. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

Where universities were once primarily sites of education, with research conducted as a side activity (Deem *et al.* 2007: 91), the emphasis has now flipped – even as the number of students in higher education has increased dramatically, and they are required to pay for the privilege. According to Park (1996: 48), research takes priority over teaching when it comes to academic careers: "research is necessary for successful promotion: if a candidate's research is deemed inadequate, no amount of teaching or service will compensate for this." Conversely, "it is not unheard of […] for teaching to be regarded as a form of punishment for those showing low productivity in research" (Deem *et al.* 2007: 72, also see Clark 2002). As discussed above, the division of labour is often gendered, with women disproportionately represented in roles of introductory-level teaching, tutoring and providing pastoral care, while men predominate in upper-level teaching and research (Deem *et al.* 2007: 91). But publications are "the currency of the realm," and research – not teaching – is what enhances prestige for individuals, departments and universities (Park 1996: 69-71):

> I do like teaching, but unfortunately in career terms it's unrewarding. […] If you got the same kind of progression through teaching as you get through research, I would have liked to have done it. But unfortunately you don't. So it is really an either-or. I mean, obviously your research can inform your teaching, but [for early undergraduate stages] there's not much crossover. *(lecturer G, modern university)*

Contrary to this view, and as discussed in Chapters Four and Five, most participants believed that research and teaching are interdependent activities. Most also felt that teaching was an important expression of social conscience, helping to develop students' critical citizenship and ability to challenge injustice (*e.g.* Bok 1999, Cancian 1995, Hattery 2003, Hillygus 2005, Lottes and Kuriloff 1994, Paterson and Bond 2005). As Galbraith (1996: 69) puts it, education "has a larger political and social role, a yet deeper justification in itself" than merely serving economic interests. But this important element of the learning process for sociology is becoming marginalised by pressures of more students and less time with them. While some universities seek to 'guarantee' students certain levels of contact with staff (Attwood 2008), this type of rhetoric appears to be a backlash against deep cuts to undergraduate contact time, which many participants were concerned about:

> We have so little face-to-face contact with students now, and we're being pressurised to reduce the amount of [undergraduate] contact hours. [...] There's all these ridiculous phrases like 'teach smart' or 'streamline your teaching,' [and] the number of lectures [...] has been enormously reduced. [...] The management of universities are making decisions in terms of finance streams [...] So we're supposed to be increasing masters teaching, because it brings in international students and fee-paying students. [...] And what we provide for undergraduate students is seen as being less important, so long as we have a certain number coming through the door. *(lecturer B, ancient university)*

> This begins before 10 years ago, but it's becoming harder and harder to maintain a close relationship with students. [...] The sense of having a close steady relationship with students over four years, is harder to achieve. You have much more sporadic encounters with a few students that you get to know. *(senior lecturer C, ancient university)*

In this sense, the drive to improve the efficiency of staff hours undermines the potential for positive teacher/student relationships, which as discussed in Chapter Five has been a motivating factor for generations of students and lecturers alike. A recent report from the Higher Education Funding Council for England indicates that students' top complaints are about slow feedback, reduced contact hours, and inaccessible staff (Attwood 2009a) – all symptoms of overloaded staff who are pressured to prioritise research. Personal contact time is meant to be replaced by online resources – posting lecture notes and slides on course

websites, conducting discussion forums, communicating via e-mail, etc. However, the use of information technology has increased and fragmented the workload of academics, rather than 'streamlining' it (Attwood 2009b, Clegg *et al.* 2003, Jacobs 2004: 9, Law and Work 2007: 149-50, Morgan 2010). PhD students did not mention the use of online teaching tools, whether because they had limited experience with such tools, or because they took them for granted. However, more than a third of staff participants – at all career stages – felt that 'tech tools' are not personally rewarding for students or lecturers, and they do not necessarily help improve student performance:

> [Using online tools], we do far, far more than was ever the case in the past. […] And yet, it's not something that seems to have been used by many students. […] I'm always amazed, given how easy it is now, the things you correct, and you really think, 'they haven't even read the notes.' […] Some of that is because students are under far more time pressure now because most of them have to work. […] But it's also, I just think there's maybe something psychological there. Something you go and do yourself, you do it to a greater extent than maybe something that [is handed to you]. *(near retirement, modern university)*

> When I was a student, we barely had lectures with overheads, and then it was overheads and now it's PowerPoint. And PowerPoint's just a monster of its own. […] Not only do students expect you to use it, but they want it on the web […] at least a day before […] and it's just a substitute for taking notes. So I think lots of students can't take notes properly. […] Like magic, you press the PowerPoint button and everyone writes down what appears. And then you talk for ten minutes and they don't write down a word. *(senior lecturer, modern university)*

The shift to digitise much of the student experience is extremely recent, and has coincided with a shift to treat students as consumers of a product rather than active participants in a process (Maskell and Robinson 2001: 88-90). It is another example of the shift away from an artisanal model – or even a factory-line model – where students are expected to become independently competent with the tools and raw materials of a discipline. The difference is not in class sizes – participants near retirement described classes of the 1960s and 1970s similar to today's first-year courses of 400 or more. The difference is in the fundamental relationship between teacher and student. Fewer lecture hours, fewer tutorials, and greater dependence on disembodied online materials threatens "the intimate pedagogical

relationship between students and academics [which] sets UK universities apart from the rest of the world" (Attwood 2009a).

Even setting aside important concerns about student motivation and performance, staff job satisfaction, and the recruitment of new academics, this trend is troubling because it is antithetical to the development of 'sociological imaginations' and social conscience. As Galbraith (1996: 72) writes, "education makes democracy possible [...] even inevitable." But critical questioning is an active and creative process that is not well-suited to a consumerist 'banking' model of education (Freire 1970). Honest discussions of ethical issues require time, sensitivity and trust, and PowerPoint slides can be a blunt instrument if used insensitively. Semi-public, semi-anonymous online spaces are not conducive to debates of depth and substance, and maintaining even superficial conversations using web-based tools involves intellectual labour of a much different kind than 'talking through' ideas in person.[111] However, online spaces are excellent settings for managerial monitoring of staff and students alike (Deem *et al.* 2007: 22-4, Law and Work 2007: 146-50). Such monitoring becomes necessary when staff are 'employees' providing a 'service' to undergraduates, and so there is a 'paper trail' to track student progress when numbers become overwhelming.

Students as Consumers & Future Workers – Not Learners & Citizens

The student-as-consumer model has not only been imposed by university managers – in large part, it comes from government mandates. Since the Dearing Report (1997) in particular, there has been increasing pressure to treat students as customers to be satisfied, even while per-student funding is slashed (Deem *et al.* 2007: 13, Maskell and Robinson 2001: 88). And as Thorne and Cuthbert (1996: 176) argue, "the genie of consumerism, once out of the bottle, can be hard to contain." Recently Lord Mandelson (former Secretary for Business,

[111] In my experience as a postgraduate tutor, online spaces were superficial at best, and often counterproductive to student learning. I felt that the hours spent monitoring and responding to student messages – and the time that students spent writing those messages – would have been more useful in 'real,' face-to-face discussion.

Innovation and Skills) argued that students should be "more demanding,"[112] and are "entitled to receive more" in course quality and overall experience – but in the same speech, he said:

> [Universities will be] subject to increasingly tight fiscal constraint for the foreseeable future. […] I don't accept that that this must impact on quality – in fact it must not. Expanding investment means universities will have to deepen and diversify their sources of non-public income through commercialisation of their teaching or research expertise, through a more professional approach to endowments and through greater resource efficiency. (Shepherd 2009c)

Of course, 'commercialisation' generally means research and consultancy work, presenting university management with a Catch-22. On the one hand, universities must provide a 'better service' to students; on the other, academics who might provide that service must also 'commercialise' their work. At the same time, the students who are meant to be 'more demanding' have less time to devote to their courses due to the abolition of grants:

> Many students coming through here are working, they're doing another job, they've got other pressures and commitments that don't allow them to fully focus on [their studies]. So they're getting a degraded experience on a couple of levels. They've got staff who are more pressured than ever before, that can give them less time, and then they themselves have got less time to devote to expanding their own learning because they've got to go and do part time jobs for crazy hours for peanuts money. […] They work very hard, but they don't have the time to fully engage with their academic activities. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

> [Instrumentalism] has become worse as students are working more, alongside learning. […] They structure [their studies] according to the minimum they can do to get through, rather than thinking, 'I'll attend the whole course to get an overall view.' Obviously some do. But a lot are having quite strategic ways of learning and going about it. *(senior lecturer A, modern university)*

In 2008, three-quarters of undergraduates were in paid employment, with a third working during term-time and more than half working during the summer, predominantly in unskilled service and retail jobs (NUS 2008: 32-3). On average, students worked 14 hours per week during term-time, but nearly 10 percent worked more than 25 hours per week (*ibid.*).

---

[112] Interestingly, the website of the National Union of Students reflects this attitude – but a prominently-placed advertisement promotes consumerism by pairing the catch-phrase "Demand Extra" with a collection of corporate logos where students can get discounts if they purchase an 'NUS Extra' card.

Students in post-1992 universities were much more likely than others to work during term-time, and also much more likely to work to meet their basic living and studying expenses, rather than to pay for socialising and 'extras' (*ibid.* 33-4). While only half of students surveyed believed that their term-time work impacted negatively on their studies, many participants in my project believed that employment contributes to a degraded student experience, alongside student debt. When it comes to debt, Scots students fare well compared to the rest of the UK,[113] but many participants felt that the prospect of graduating with large debts adds to an instrumentalist approach to studying.

For several PhD students and two-thirds of staff, student instrumentalism was a major concern: increasingly, students are encouraged to study as means to an end, motivating themselves with the desire to get a good job once they graduate. For example, in the 2009 UK government framework for higher education, universities will be required to label courses with information about graduates' future earnings (Curtis 2009). However, participants did not blame students for this shift. On the one hand, a degree is now a necessity for middle-class employment, and is often 'the done thing' among a range of social groups; on the other hand, participants were aware that their undergraduate experience was the exception rather than the rule – most undergraduates do not go on to become lecturers:

> When I go back and think of my cohort in sociology, I was an oddity. I went to every lecture, loved the stuff, lapped it up. […] You only see a small minority of students coming through now that do that kind of thing. So, you begin to have to pinch yourself and remind yourself that you are an outlier here. *(lecturer C, modern university)*

> I was really keen on [sociology]. That's why I'm a lecturer, right? […] I think probably back then, loads of other students were just getting through it. […] So maybe it was always that way. […] I think we often overestimate the amount of time students spend actually thinking about their degree, massively. *(lecturer D, ancient university)*

---

[113] On average, students starting elsewhere in the UK in 2009 will owe £23,000 when they graduate, while Scottish and EU students in Scotland will owe around £9,000 – a difference almost entirely attributable to a lack of tuition fees in Scotland (BBC 2009b)

> The drive towards getting more people into higher education may have been slightly misguided. […] But because they've downgraded the degrees so much, the degree's worth so little now, people have to do it. *(late-stage PhD student C, modern university)*

While future employability has always been a factor in students' motivations, participants were troubled by the ways that universities are transforming their courses to become more vocational, overlooking the innate intellectual and cultural value of higher education. This pattern shows a constricting of the psychological space within universities, favouring the kind of rational exchange mentality that fits with neoliberalism (Harvey 2007). But as discussed in Chapter Five, the motivations of academics are often not rational – emotional motivations are just as important, whether curiosity, outrage, pleasure, a sense of moral obligation, or all of these (Bellas 1999, Neumann 2006).

More broadly, this constriction mirrors wider neoliberal trends of tying effort to its perceived financial value, while ignoring non-financial values – and non-financial consequences (Harvey 2007). This is problematic in higher education, because while universities undoubtedly have financial benefits to the societies they serve (HEFCE 2009a, Lambert and Smith 2009, Ryan 2005), their deeper and arguably more lasting benefits are non-financial, and cannot be easily measured (Bertelsen 1998, Brennan 2008, Freire 1970, Harvie 2006, hooks 1994, Morgan 2010, Nixon 2001). As with the patterns discussed above, the shift towards commodification has been a centralised process. Teaching quality is managed and monitored by quality assurance agencies (Deem *et al.* 2007: 72-3), and a focus on 'transferable skills' dilutes other values that may be embedded in the curriculum:

> Although it is really important to extend and expand admissions to universities, if you do it by turning them into just mechanisms for operating in a competitive market, then the educational purposes and the cultural values are in danger of being sidelined or eroded. *(professor G, ancient university)*

> Something odd has happened when you start making higher education about providing future employment for students, rather than about education. Historically, it justified itself on its own terms. It was worth doing these things […] because we believe they are intrinsically good for their own sake, what they do for us as people, rather than what use we could make out of them at a later date. […] The push to

> have education simply in terms of vocational skills or transferable skills is part of a compromise that neuters what education should be, that makes it less radical than it might be. *(lecturer C, ancient university)*

> With the opening-up of [higher] education, the arguments that folk bring up are about the economic benefits to society, rather than the fact that we live in a democracy and therefore we should be teaching people the skills to reason for themselves, to think, to look at the different perceptions of society and how things do not have to be as they are. How do you educate people to be citizens? *(lecturer C, modern university)*

On the side of structure, we have an increasing focus on student employability, and on the side of agency, increasingly debt-burdened students who make instrumental choices about their learning. This follows the pattern of time limits for PhD students and other time pressures for academic staff – with staff and postgraduates needing to become more 'strategic' with their time, is it any wonder that undergraduates are following suit? However, instrumentalism is not only problematic on the level of difficult choices for individuals – as Giroux (2007: 103-4) explains, a focus on market values "sacrifices any notion of higher education as a crucial public sphere in which critical citizens and democratic agents are formed."

Broadly speaking, neoliberal values are in direct conflict with a belief that higher education should benefit society in ways that are difficult to record on a balance sheet (Giroux 2007, Jurik 2004). Ignoring these benefits changes the nature of what higher education means, which was a prospect that deeply troubled many participants. When higher education becomes a means to a financial end, the compromises extend beyond the walls of universities, into the wider social contexts with which sociologists have historically engaged.

Marketising Public Intellectualism

As discussed in the previous chapters, public intellectualism and civic engagement form an important element of sociological practice, offering an outlet for the expression of social conscience. However, pressures within academia have challenged the ways that lecturers can engage with outside activities. According to retirement-stage participants, there was once a

time when academics were expected to use their flexible schedules to maintain a certain level of unpaid engagement with civic groups, local government, trade unions, newspapers, and other organisations, or to teach night courses. This engagement was seen as an important part of an academic's role, and an opportunity to connect the university with the wider community by offering a sociological perspective to groups who might benefit from it:

> In the earlier days, […] if some organisation or other, unless they were very well-off, asked you to do something, you would just say 'fine.' You wouldn't think about charging them. […] [Nowadays], the pressure is to get [paid] contracts. Whereas, I think the kind of contract with the wider society that I used to see universities having, staff got quite a bit of freedom, quite a bit of space. But the pressure on them in return was to do some social service. And, in the past, I think that was more appreciated and understood. *(near retirement, modern university)*

As with other academic activities, and especially parallel to the push for measurable 'impact' in research, there has been pressure towards profitability and accountability in civic engagement. The phrases 'knowledge exchange' or 'knowledge transfer' indicate the commodification of academics' time, along with knowledge itself (Deem *et al.* 2007: 68, Law and Work 2007).[114] Rather than an implicit 'duty,' outside engagement has become an explicit part of the academic job in some universities, subject to monitoring and routinisation:

> Outreach work with the community is regarded as one of their mission statement goals or something. […] So any talk that me or my colleagues give to a community centre or any sort of pro-bono work that we do is literally a loss in terms of time and stuff that we could do which would actually generate income for the university, but it's considered sufficiently valuable that it's encouraged. *(lecturer G, modern university)*

> We have teams of people who work on [knowledge exchange]. So we produce regular briefings that are supposed to be for wider audiences and are written in an accessible way. […] There's a knowledge exchange programme written into every single grant that we ever apply for. *(professor B, ancient university)*

[114] I recently received an invitation to a workshop for postgraduates and early-career researchers for "valuable skills training in delivering engagement activities."

The kind of mandatory, documented engagement described here, which must be justified to university managers, has a very different feel from the autonomous and voluntary engagement described above. Arguably, creating connections beyond the ivory tower is an important goal regardless of the route – but it is clear that social conscience and community engagement are not the top priorities[115] of finance-conscious university managers. As noted above, only about half of universities' income is in the form of core public funding. In these conditions, it makes sense that managers would push commercialisation wherever possible.[116] In the Strategic Plan mentioned above (UoS Planning Team 2007: 16-19), there is a section for knowledge exchange, but trade unions, charities, activist groups, and other civil society groups are not mentioned at all. Instead, the focus is on increasing commercialisation income, increasing revenue from Continuing Professional Development courses, and focusing on 'high-value' patents and spin-out companies, "to maintain and enhance our position as a leading player in the UK and Europe" (*ibid.* 16). In the section on research, "strategic partnerships" are also emphasised (*ibid.* 8). According to the document, knowledge exchange "has become far more prominent in the higher education sector and we need to ensure that we regain our competitive advantage" (*ibid.* 17). The websites of other universities in Scotland use similarly commercial language – a far cry from Havel's "speaking the truth to power" (Misztal 2007: 2).

This emphasis on economic values rather than social or intellectual values gives rise to a need to centrally manage all aspects of academics' work in pursuit of 'efficiency' (*e.g.* Attwood 2008, 2009b, Deem *et al.* 2007: Chapters 3 and 6, Law and Work 2007: 40-50). Outside engagement is encouraged – even required – but there is a growing preference for a certain *kind* of engagement. As with requirements for research 'impact,' public engagement can be constricted into a tightly managed form of knowledge exchange, which runs counter to values of public intellectualism – clarifying debates, legitimating dissent, and "expanding the

---

[115] In some cases they are present, however: the vision statement for the new Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Strathclyde contains explicit reference to social conscience (Clark 2010), though it is unclear how the expression of social conscience will be encouraged and supported.
[116] Though if they were truly concerned about the financial plight of their institutions, university Principals might avoid awarding themselves large pay increases (of 5% to 15%) amidst job losses (Denholm 2008).

democratic imagination and civic sensitivity of citizens and their leaders alike" (Misztal 2007: 4).

In line with other trends in higher education, growing expectations are often not matched with adequate time or resources,[117] so choices of where to engage can become increasingly instrumental:

> There's no money in [public engagement]. You've got to teach, you've got to mark, you've got to get grants in. And getting an article in the *New Statesman* or appearing on a platform talking about stuff is a little value adding but not much to one's standing. *(lecturer G, modern university)*
>
> Everyone is compelled to be selfish within an RAE culture. [...] If I'm giving up my time, what am I getting out of it? [...] I know for a fact, talking to people who have retired recently, that in the 60s and 70s [...] people were much more giving of their time. But now we've completely got the attitude of time is money. *(professor G, ancient university)*

Despite all of this, there is evidence that academics continue to participate in civic engagement that is not necessarily profitable or centrally managed. According to a study by Bond and Paterson (2005: 338-9), 87 percent of Scottish academics surveyed (across a range of disciplines) in 2001 believe it is important for academics to undertake engagement with outside, non-business organisations, and 71 percent had taken part in civic engagement themselves during the previous three years.[118] Bond and Paterson note that such activity "often attracts little or no financial incentive, and in fact is frequently undertaken despite a number of professional and personal *dis*incentives" (*ibid.* 347, original emphasis). In some ways, this indicates that academics are highly dedicated to civic engagement, squeezing it into their working lives at the margins. However, it is becoming an increasingly tight squeeze:

---

[117] In England, HEFCE has developed a permanent 'third-stream' funding programme to encourage economic and social engagement, but significantly, a report on the programme's effectiveness indicates that "academics are still constrained by time to engage fully in third stream activity." (HEFCE 2009a).

[118] Activities were: speaking to a non-academic audience, appearing in print and/or broadcast media, acting as a consultant to a non-governmental organisation (not private-sector), and acting as a consultant to a government department (Bond and Paterson 2005: 338-9). The extent to which respondents participated in economic engagement was much lower (28%), though most considered their work to have some level of economic significance (*ibid.* 343).

> It's really hard to try and do that public sociology thing and be in tune with civil society and really contribute, because civil society aren't just going to allow academics in as passengers and observers. You have to actually be doing something. […] And to do that as well as meeting the targets that you have for output, as measured in RAE terms, is really, really difficult. […] It's a massive stretch since I've been here, trying to do both of those. And I guess I've done neither as well as I would have liked to do, but that's just the way it is. The mundane routines of academic life these days are just bleagh. *(lecturer F, modern university)*

This account resonates with Bourdieu's (1998: 56-7) insistence that in relation to social movements, public intellectuals cannot be merely prophets, figureheads, or experts giving lessons – they must be actively and creatively engaged. Such engagement is not expressly forbidden; it is only made increasingly difficult. In many ways, academics today have the illusion of choice when it comes to civic engagement. The participant quoted at the start of this section (page 235) reflected that a focus on political work had meant less priority for academic work throughout her career; there are obvious compromises to be made. But newer academics do not have the same level of choice. Given that academic employment is increasingly precarious, spending too much time on the 'wrong' kinds of work or engaging with the 'wrong' kinds of causes can feel increasingly risky:

> It used to be a sort of rule of thumb that when you were younger, you were more radical, and then when you were older you got a bit more conservative. […] But now […] it seems that the people who are younger feel so insecure and they have their careers and they have all the rest of it to take care of, that they are very reticent, many of them, to speak out. And possibly, older people are perhaps a bit more prepared to. And that's a bit of a turnaround, and that's a bit sad. *(near retirement, ancient university)*

On the surface these look very much like personal matters: how and with whom to engage, when and on what to speak out, how much extra-academic participation is 'affordable' in terms of time, energy, career sacrifices. But looking beneath the surface the public issues become clear (Mills 1959). Three elements are at play here: pressure for profitable knowledge exchange, management scrutiny, and the speeding-up of production which forces instrumental decisions about time. Combined, these seek to commodify the energy behind public intellectualism and marginalise the kind of morally-driven (or simply interest-driven)

engagement that academics find meaningful and enjoyable, and which provides social benefits that are difficult to measure on a balance sheet.

Strategies of Survival & Resistance

As discussed throughout this chapter, higher education in Scotland is becoming ever-more bureaucratised, expanding the role of market-based values and limiting the space in which academics can express 'traditional' academic values and social conscience. Job insecurity, speeding-up production, increased administrative demands and a wide range of other job pressures all serve to diminish academics' ability to contribute to the positive social change they wish to see. It is not impossible – only extremely difficult, and that is enough to maintain the status quo:

> The whole way in which knowledge is produced in our society tends to constrict the space for [socially relevant] investigation. It's not a space which is entirely gone, of course, but it tends to constrict. *(professor E, modern university)*

This pattern is a microcosm of wider trends (Harvey 2007, Jurik 2004), and as I have discussed above, even in the context of universities it is extremely pervasive, deeply interconnected, and resistant to any change that would decentralise power. According to Weber, "once it is fully established, bureaucracy is among those social structures which are hardest to destroy" (Thompson and Tunstall 1971: 78). While many participants expressed the desire for different conditions in academia, none spoke about actively trying to change those conditions. However, they employed a number of different strategies to cope with challenges and resist the changes they felt most strongly about, including treating academic work as 'just a job' (this was a strategy for PhD students only), focusing on the integrity of teaching or research, combining academic work with public engagement, participating in the public sphere outside of academia, intentionally focusing on a marginalised research topic, and 'playing the game' well enough to create space for critical and social-change work. A common theme for those employing these strategies (or none of them) was to seek to 'juggle' the many demands of university work, despite the potentially negative consequences of job

stress on personal health, family life, and 'work/life balance' (*e.g.* Ashley 2007, Jacobs and Winslow 2004, Park 1996). For all the reasons discussed above, they considered their work sufficiently worthwhile and rewarding to make the necessary compromises.

However, it should be reiterated that one common strategy was not found in this study, because I focused on academics who have chosen to work in academia. From participants' accounts, several studies (*e.g.* Abbas and McLean 2001, Allen-Collinson and Hockey 1998, Huisman *et al.* 2002, Kerr 1996, Rothblum 1988), and personal experience, it is clear that many people with academic training choose to work outside of higher education. Their experience – including the gendered component of academic attrition – is the 'other side of the story' of those who remain in academia, but is beyond the scope of this project. Still, several PhD students expressed the intention to shift into other sectors once they complete their studies – even with strong personal pressures to pursue university work:

> You do a doctorate, they kind of expect you to stay in academia. If you don't, they make voodoo dolls and burn you. *(laughs)* I have a couple of friends who've done that, they left academia after their PhDs and their lecturers were just mortally wounded! *(early-stage PhD student F, ancient university)*

This pressure speaks to the strong mentorship role discussed in Chapter Five, and a more artisan-style social organisation: it could be disappointing to invest effort into supervising an 'apprentice,' only to see them leave the 'guild' of academia. However, it must be a common disappointment, as only 20 percent of people with social science PhDs eventually secure permanent posts within academia (Graham 2010). But whether PhD students intended to stay in academia or not (or were undecided), not all were troubled by a gulf between their moral aspirations and the practical requirements of universities. More than a third of PhD student participants did not mention any conflict between their values and the values now being imposed on higher education, while all staff participants gave this matter at least passing mention. This suggests that many PhD students have not yet encountered the kinds of issues that may threaten their personal values, such as difficulties in maintaining a public intellectual role, or the need to adapt their research interests to funding council priorities. As discussed above, PhD students tend to be 'sheltered' from the more intensely challenging

aspects of academic work – though the majority of PhD student participants were aware of the compromises they would have to make if they chose to pursue academia. Among those who did not mention any values conflict, several took for granted the highly competitive, research-driven paradigm, choosing a pragmatic approach:

> A lot of it has been quite pragmatic. […] I was always aware that if I was going to get a PhD in something, I needed to get a PhD in something where they'd want to fund me after it. *(early-stage PhD student H, modern university)*

> I do a little bit every day, to make sure I'm on top of it, but I don't get obsessed by it. […] You can get quite a lot of work done over three months, doing 200 words a day. […] I'm not going to push myself too hard, because it is a really draining task, writing, doing things like transcribing, it's really tiring. […] I'm able to be a bit more practical about it, because I just treat it as a job. *(late-stage PhD student F, modern university)*

In contrast to these approaches, while all staff participants were pragmatic enough to keep their jobs, none spoke about academic work as 'just' a job – as discussed in Chapter Five, all were motivated by something beyond a steady income. For a third of staff participants, that motivation was belief in the value of sociology for undergraduate students, as discussed in Chapter Four. To that end, they resisted the myriad of expanded roles for academics (administrator, project manager, fundraiser, 'knowledge exchange' expert, etc.), focusing instead on maintaining the integrity of their teaching:

> I mainly define myself as a teacher. […] For me, that basic teaching relationship still continues, and that's what it's about. It's not about the administrative issues or the issues of increased accountability. Okay, they're nuisances at times. But that basic relationship still continues. *(senior lecturer C, ancient university)*

Those who focused on teaching considered students important 'publics' with whom to engage, and they resented how the status of teaching has been eroded, as discussed above. However, while most participants enjoyed teaching, there was only one (near retirement, with tenure) who identified with it exclusively. Of course, there is a growing 'underclass' of part-time and fixed-term staff who are contracted to work exclusively on teaching (*e.g.* Abbas and McLean 2001, de Groot 1997, Park 1992), but with the growing influence of research-

dependent funding, the role of researcher is not one that can be fully resisted in the context of a full-time academic job (Deem *et al.* 2007: 91-92).

Beyond teaching, most staff participants (and two PhD students) sought to contribute to a wider public sphere. Despite the pressures discussed above, they often combined academic work with political or third-sector work. This synthesis included pursuing socially-relevant research, disseminating research findings through newspapers or books intended for popular audiences, using research to help charitable organisations or policy-making bodies, using research as a vehicle for political advocacy, and sharing academic skills with publics outside of academia. Where research and political interests did not overlap, participants were happy to keep the two separate:

> I haven't always managed to pull all my areas of political interest together with my academic interests. Like I've been quite involved in [a particular movement] off and on over the years, and I've never directly researched that as a topic, because I've never really been fully persuaded that I could find a way of doing it that would be of value to the issue. *(professor B, ancient university)*

However, where research and political interests did overlap, many participants engaged in a public intellectual role:

> In the last couple of years, I've spent a lot more time working with civil society organisations and NGOs than I did when I was on the research contract track of things. *(lecturer F, modern university)*
>
> I find it quite a struggle to adopt a kind of language that will allow me to publish articles and get grants, while also maintaining a critical standpoint, because really, the focus of a lot of grant awarding bodies is often [...] providing apparent solutions to problems. So [...] it has changed my writing strategy. I focus my energy much more on books now, which gives me the freedom to be much more discursive and critical. *(lecturer D, ancient university)*

These two accounts illustrate the kinds of compromises commonly described by participants: delaying public engagement until gaining a certain level of autonomy and job security, and focusing on writing critical and accessible books, rather than articles that are favoured in the quest for a 'world leading' RAE score. Both of these examples also illustrate some of the very

practical questions of values that arise in an increasingly managerialist, neoliberal setting: who is worthy of an academic's time? What kinds of work are valuable? What kinds of publications 'count?' Along these lines, many participants were concerned about the pressures to focus ever more exclusively on RAE-relevant forums for dissemination, at the expense of a public intellectual role. However, for one participant, the solution was to go in the opposite direction, choosing to intentionally research a 'useless' topic as resistance:

> The more that there's been a tendency towards the bureaucratisation of research, the more that there have been forces pushing people into doing certain kinds of research through the means of having to get research grants, I've gone completely the opposite way deliberately. I've deliberately done things that, in terms of those governmental bureaucratic criteria, are useless. And it is a deliberate form of resistance, and it's been quite self-conscious. […] As long as this other road is open to me, even if it's a smaller road and it's turning into a lane or an alley, rather than a road, I'm going down it. *(professor G, ancient university)*

The metaphor of an ever-narrowing road is an apt one, given the increasingly 'tight' controls on funding discussed above. This form of resistance is not available to many, and certainly among sociologists, who generally desire to be socially 'useful' with their work, it would not be desirable for many. But this participant's strategy resonates with concerns raised about research in the humanities, which offers little or no direct social or economic 'impacts,' but is culturally and intellectually valuable (*e.g.* Collini 2009a, Derbyshire 2009, Morgan 2010, O'Gorman 2009, Shepherd 2009a). Again, questions are raised about what counts as 'valuable,' and who gets to decide.

A final strategy was to treat the demands described throughout this chapter as a 'game' to be mastered, in order to create space for more worthwhile intellectual work. This was alluded to by many participants who described the various compromises they made, and it seems particularly appropriate in a discipline that studies the subtleties of social structures and power dynamics. Of course, there is a profound difference between simply mastering the 'rules' of the game and doing so while remaining critical of them. Among staff, there were no participants who spoke uncritically about the present conditions of academia, and all acknowledged that it is a difficult game to succeed in. Still, many spoke about the conscious

choice to maintain a position that would allow them the prestige and intellectual space to pursue their interests – including social change. As Bourdieu (1998: 103) points out, many of neoliberalism's doctrines were born and nurtured within academia; but scholars who oppose those doctrines can maintain a position from which to "conduct the symbolic struggle" against them. In particular, three participants spoke explicitly of 'buying time' for the practice of public sociology:

> It seems to me that we are in a neoliberal system, and you can pretend that we're not, or you can set your face against it and say, 'we'll not collaborate or cooperate with neoliberalism at all.' Or you can decide that you will try and play the game to some extent, in order to pursue a critical public social science. That's the approach that I like to take. […] And if you play that game well enough – which is difficult, given its ideological tenor – then you can expect […] to be left alone, to be given some protected space, and that kind of thing. And if that bargain fails, if we all do that, and they still come after us, then that's when that strategy has failed and we have to come up with another one. I'm not convinced that we're at that point yet. *(professor E, modern university)*

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that a shift towards neoliberal values has been changing the fundamental structures, processes and experiences of higher education in Scotland. Funding shortfalls, increasing bureaucratic demands and increasing competition add enormous pressure to academic work, which is becoming subject to more scrutiny and control from centralised management than ever before. Academics are expected to 'produce' increasing quantities of publications and funding bids more quickly, and the academic career structure has become increasingly fragmented as universities rely on insecure labour to cut costs. Research has become tied to funding council priorities and the needs of the Research Assessment Exercise, cutting into academics' professional autonomy and ability to express social conscience in their scholarly work. Public engagement has become much more constrained and monitored in efforts to quantify and measure 'impact.'

As more funding is tied to research grants, and as staff-student ratios increase, the 'human element' within undergraduate teaching has become marginalised, with an increasing

reliance on information technologies. Meanwhile, postgraduate and overseas tuition fees provide an important funding stream, which has resulted in an oversupply of PhDs during a time of relative scarcity in academic jobs. This mismatch has inflated competition for jobs, allowing universities to rely heavily on part-time and short-term contracts while still attracting qualified candidates. Academics accept the increasing pressures of academia because they enjoy academic work and its benefits, as discussed in the previous chapter. Many also seek to 'make a difference' by expressing social conscience in their work, even though the space for such expression is becoming increasingly constrained. However, increasing pressures and the erosion of autonomy have led to increased stress and anxiety for academics, and difficulty maintaining a healthy 'work/life balance.'

Broadly speaking, the changes detailed throughout this chapter represent the growing structural and cultural barriers to participants' expression of social conscience in their academic work. The shift towards neoliberal values of competition, profitability and efficiency has undermined academic and civic values like critical inquiry, public service, democratic governance, professional autonomy and commitment to truth, by seeking to measure academics' intellectual, social and moral contributions in terms of their monetary worth. In order to survive the stress of seeing their cherished values threatened, participants focused on the integrity of their work, combined academic work with public engagement, participated in the public sphere outside of academia, or treated their academic work as 'just a job.' Some also sought to resist and subvert the neoliberal changes being imposed on academia by intentionally focusing on a marginalised research topic, or by seeking to 'play the game' and create space for critical and social-change work.

Chapter Seven
Conclusions

In this concluding chapter, I will draw together the key themes of this research, and highlight the most significant developments that I have discussed in the chapters above. I will also discuss the necessary limitations of this research, and briefly outline areas where more research would be helpful in understanding the effects of neoliberalism and marketisation within higher education. In particular I will suggest potential directions for future research where the key themes might be explored in different contexts, or in more depth than I have had scope for here. While challenging neoliberalism and preserving autonomy for academics is doubtlessly a huge task, I will also suggest some ways that the problems discussed above might be remedied, or at least eased, in hopes of creating more space for social conscience within higher education.

To reiterate the focus introduced in the first chapter, my core concern has been to investigate ***what is happening to the values that underpin higher education in Scotland.*** Stemming from this concern, I have explored the following research questions:

- How can we understand social conscience and its expression by individuals?
- Through the academic life cycle, what values do academics express in their understanding and practice of their work?
- What are the structural and cultural barriers to academics' expression of these values?
- How have academics responded to these barriers?
- Are the structural and cultural conditions of higher education changing the kinds of values that can be expressed through academic work?

I have defined social conscience as a sense of right and wrong for social conventions and institutions, and concern with the social consequences of personal actions. It is rooted in a person's understanding of the social world, and is the emotional bridge between values and

their expression when it comes to social matters – as individual conscience bridges values and their expression for personal matters. In this understanding, social conscience is politically neutral, based in a person's values and beliefs, wherever they are located on the political spectrum. For example, as discussed in Chapter Two, liberal and conservative values can yield opposite moral responses to the same social issues, based on different ideas of who is an 'insider' and worthy of collective consideration, and who is a threatening 'outsider.'

By examining the way participants understand sociology, I have highlighted a number of values that underpin the discipline. Broadly speaking, participants considered sociology to consist of three interconnected elements: understanding, critiquing or challenging, and changing the social world. In its facet of understanding the social world, the discipline seeks to illuminate patterns and connections, maintaining a grasp of both the 'big picture' and its effects on individual lives – using the 'sociological imagination' (Mills 1959) to connect personal troubles with public issues within social structures. This practice delves into 'big questions' about the way the world operates and our place in it, but often raises more questions than it answers. There was a deep sense of respect among participants for the complexity and interconnectedness of the social world – they were clear that there are no easy answers to pressing social problems, and no easy ways of understanding them. However, they remained dedicated to the pursuit of truth and looking beyond obvious, 'common-sense' explanations of the social world.

Participants differed in their opinions as to the best approaches for understanding the social world, with some preferring qualitative methods and others quantitative, and some favouring an empirical approach while others favoured more theoretical study. Each method and approach was seen as having strengths and weaknesses, and together they were seen as contributing to the discipline's strength and vitality. On a fundamental level, participants valued diversity of viewpoints and approaches, giving a strong sense that all voices are worthy of being heard. This extended to sociology's connections with other areas of intellectual endeavour, and more than half of participants had ties to other disciplines.

Sociology was seen as ideally taking the best of the other social sciences, physical sciences, philosophy and the humanities, and making use of the fertile space between them.

Linked with understanding the social world, participants strongly valued a critical stance, particularly challenging injustice and inequality so that human suffering may be reduced. This is another aspect of looking beyond 'common sense' views: questioning that which is taken for granted, and 'making the familiar strange.' Critique was considered central to both research and teaching practice: many participants challenged the distribution of power in their research, and most sought to help students develop skills in critical thinking, in order to help them become more thoughtful and informed citizens. Many linked the capacity for critical questioning with the practice of democracy, and saw their teaching as contributing to the democratic potential of the next generation.

The third facet of the discipline was its potential to change the social world. What participants considered 'good' sociological research favoured pursuit of the common good or public interest, reduction of inequality, and protection of vulnerable groups – challenging neoliberal tendencies to reward self-interest and externalise the negative consequences arising from the pursuit of profit. On the other hand, 'bad' sociological research was described as detached, irrelevant and selfish. Nearly all participants' research was connected to understanding and critically questioning social problems, and most expressed a strong sense of social responsibility or civic duty in helping to solve those problems. Many participants sought to make their research available to policymakers and social-change organisations, or participated directly in activism themselves. Others saw their research as contributing to the intellectual foundations of the discipline, providing 'raw materials' for scholars involved more directly in research for social change.

Beyond the ways that participants understood sociology, I have discussed the values expressed in the way they spoke about their *experience* of academic work, particularly the pleasurable parts of that work, and their motivations for pursuing it. Working in academia was seen as a privileged position, especially for participants from working-class backgrounds.

Regardless of class background, participants expressed a strong sense of gratitude for the ability to pursue interesting and enjoyable work with good financial rewards and a relatively flexible lifestyle. However, they emphasised that their primary motivations were not financial, indicating that intrinsic motivations are more highly valued – or seen as more socially acceptable – than extrinsic ones.

In terms of intrinsic motivations, positive relationships with teachers and colleagues were key, and participants were often drawn into sociology or academia because of influential teachers. They strongly valued passion and enthusiasm for the discipline, and this 'human element' of study was valued alongside its intellectual element. In particular, PhD student participants valued emotional support from colleagues and supervisors, and staff valued collegiality and intellectual excitement. Across the 'academic life cycle,' relationships between colleagues were portrayed as contributing to socialisation into the discipline, allowing new scholars to learn on a relational level what it means to be a sociologist. Interestingly, nearly all participants considered their path into academia 'accidental' in some way, denying their own agency and emphasising being invited into the discipline or into academia. In other words, they valued the social context of their vocational development over a sense of individual drive, even though much academic work is ultimately self-directed.

Beyond its social context, participants enjoyed the practice of sociological work itself. Research and fieldwork were particularly pleasurable activities, allowing participants to indulge their curiosity and develop their understanding and critique of the social world. Female PhD students also valued their relationships with fieldwork participants, but others emphasised other elements of research, such as its complexity and sense of discovery. Nearly all participants expressed enthusiasm for the discipline and their particular research areas, alongside dedication to critical citizenship and social change. Many expressed a sense of moral motivation for their work, hoping to 'make a difference' as discussed above. Additionally, nearly all participants enjoyed teaching, particularly its 'human element' and the opportunity to take on similar role to the teachers they admired. Teaching was generally

portrayed as a reciprocal process, with students' learning providing a sense of energy and motivation, encouraging lecturers and tutors to learn as much as they taught.

While the values held by participants reflected 'traditional' academic values (*e.g.* Scott 2003), neoliberal changes to higher education in recent decades have begun to present barriers to their expression. The root cause of these barriers has been inadequate funding of higher education during decades of expansion, creating heavy workloads, time pressures and high levels of competition, all of which have consequences for the mental health and family lives of academics. Postgraduate numbers have grown rapidly to help meet universities' funding needs, but the 'PhD glut' has contributed to an imbalance between new academics and available jobs. This in turn has allowed universities to shift increasingly to a flexible and insecure labour model, relying on part-time and fixed-term contracts, which has the added effect of indirect censorship, or self-censorship: there is a fear, expressed by the PhD student on page 201 and others, that academics who write or say the 'wrong' thing may lose access to jobs. Where academics once had relative freedom to express critical views and pursue unpopular research, participants felt that such freedom has been limited by the necessity of maintaining funding flows.

Parallel to funding shortfalls, the centralisation of power in universities and higher education more broadly means that academics must meet increasing bureaucratic and administrative demands, while 'unproductive' activities are marginalised – another element of indirect censorship. In line with neoliberal values, the 'output' of academic labour has become increasingly commodified and made subject to competition: articles in scholarly journals are counted and ranked, research is only considered worthwhile if it can attract grant money, and public engagement is reduced to notions of 'impact' and measurable 'knowledge exchange.' Increasing reliance on research grants and assessment metrics has devalued undergraduate teaching, while the changing ethos of universities and growing power of business-oriented managers has placed students in the role of consumers and future workers rather than learners and critical citizens. Increasing staff-student ratios are diluting the

‘human element’ of undergraduate teaching, replacing it with increasing reliance on information technology.

Academics are now under enormous pressure to produce certain types of knowledge for certain types of audiences, limiting their ability to express social conscience in their work – but many participants insisted that such expression is still possible. They responded to barriers to the expression of social conscience in a number of ways, which often varied across the ‘academic life cycle.’ PhD students in general were ‘sheltered’ from many of the changes wrought by neoliberalism, and some saw no conflict between their values and those imposed by the changing structures of academia – a few of these students treated their research as ‘just a job.’

For staff and PhD student participants who did perceive a conflict, many sought to survive the stress of seeing their values threatened by focusing on the integrity of their work. One participant sought to resist the neoliberal changes being imposed on academia by intentionally focusing on an obscure research topic, but most ‘juggled’ the many demands placed on them while taking refuge in the pleasures of research and teaching. While social conscience was often marginalised in their research, they were able to express it strongly in teaching, where they sought to help students develop critical citizenship.

Another common strategy was to combine academic work with public engagement, pursuing socially-relevant research and making the results available to policymakers and social-change organisations. Some participants also participated in the public sphere outside of academia, pursuing social change as citizens rather than intellectuals and practising Weber’s (1922: 14) preference for separating intellectual and political activities. Most, however, insisted that intellectual and political engagement must be combined, and that sociologists have a moral duty to use their work for the public good. For several, this was made possible by skilfully ‘playing the game’ of academic demands, thus creating space for critical and social-change work.

Broadly speaking, the structural and cultural conditions of higher education are changing the kinds of values that can easily be expressed through academic work. Values like critical citizenship, pursuit of the public good, pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, professional autonomy and the 'human element' of teaching are becoming marginalised by tendencies towards competition, quantification, and centralisation of power. Students are increasingly seen as consumers, research is increasingly seen as a commodity and public engagement only 'counts' if it adds to institutional revenue or prestige. The changes wrought by neoliberalism have skewed our perception of higher education's broader social purpose, and threaten the capacity for universities to be sites for preserving Scotland's democratic foundations.

To a certain extent, this tendency is offset by the social conscience of academics, who continue to express their values despite growing pressures to stifle them. However, academics' passion and dedication are finite resources, and their exploitation is unsustainable. As pressures continue to intensify, higher education will eventually reach a breaking point. Once lost, its moral and civic facets will be difficult or impossible to recover. The new government that has taken power in 2010 faces a number of key decisions regarding tuition fees and university funding, and given the history of Conservative interventions in higher education – massive cuts to funding and autonomy, with an intensification of work and pressure to commodify learning – the outlook is not good. Still, academics in Scotland are broadly committed to traditional academic and civic values, and as long as the expression of social conscience remains a possibility, then all is not lost.

Dissemination

In presenting parts of this research at conferences and workshops (*e.g.* Goldberg 2008, 2009, 2010), response from other academics has been positive and enthusiastic. I intend to continue disseminating my work through scholarly articles and conference presentations, particularly seeking to connect with scholars examining higher education in other countries. For example, both the British and European Sociological Associations have expressed interest in my research, and I was invited to contribute to the annual conference of the International Association of Universities, an organisation which brings together university

managers and researchers of higher education. Additionally, an article summarising the key findings of my research will be published in the proceedings of the World Universities Congress in late 2010.

As a firm believer in public intellectualism and public sociology, I intend to disseminate my research well beyond the academic sphere. Throughout 2009 and especially since the elections in 2010, questions about the funding and purpose of higher education have been frequently debated in the media. I hope to contribute to the discussion through writing for a popular audience, building on previous experience as an education columnist for *The Scotsman*. While newspapers will reach a broad and diverse audience, I will also approach specialist publications like the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, and Scotland-focused publications like *Scottish Affairs* and the *Scottish Left Review*. As a member of the Universities and Colleges Union, I will make my research available for use in campaigns to improve the working conditions of academics in the UK.

Limitations & Scope for Further Research

The most obvious limitation of a case study is its small scale. In order to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of social conscience in Scottish higher education, further research would be necessary, examining a range of different disciplines. Of particular interest would be comparing disciplines that stereotypically attract people concerned with moral questions, like theology or philosophy, with disciplines more focused on practical problem-solving, such as engineering or chemistry. Another interesting avenue for investigation would be to compare disciplines in the arts and humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences – either across or within broad 'schools.' It is likely that interesting patterns may emerge, challenging stereotypes. For example, in my experience, people who are interested in physics are often interested in moral questions, and according to one university official I spoke with informally, many accountancy students have a deep-rooted desire to help others.

Beyond the specific study of social conscience, it would be worth examining the different ways that neoliberal changes to higher education affect different disciplines and universities. As discussed in Chapter Six, previous research has indicated that funding cuts have not been equal across all disciplines, and not all disciplines are able to easily attract external funding. Similarly, some universities have been successful in attracting funding, international students and other means of supporting themselves, while other universities have struggled. At the same time, former colleges have gained university status, even since I began this research in 2006, and several universities have been engaged in large-scale restructuring. The changing landscape of higher education in Scotland is worthy of further study, and more research is needed to look behind the numbers and reveal some of the consequences of funding shortfalls and reorganisation for academics, students, and wider society.

Along these lines, the experience of undergraduate students also warrants further investigation, particularly in light of the themes raised by academics in this research. As discussed above, the undergraduate surveys conducted for this project did not reveal the rich insights that might have been possible, had they been carried out *after* the interviews, with full awareness of the 'hot' topics for academics. Given sufficient time, there is wide scope for studying the way that social conscience develops over the course of an undergraduate degree, and how the ascendancy of neoliberal values is experienced by students, who are among the least powerful members of a university community (though they are far from powerless). In developing a clear picture of neoliberalism's effects on higher education, it will be important to listen to students' own experiences and opinions, in addition to reflections from their lecturers and tutors.

A further limitation of this research has been the exclusion of a large and growing proportion of academics in Scotland – those on part-time and research- or teaching-only contracts. Their perspectives are another important element in understanding the effects of neoliberalism on higher education, particularly in terms of the human cost of fragmenting the academic labour process. There is scope for research examining the changes to the career structures of academia, across different disciplines, and its effects on people's motivations for

working in universities. There is also scope to consider the perspectives of those with academic training who have left the higher education sector to work elsewhere. Only 20 percent of people with social science PhDs eventually gain permanent academic jobs (Graham 2010), and the voices of the other 80 percent should be heard – or at least those who wanted to work in academia, but were unable to do so. In addition to understanding the pressures of neoliberalism on those who work in academia, it would be important to draw attention to the potential talent that universities have lost due to neoliberalism's restrictions and restructuring. Such research could have an important role in arguing for universities to remain hospitable to academic and civic values.

Recommendations for Policy & Practice

As discussed in Chapter Six, most of the difficulties faced by academics stem from a lack of funding in higher education, which in turn is a symptom of the much wider shift of wealth from the public sector to the private sector (*e.g.* Harvey 2007, Mooney and Law 2007). Still, it is unreasonable to think that higher education can remain true to academic and civic values without adequate funding. In recognition of higher education's positive social and economic contributions, government should ensure that universities have enough core funding to meet the targets they have set, without resorting to increased tuition fees. The Universities and Colleges Union has proposed a tax on business profits to help support higher education (Ashley 2010). During a time of economic hardship, public spending on higher education is often portrayed as a luxury – but it is important to question whether we can afford *not* to invest in higher education, given its key role in social and economic well-being (Baty 2009).

While increased funding is necessary to improve staff-student ratios, academic workloads and excessive competition for academic jobs, it is also necessary to re-think the way that higher education funding is allocated. As discussed above, the current system "rewards shrewdness rather than principle and privileges the values of competition over 'professional' [academic] values" (Bell 2006: 123). This kind of system is broadly incompatible with the ethos of critical citizenship and free inquiry. Of course, a certain level of competition is healthy, but competitively-won grants should be a funding source that supplements basic

core funding, not replaces it. Similarly, while it is important to ensure quality in academic work, activities like the Research Assessment Exercise are wasteful and counterproductive. Not only does the RAE disadvantage departments that 'perform poorly' – and place them in a position where it is difficult to improve – they drive an imbalance between research and teaching, and an excessive level of scholarly publishing.

While the new Research Excellence Framework provides for a broader measure of 'impact,' it is still extremely limited in terms of what 'counts' towards a department's score, and still places universities in problematic relationships of competition with each other. It would be naïve to argue for complete autonomy within academic departments or a blind provision of core funding, but a balance must be found between the power of central managerial structures and the power of academic workers, individually and collectively. As with many areas of social life, the higher education sector would benefit from the principle of subsidiarity – that power should be held at the lowest and least centralised possible level (Bosnich 1996: 9). This would not exclude centralised power, only limit it to an appropriate level, and decisions about how power should be distributed should be taken collectively. Of course, this poses a 'chicken-or-egg' conundrum. A process of developing subsidiarity would be difficult in the current system, where an overworked and fragmented labour force has little extra time to debate matters of institutional organisation – yet more secure forms of academic labour are unlikely to arise when power is highly concentrated and structures are driven by financial rather than intellectual goals. Still, it is worthy of consideration as a potential alternative to the highly centralised, and highly problematic current system.

On a more ideological level, it is important for academics to openly challenge neoliberal values, and to insist that higher education be recognised – in actions as well as words – as a source of more than just economic growth. Part of neoliberalism's power comes from its narrative of inevitability (*e.g.* Harvey 2007), but it does not have to be inevitable. In Scotland, the Curriculum for Excellence emphasises developing citizenship for students in primary and secondary education, and this role should carry through to higher education. A strong counter-narrative highlighting the important role of higher education in maintaining a

democratic society would not only help to make the broad contributions of academics more visible, it would also challenge neoliberalism's largely unchallenged hegemony. Collective pressure to hold politicians accountable would help translate rhetoric into practical action.

On the level of academic practice, less pressure would help academics to create space to speak about values, whether to express social conscience in their research and public engagement, or to help students clarify and develop coherent moral positions in relation to social issues. As I have argued previously (Goldberg 2009b), an important tool in developing social conscience is examining one's own values and speaking about values with others in a non-judgemental way. Additionally, cultivating self-reflexivity and honest expression of values could potentially make sociological work more relevant, accessible and 'real' to non-academic audiences. And finally, even without any structural changes in higher education, reflecting on our values as scholars and as human beings may remind us why we engage in this work to begin with, and become a source of energy and resilience to carry on.

Bibliography

Abbas, Andrea and Monica McLean. 2001. "Becoming Sociologists: Professional Identity for Part-Time Teachers of University Sociology." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 22(3):339-352.

Agar, Michael. 1982. "Toward an Ethnographic Language." *American Anthropologist, New Series* 84(4):779-795.

—. 1986. *Speaking of ethnography*. London: Sage.

Albert, Mathieu. 2003. "Universities and the Market Economy: The Differential Impact on Knowledge Production in Sociology and Economics." *Higher Education* 45(2):147-182.

Allen-Collinson, Jacquelyn and John Hockey. 1998. "Capturing Contracts: Informal Activity among Contract Researchers." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 19(4):497-515.

Althusser, Louis. 1972. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Towards an Investigation." in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* Monthly Review Press.

Alvesson, Mats. 2003. "Methodology for Close up Studies: Struggling with Closeness and Closure." *Higher Education* 46(2):167-193.

Alvesson, Mats and Kaj Sköldberg. 2009. *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas in Qualitative Research, Second Edition*. London: Sage.

Andrew, John A. 1999. *Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.

Angell, Norman. 1922. *Co-operation and the New Social Conscience*. Manchester: The Co-operative Union Limited.

Anonymous. 2006. "A word about academic depression." in *Post-PhD Shades of Blue (and other colors too)*: 11 January 2006. http://phdblue.blogspot.com/2006/01/word-about-academic-depression.html (accessed 11 March 2010).

—. 2008. "Feeling socially trapped." in *Life of a Psychology Ph.D. student*: 25 May 2008. http://psychnihilist.blogspot.com/2008/05/feeling-socially-trapped-depression.html (accessed 11 March 2010).

—. 2009. "Who doesn't have PhD Depression?" in *Ph.D. Depression*: 14 October 2009. http://www.phddepression.com/ (accessed 11 March 2010).

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Arkes, Hal R. and Catherine Blumer. 1985. "The Psychology of Sunk Cost." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 35(1):124-140

Arnott, Margaret. 2005. "Devolution, Territorial Politics, and the Politics of Education." in *Exploring Social Policy in the 'New' Scotland*, edited by G. Mooney and G. Scott. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Ashley, Dan. 2007. "Overworked and underpaid academics not acceptable says UCU in response to new research." Universities and Colleges Union, 10 April 2007.

—. 2009. "Lecturers doing even more unpaid overtime." Universities and Colleges Union, 27 February 2009.

Attwood, Rebecca. 2008. "Academics split over teaching contact hours." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 8 May 2008.

—. 2009a. "The personal touch." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 7 May 2009.

—. 2009b. “Edict curtailing freedom to work at home ‘appals’ staff.” in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 2 July 2009.

Austin, Ann E. 2002. “Preparing the Next Generation of Faculty: Graduate School as Socialization to the Academic Career.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 73(1):94-122.

Babbie, Earl. 2004. “Sociology: An idea whose time has come.” *Sociological Perspectives* 47:331-338.

Back, Les. 2007. *The Art of Listening*. Oxford: Berg.

Bailey, Ed. 2009. “Early Careers Survey: Getting the Start You Deserve.” *Universities and Colleges Union Newsletter,* May 2009, pp. 18-20.

Bakan, Joel. 2004. *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*. New York: Free Press.

Ball, Stephen J. 2006. *Education Policy and Social Class*. London: Routledge.

—. 2007. *Education plc: Understanding private sector participation in public sector education*. London: Routledge.

Ball, Terrence and Richard Dagger. 1995. *Ideals and Ideologies: A Reader*. New York: HarperCollins.

Barnes, Jonathan. 2000. *Aristotle: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bassnett, Susan. 2007. “Labouring under a misconception.” in *The Times Higher Education Supplement,* 5 October 2007.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2006. *Liquid Fear*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

BBC. 2005. “On this day: 29 January - 1985: Thatcher snubbed by Oxford dons.”

—. 2007. “Male professors outnumber women.” in *BBC News,* 14 May 2007.

—. 2008. “UK work week among EU’s longest “ in *BBC News,* 4 September 2008.

—. 2009a. “Thatcher and the Scots.” in *This is Scotland*. UK: BBC Four. 1 January 2009.

—. 2009b. “New students ‘face £23,000 debt’.” in *BBC News,* 18 August 2009.

—. 2009c. “Universities warn that budget cuts will be challenging.” in *BBC News,* 10 December 2009.

—. 2010a. “Top UK universities warn of damage from budget cuts.” in *BBC News,* 12 January 2010.

—. 2010b. “Mandelson defends university cuts.” in *BBC News,* 14 January 2010.

—. 2010c. “Minister warns universities of reduced funding.” in *BBC News,* 25 January 2010.

—. 2010d. “University heads’ salaries soar.” in *BBC News,* 15 March 2010.

—. 2010e. “Overseas students reach record numbers in the UK.” in *BBC News,* 26 March 2010.

—. 2010f. “At a glance: General Election 2010 key stories.” in *BBC News,* 7 May 2010.

—. 2010g. “Cameron’s government: A guide to who’s who.” in *BBC News,* 14 May 2010.

Bechhofer, Frank and David McCrone. 2009. “Founding Principals: Sociology at Edinburgh.” University of Edinburgh, Department of Sociology.

Becker, Howard. 1950. *Through Values to Social Interpretation: Essays on Social Contexts, Actions, Types, and Prospects*. Durham: Duke University Press.

—. 1963. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. London: Collier-Macmillan.

—. 1967. “Whose Side Are We On?” *Social Problems* 14(3):239-247.

Bell, R. E. 2000. “Scotland’s Universities.” *Comparative Education* 36(2):163-175.

Bellas, Marcia L. 1999. “Emotional Labor in Academia: The Case of Professors.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 561:96-110.

Bénabou, Roland and Jean Tirole. 2003. "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation." *The Review of Economic Studies* 70(3):489-520.

Benedict, Larry , Michael Folkert, Kristine Girard, Michael Glover, Rupa Hattangadi, Arnold Henderson, Eric Hetland G, Anne Hunter, Brad Ito, Susan Kelley, Gabrielle Pardo, Peter Reich, Barbara Roberts, Efrat Shavit, Aurelie Thiele, and Majorie Nolan-Wheatley. 2001. "MIT Mental Health Task Force Report." Massachussetts Institute of Technology.

Benton, Ted and Ian Craib. 2001. *Philosophy of Social Science: the Philosophical Foundations of Social Thought*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Berezin, Mabel. 2009. *Illiberal Politics in Neoliberal Times: Culture, Security and Populism in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bertelsen, Eve. 1998. "The Real Transformation: The Marketisation Of Higher Education." *Social Dynamics* 24(2):130-158.

Birch, Kean, and Vlad Mykhnenko. 2010. *The Rise and Fall of Neo-Liberalism: The Collapse of an Economic Order?* London: Zed Books.

Bland, Carole J., Bruce A. Center, Deborah A. Finstad, Kelly R. Risbey, and Justin Staples. 2006. "The Impact of Appointment Type on the Productivity and Commitment of Full-Time Faculty in Research and Doctoral Institutions." *The Journal of Higher Education* 77(1):89-123.

Bleiklie, Ivar 2005. "Organizing Higher Education in a Knowledge Society." *Higher Education* 49(1/2):31-59.

Bloom, Paul. 2010. "The Moral Life of Babies." *The New York Times Magazine*, 3 May 2010.

Blyth, Mark. 2002. *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bok, Derek. 1999. "Can Higher Education Foster Higher Morals?" Pp. 506-515 in *Social and Personal Ethics*, edited by W. H. Shaw. London: Wadsworth.

—. 2003. *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education*. Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Bond, Ross and Lindsay Paterson. 2005. "Coming down from the ivory tower? Academics' civic and economic engagement with the community." *Oxford Review of Education* 31(3):331-351.

Borkowski, David. 2004. ""Not Too Late to Take the Sanitation Test": Notes of a Non-Gifted Academic from the Working Class." *College Composition and Communication* 56(1):94-123.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1988. *Homo Academicus*. Translated by P. Collier. Cambridge: Polity Press.

—. 1998. *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time*. Translated by R. Nice. Cambridge: Polity Press.

—. 2003. "For Scholarship with Commitment." in *Firing Back*, edited by P. Bourdieu. London: Verso.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc J.D. Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Boyns, David and Jesse Fletcher. 2005. "Reflections on Public Sociology: Public Relations, Disciplinary Identity, and the Strong Program in Professional Sociology." *The American Sociologist*:5-26.

Bradbury, Malcolm. 1975. *The History Man*. London: Arrow Books.

Brehony, Kevin J. and Rosemary Deem. 2005. "Challenging the Post-Fordist/Flexible Organisation Thesis: The Case of Reformed Educational Organisations." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 26(3):395-414.

Brennan, John. 2008. "Higher education and social change." *Higher Education* 56:381-393.

Brint, Steven. 2005. "Guide for the Perplexed: On Michael Burawoy's "Public Sociology"." *The American Sociologist* Fall/Winter 2005:46-65.

British Sociological Association. 2010. "The Origins of Sociology." http://www.britsoc.co.uk/WhatIsSociology/SocHist.htm (accessed 27 April 2010).

Britzman, Deborah P. and Alice J. Pitt. 1996. "Pedagogy and Transference: Casting the Past of Learning into the Presence of Teaching." *Theory into Practice* 35(2):117-123.

Brown, Alice, David McCrone, and Lindsay Paterson. 1998. *The Scottish Electorate: The 1997 General Election and Beyond*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Brown, Roger. 2009. "Even Lord Mandelson can't see into the future." in *The Guardian*, 4 November 2009.

Brown, Roger and Peter Scott. 2009. "The Role of the Market in Higher Education." Higher Education Research Institute, Oxford.

Bruce, Steve. 1999. *Sociology: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryson, Colin. 2004. "What about the workers? The expansion of higher education and the transformation of academic work." *Industrial Relations* 35:38-57.

Buiter, Willem H., Marcus H. Miller, Jeffrey D. Sachs, and William H. Branson. 1983. "Changing the Rules: Economic Consequences of the Thatcher Regime." *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* 1983(2):305-379.

Bulmer, Martin. 1984. *The Chicago School of Sociology: Institutionalization, Diversity, and the Rise of Sociological Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Burawoy, Michael. 2005. "2004 American Sociological Association Presidential Address: For Public Sociology." *The British Journal of Sociology* 56:259-294.

—. 2007. "Public Sociology: Past, Present and Future." Presentation at the University of Strathclyde, Department of Geography & Sociology, Glasgow, 28 March 2007.

Burgess, Yvonne. 1996. *The Myth of Progress*. Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications.

Caldwell, David. 2004. "Scottish Higher Education: Character and Provision." in *Scottish Education, Second Edition: Post-Devolution*, edited by T. G. K. Bryce and W. M. Humes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Calhoun, Craig. 2005. "The Promise of Public Sociology." *The British Journal of Sociology* 56:355-363.

Callinicos, Alex. 2001. *Against the Third Way: an Anti-Capitalist Critique*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

—. 2006. *Universities in a Neoliberal World*. London: Bookmarks Publications.

Cancian, Francesca M. 1995. "Truth and Goodness: Does the Sociology of Inequality Promote Social Betterment?" *Sociological Perspectives* 38(3): 339-356.

Cassidy, Sarah. 2008. "University degrees are a waste of time - the damning verdict of British students." in *The Independent,* 10 April 2008.

Chang, Ha-Joon, and Ilene Grabel. 2005. "Reclaiming Development from the Washington Consensus." *Journal of Post Keynesian Economics* 27(2):273-91.

Chase-Dunn, Christopher. 2005. "Global Public Social Science." *The American Sociologist* Fall/Winter 2005:121-132.

Chitty, Clyde. 1997. "Privatisation and Marketisation." *Oxford Review of Education* 23(1):45-62.

Chow, Esther Ngan-Ling, Chadwick Fleck, Gang-Hua Fan, Joshua Joseph, and Deanna M. Lyter. 2003. "Exploring Critical Feminist Pedagogy: Infusing Dialogue, Participation, and Experience in Teaching and Learning." *Teaching Sociology* 31(3):259-275.

Clance, Pauline Rose and Maureen Anne O'Toole. 1988. "The Imposter Phenomenon: An Internal Barrier to Empowerment and Achievement." Pp. 51-64 in *Treating Women's Fear of Failure*, edited by E. D. Rothblum and E. Cole. New York: Haworth Press.

Clark, Colin. 2002. "Divide and demotivate." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement,* 18 January 2002.

—. 2010. Personal Communication: 22 February 2010, Glasgow.

Clark, Linda. 1977. "Fact and Fantasy: A Recent Profile of Women in Academia." *Peabody Journal of Education* 54(2):103-109.

Clegg, Sue, Alison Hudson, and John Steel. 2003. "The Emperor's New Clothes: Globalisation and e-Learning in Higher Education." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 24(1):39-53.

Cohen, Nick. 2010. "Welcome to Britain in 2010 where money + class = power." in *The Guardian*: 16 May 2010.

Cohen, Robin and Paul Kennedy. 2000. *Global Sociology*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Cohen, Stanley. 1972 (2002). *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. London: Routledge.

—. 1985. *Visions of Social Control*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Collier, Richard. 2005. "Review: The Liberal Law School, the Restructured University and the Paradox of Socio-Legal Studies." *The Modern Law Review* 68(3):475-494.

Collini, Stefan 2009a. "The impact of "impact"." *The New Statesman*, 16 November 2009.

— 2009b. "Would Socrates have got research funding?" *The New Statesman*, 16 November 2009.

Coltrane, Scott. 2004. "Elite Careers and Family Commitment: Its(Still) about Gender." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 596:214-220.

Corbyn, Zoë. 2008. "Call to scrap peer review in hunt for brilliant ideas." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement,* 18 December 2008.

—. 2010. "Stress levels exceed safety parameters." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement,* 18 February 2010.

Coser, Lewis A. 1977. *Masters of sociological thought: Ideas in historical and social context*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Costello, Hugh 2007. "It's Supermac!" *BBC History Magazine*, January 2007, p. 68.

— 2007. "A Nation of Shoppers." *BBC History Magazine*, May 2007, p. 69.

Coughlan, Sean. 2007. "Education, education, education." in *BBC News,* 14 May 2007.

Cownie, Fiona. 2004. *Legal Academics*. Oxford: Hart.

Crace, John and Jessica Shepherd. 2007. "The right prescription?" in *The Guardian,* 24 July 2007.

Cresswell, John W. 2007. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design, Second Edition*. London: Sage.

Currie, Jan, and Janice Newson. 1998. *Universities and Globalization: Critical Perspectives*. London: Sage.

Curtis, Polly. 2009. "Universities overhaul will make them more inclusive, says Mandelson." in *The Guardian,* 3 November 2009.

Cuthbert, Rob. 1996. "Working in Higher Education." Buckingham: Open University Press.

Darley, John and C. Daniel Batson. 1973. "From Jerusalem to Jericho: A study of situational and dispositional variables in helping behaviour." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 27:100-108.

Davidson, Neil, Patricia McCafferty, and David Miller (Eds.). 2010. *Neoliberal Scotland: Class and Society in a Stateless Nation*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Davie, George. 1961. *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and Her Universities in the Nineteenth Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Dearing Report. 1997. "Higher Education in the Learning Society." London: The Stationery Office.

Deem, Rosemary, Sam Hillyard, and Mike Reed. 2007. *Knowledge, Higher Education and the New Managerialism: The Changing Management of UK Universities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Deflem, Mathieu. 2004. "Save Sociology." www.savesociology.org. (accessed 12 February 2007).

Denholm, Andrew. 2008. "Anger at university principals' £142,000 pay raise." in *The Herald,* 21 Jan 2008.

Derbyshire, Jonathan 2009. "Against 'impact'." *The New Statesman*, 19 October 2009.

Dixon-Reeves, Regina 2003. "Mentoring as a Precursor to Incorporation: An Assessment of the Mentoring Experience of Recently Minted PhDs." *Journal of Black Studies* 34(1):12-27.

Donald, James and Stuart Hall. 1988. *Beliefs and Ideologies: Concepts and Questions*. Milton Keynes: The Open University Press.

Durbin, J. 1987. "Statistics and Statistical Science." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 150(3):177-191.

Durkheim, Émile. 1895 (1982). *The Rules of Sociological Method.* Translated by S. Lukes. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

—. 1914 (1983). "Pragmatism & the Question of Truth." in *Pragmatism and Sociology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eason, Gary. 2010. "Record applicants accepted at UK universities in 2009." in *BBC News,* 15 January 2010.

Economic and Social Research Council. 2005. "ESRC Postgraduate Training Guidelines, Fourth Edition." Swindon: Economic and Social Research Council.

—. 2007. "Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Social Sciences: Frequently Asked Questions."

—. 2009a. "Strategic Plan 2009-2014: Delivering Impact Through Social Science." Swindon: Economic and Social Research Council.

—. 2009b. "Postgraduate Funding Guide 2009-10." Swindon: Economic and Social Research Council.

—. 2010. "Research Funding Guide." Swindon: Economic and Social Research Council.

Education Guardian. 2004. "Ethnic distribution by institution, 2003-04."

Eggins, Heather. 1988. *Restructuring Higher Education.* Milton Keynes: The Society for Research Into Higher Education and the Open University Press.

Elliott, Anthony. 2003. *Critical Visions: New Directions in Social Theory*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield.

Enders, Jurgen and Ulrich Teichler. 1997. "A Victim of Their Own Success? Employment and Working Conditions of Academic Staff in Comparative Perspective." *Higher Education* 34(3):347-372.

Fairclough, Norman. 1992. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Finlayson, Alan. 2009. "Mandelson needs a liberal arts degree." in *The Guardian,* 4 November 2009.

Fisher, Shirley. 1994. *Stress in Academic Life: The Mental Assembly Line*. Milton Keynes: The Society for Research Into Higher Education and The Open University Press.

Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2001. *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it Can Succeed Again*. Translated by S. Sampson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by A. Sheridan. London: Penguin.

Fox, Selina 2005. "SSRC/ESRC: The First Forty Years." Swindon: Economic & Social Research Council.

Frank, Arthur W. 1995. "Lecturing and Transference: The Undercover Work of Pedagogy." Pp. 28-35 in *Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation*, edited by J. Gallop. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Freire, Paulo. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.

Fuller, Steve. 1999. "Making the University Fit for Critical Intellectuals: Recovering from the Ravages of the Postmodern Condition." *British Educational Research Journal* 25(5):583-595.

Fulton, Oliver. 1996. "Which Academic Profession Are You In?" Pp. 157-169 in *Working in Higher Education*, edited by R. Cuthbert. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Galbraith, John Kenneth. 1958 (1991). *The Affluent Society (Fourth Edition)*. London: Penguin Books.

—. 1996. *The Good Society: The Humane Agenda*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson.

Gans, Herbert J. 1989. "Sociology in America: The Discipline and the Public (American Sociological Association, 1988 Presidential Address)." *American Sociological Review* 54:1-16.

Geertz, Clifford. 2001. "Empowering Aristotle." *Science* 293:53.

Gerholm, Tomas. 1990. "On Tacit Knowledge in Academia." *European Journal of Education* 25(3):263-271.

Gersick, Connie J. G., Jean M. Bartunek, and Jane E. Dutton. 2000. "Learning from Academia: The Importance of Relationships in Professional Life." *The Academy of Management Journal* 43(6):1026-1044.

Giddens, Anthony. 1978. *Durkheim*. Sussex: John Spiers.

—. 1982. *Sociology: A Brief but Critical Introduction*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Gill, John. 2009. "Keep peer input in REF, urge panels." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement,* 8 January 2009.

Gillan, Audrey. 2005 "Work until you drop: how the long-hours culture is killing us." in *The Guardian,* 20 August 2005.

Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. London: Harvard University Press.

Giroux, Henry A. 2007. *The University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex*. Boulder: Paradigm.

Girves, Jean E. and Virginia Wemmerus. 1988. "Developing Models of Graduate Student Degree Progress." *The Journal of Higher Education* 59(2):163-189.

Gladwell, Malcolm. 2008. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. London: Penguin.

Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Piscataway, New Jersey: Transaction.

Glautier, Michael. 2007. *The Social Conscience*. London: Shepheard-Walwyn.

Goffman, Erving. 1959 (1990). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin.

Goldberg, Myshele. 2005. "Telling Mythologies: Pasts and Possible Futures in Activist Literature." Unpublished MSc thesis, Centre for Human Ecology, Open University, Edinburgh.

—. 2007. "Useful for whom?" in *The Scotsman,* 10 November 2007.

—. 2008a. "Labour Exploitation in Academia." in *The Scotsman,* 21 May 2008.

—. 2008b. "Can Sociology Teach Global Citizenship? Preliminary Survey Results." Poster Presentation at the University of Stathclyde Research Day, 10 June 2008.

—. 2009a. "A Changing Landscape: Teaching, Learning, and the Human Element in Higher Education in Scotland." Presentation at the Moving Forward Conference, University of Aberdeen, 22 July 2009.

—. 2009b. "Social Conscience." in *The Handbook of Sustainability Literacy: Skills for a Changing World*, edited by A. Stibbe. London: Green Books.

—. 2010a. "The Ponzi Scheme of Higher Education in the UK." Presentation at the Staff-Student Seminar Series, University of Strathclyde Department of Geography & Sociology, 31 March 2010.

—. 2010b. "Social Conscience and Scotland's Universities: Past, Present and Future." Forthcoming publication in the *Proceedings* of the World Universities Congress, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey, 20-24 October 2010.

Golde, Chris M. . 2005. "The Role of the Department and Discipline in Doctoral Student Attrition: Lessons from Four Departments." *The Journal of Higher Education* 76(6):669-700.

Gottlieb, Esther E. and Bruce Keith. 1997. "The Academic Research-Teaching Nexus in Eight Advanced-Industrialized Countries." *Higher Education* 34(3):397-419.

Gouldner, Alvin. 1968. "The Sociologist as Partisan: Sociology and the Welfare State." *The American Sociologist* 3:103-116.

Gouldner, Alvin W. 1979. *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class: A Frame of Reference, Theses, Conjectures, Arguments, and an Historical Perspective on the Role of Intellectuals and Intelligensia in the International Class Contest of the Modern Era*. London: Macmillan.

Gouldner, Alvin W. and Helen P. Gouldner. 1963. *Modern Sociology: An Introduction to the Study of Human Interaction*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.

Grafton, Anthony 2010. "A Crisis of the Mind and Spirit." *UCU Members' Magazine*, Spring 2010, pp. 8-10.

Graham, Barbara. 2010. "Careers for Social Scientists." University of Strathclyde Careers Service, 24 February 2010.

Graham, Jesse, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian A. Nosek. 2009. "Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of moral foundations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96(5):1029-1046.

Grayling, Anthony Clifford. 2009. "Universities are not there to spoon-feed." in *The Guardian*. London.

Gregg, Melissa 2009. "Why Academia Is No Longer A Smart Choice." *New Matilda*, 24 November 2009.

Griswold, Charles L. 1991. "Adam Smith: Conscience of Capitalism." *Wilson Quarterly* 15:53-61.

de Groot, Joanna. 1997. "After the Ivory Tower: Gender, Commodification and the 'Academic'." *Feminist Review* 55:130-142.

Gubbay, John, Chris Middleton, and Chet Ballard. 1997. "The Student's Companion to Sociology." Oxford: Blackwell.

Hall, Edward T. 1959 (1990). *The Silent Language*. London: Random House.

Halsey, A. H., and Martin Trow. 1971. *The British Academics*. London: Faber and Faber.

Halsey, Guy. 2008. “Contact Hours Mini Report.” National Union of Students & HSBC Students' Research.

Hamnett, Andrew. 2007. “University's role in local and international community.” in *The Scotsman,* 15 October 2007.

Hamovitch, William and Richard D. Morgenstern. 1977. “Children and the Productivity of Academic Women.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 48(6):633-645.

Harding, Sandra and Kathryn Norberg. 2005. “New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies: An Introduction.” *Signs* 30:2009-2015.

Harrison, Angela. 2010. “Universities facing first budget cuts in years.” in *BBC News.* 18 March 2010.

Hartley, David. 1995. “The ‘McDonaldization' of Higher Education: Food for Thought?” *Oxford Review of Education* 21(4):409-423.

—. 2004. “Education and the Scottish Economy.” in *Scottish Education, Second Edition: Post-Devolution*, edited by T. G. K. Bryce and W. M. Humes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Harvey, David. 2007. “Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 610:21-44.

Harvey, Joan C. 1985. *If I'm So Successful, Why Do I Feel Like a Fake?* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Harvie, David. 2006. “Value production and struggle in the classroom: teachers within, against and beyond capital.” *Capital and Class* 88:1-32.

Hattery, Angela J. 2003. “Sleeping in the Box, Thinking outside the Box: Student Reflections on Innovative Pedagogical Tools for Teaching about and Promoting a Greater Understanding of Social Class Inequality among Undergraduates.” *Teaching Sociology* 31(4): 412-427.

Hayek, Freidrich. 1960. “Why I Am Not a Conservative.” in *The Constitution of Liberty*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

HEFCE. 2009a. “Report shows public investment in higher education benefits the economy and society.” 1 April 2009.

—. 2009b. “Research Excellence Framework: Second consultation on the assessment and funding of research.” September 2009.

Hellström, Tomas. 2004. “Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Academic Institutional Change and the Problem of Collective Action.” *Higher Education* 48(4):511-528.

Henkel, Mary. 1999. “The Modernisation of Research Evaluation: The Case of the UK.” *Higher Education* 38(1):105-122.

Herman, Arthur. 2001. *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Higgins, Monica C. and David A. Thomas. 2001. “Constellations and Careers: Toward Understanding the Effects of Multiple Developmental Relationships.” *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 22(3):223-247.

Higher Education Statistics Agency. 2004. “Table 14 - Academic staff at UK HE institutions by location of institution, mode of employment, clinical status, principal source of salary, primary employment function, grade and gender 2002/03.”

—. 2009. “Summary of academic staff (excluding atypical) in all UK institutions 2007/08.”

—. 2010. “Table 2e - All HE students by level of study, mode of study, subject of study, domicile and gender 2008/09.”

Hill, E. Jeffrey, Alan J. Hawkins, Maria Ferris, and Michelle Weitzman. 2001. "Finding an Extra Day a Week: The Positive Influence of Perceived Job Flexibility on Work and Family Life Balance." *Family Relations* 50(1):49-58.

Hill, Paul. 2004. "Gender divide is deep." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 28 May 2004.

—. 2005. "Average graduate debt climbs to £13,500." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement,* 15 April 2005.

Hillygus, D. Sunshine. 2005. "The Missing Link: Exploring the Relationship Between Higher Education and Political Engagement." *Political Behavior,* 27(1):25-47.

Hitlin, Steven. 2008. *Moral Selves, Evil Selves: The Social Psychology of Conscience*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hockey, John. 1996. "Motives and Meaning Amongst PhD Supervisors in the Social Sciences." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 17(4):489-506.

hooks, bell. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. London: Routledge.

—. 2000. *Where We Stand: Class Matters*. London: Routledge.

Hughes, John A. , Wes W. Sharrock, and Peter J. Martin. 1995. *Understanding Classical Sociology*. London: Sage.

Huisman, Jeroen, Egbert de Weert, and Jeroen Bartelse. 2002. "Academic Careers from a European Perspective: The Declining Desirability of the Faculty Position." *The Journal of Higher Education* 73(1):141-160.

Hull, Richard. 2006. "The great lie: Markets, freedom and knowledge." Pp. 141-155 in *Neoliberal Hegemony: A Global Critique*, edited by D. Plehwe, B. Walpen, and G. Neunhöffer. London: Routledge.

Humes, Walter and Tom Bryce. 2004. "The Distinctiveness of Scottish Education." in *Scottish Education, Second Edition: Post-Devolution*, edited by T. G. K. Bryce and W. M. Humes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hutcheon, Paul. 2009. "Revealed: the spiralling wages of university principals." Pp. 8-9 in *The Sunday Herald*, 18 October 2009.

Hyun, Jenny K., Brian C. Quinn, Temina Madon, and Steve Lustig. 2006. "Graduate Student Mental Health: Needs Assessment and Utilization of Counseling Services." *Journal of College Student Development* 47(3).

The Insecure Scholar. 2009a. "Career-making journal articles will have to wait." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 20 October 2009.

—. 2009b. "The insecure scholar: On the subject of my future, I should have kept quiet." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement,* 27 October 2009.

Jacobs, Jerry A. 1996. "Gender Inequality and Higher Education." *Annual Review of Sociology* 22:153-185.

—. 2004. "The Faculty Time Divide." *Sociological Forum* 19(1):3-27.

Jacobs, Jerry A. and Sarah E. Winslow. 2004. "Overworked Faculty: Job Stresses and Family Demands." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 596:104-129.

Jacobs, Michael. 1991. *The Green Economy: Environment, Sustainable Development and the Politics of the Future*. London: Pluto Press.

Jacques, David and John Richardson. 1985. *The Future for Higher Education*. Guildford: The Society for Research into Higher Education.

Jagger, Alison M. 1989. "Love and knowledge: emotion in feminist epistemology." Pp. 145-171 in *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, edited by A. M. Jaggar and S. R. Bordo. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Jansen, Sue Curry. 1985. "Review: *Strangers in Paradise: Academics from the Working Class* by Jake Ryan and Charles Sackrey." *Theory and Society* 14(6):897-901.

Jeffries, Vincent. 2005. "Pitirim A. Sorokin's Integralism and Public Sociology." *The American Sociologist* Fall/Winter 2005:66-87.

Jenkins, Philip. 1992. *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Britain, Social Problems and Social Issues*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Jensen, Derrick. 2000. *A Language Older Than Words*. London: Souvenir Press.

Jessop, Bob. 2006. "The Third Way: Neo-Liberalism with a Human Face?" Pp. 333-366 in *New Labour und die Modernisierung Grossbritanniens*, edited by S. Berg and A. Kaiser. Augsberg: Wiβner-Verlag.

Johnson, Ronald C., Paul R. Dokecki, and O. Hobart Mowrer. 1972. *Conscience, Contract, and Social Reality: Theory and Research in Behavioral Science*. London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Johnson, R.J. 1996. "Managing How Academics Manage." Pp. 101-118 in *Working in Higher Education*, edited by R. Cuthbert. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Jurik, Nancy C. 2004. "Imagining Justice: Challenging the Privatization of Public Life." *Social Problems* 51(1):1-15.

Kain, Edward L. 2006. "Bridging the Gap between Cultures of Teaching and Cultures of Research." *Teaching Sociology* 34(4):325-340.

Kameen, Paul 1995. "Studying Professionally: Pedagogical Relationships at the Graduate Level." *College English* 57(4):448-460.

Kane, Ruth, Susan Sandretto, and Chris Heath. 2002. "Telling Half the Story: A Critical Review of Research on the Teaching Beliefs and Practices of University Academics." *Review of Educational Research* 72(2):177-228.

Kaufman, Peter. 2005. "Middle-Class Social Reproduction: The Activation and Negotiation of Structural Advantages." *Sociological Forum* 20(2):245-270.

Keay, Douglas 1987. "AIDS, education and the year 2000!" *Woman's Own*, 31 October 1987, pp. 8-10.

Kelsey, Jane. 1998. "Privatizing the Universities." *Journal of Law and Society* 25(1):51-70.

Keltner, Dacher and Jason Marsh 2006. "We are all bystanders." *The Greater Good*.

Kerevan, George. 2004. "Beyond the Ivory Tower: the Changing Social Role of the Scottish University." in *Scottish Education, Second Edition: Post-Devolution*, edited by T. G. K. Bryce and W. M. Humes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Kerr, Ian J. 1996. "Discontent in Academia: Straws from Winnipeg." *Economic and Political Weekly* 31(29):1924-1926.

Kettler, David. 2005. *Adam Ferguson: His Social and Political Thought, Second Edition*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Kirschner, Suzanne R. 1987. "'Then What Have I to Do with Thee?' On Identity, Fieldwork, and Ethnographic Knowledge." *Cultural Anthropology* 2(2):211-234.

Klein, Naomi. 2002. *Fences and Windows: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Globalization Debate*. London: Flamingo.

—. 2007. *The Shock Doctrine*. London: Penguin Books.

Kluger, Jeffrey 2007. “What Makes Us Moral.” *Time Magazine*, 21 November 2007.

Krugman, Paul. 2007. *The Conscience of a Liberal*. London: W. W. Norton.

Lacy, Fiona J. and Barry A. Sheehan. 1997. “Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff: An International Perspective.” *Higher Education* 34(3):305-322.

LaGravenese, Richard. 2007. “The Freedom Writers.” USA: Paramount Pictures.

Lakoff, George. 1995. “Metaphor, Morality, and Politics.” Talmage, California: The Institute for Cultural Democracy.

—. 2002. *Moral Politics: How liberals and conservatives think*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lambert, Richard and Steve Smith. 2009. “Higher education’s importance goes well beyond teaching.” in *The Guardian*. London.

Lamm, Rolene. 2004. “Learning and Affect in the Research Higher Degree.” in *Association for Active Educational Researchers’ Conference Proceedings*, edited by P. L. Jeffery. Melbourne, Australia: AARE.

Law, Alex. 2006. “Sociology and the pedagogy of common sense: dialogues with ‘non-traditional’ sociology students in a new Scottish university.” *Learning and Teaching in the Social Sciences* 3(3):151-169.

Law, Alex and Hazel Work. 2007. “Ambiguities and Resistance: Academic Labour and the Commodification of Higher Education.” Pp. 137-162 in *New Labour / Hard Labor? Restructuring and Resistance Inside the Welfare Industry*, edited by G. Mooney and A. Law. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Laws, David and Paul Marshall. 2004. “The Orange Book: Reclaiming Liberalism.” London: Profile Books.

Lawson, Neal. 2006. “Foreword.” Pp. 11-13 in *The Good Society*, edited by J. Rutherford and H. Shah. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Leahey, Erin. 2006. “Gender Differences in Productivity: Research Specialization as a Missing Link.” *Gender & Society* 20(6):754-780.

Lee, Alison and Carolyn Williams. 1999. “Forged in Fire: Narratives of Trauma in PhD Supervision Pedagogy.” *Southern Review* 32(1):6-26.

Leigh, David and Rob Evans. 2010. “Salaries soar for heads of British universities.” in *The Guardian*. 14 March 2010.

Levin, John S. 2006. “Faculty Work: Tensions between Educational and Economic Values.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 77(1):62-88.

Lindholm, Jennifer A. 2004. “Pathways to the Professoriate: The Role of Self, Others, and Environment in Shaping Academic Career Aspirations.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 75(6):603-635.

Lipsett, Anthea. 2008. “More female academics working in universities.” in *The Guardian,* 28 February 2008.

Lottes, Ilsa L. and Peter J. Kuriloff. 1994. “The Impact of College Experience on Political and Social Attitudes.” *Sex Roles* 31:31-54.

Luck, Philip. 2007. “Sociology as a Practice in Humanity: Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, and Social Responsibility.” *Critical Sociology* 33:937-955.

Lukács, Georg. 1920. *History and Class Consciousness*. Translated by R. Livingstone. London: Merlin Press.

Lynch, Kathleen and Cathleen O'Neill. 1994. "The Colonisation of Social Class in Education." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 15(3):307-324.

Madsen-Brooks, Leslie. 2005. "Depression in the Academy." in *The Clutter Museum*, 27 November 2005. http://cluttermuseum.blogspot.com/2005/11/depression-in-academy.html (accessed 11 March 2010).

Mahony, Pat and Christine Zmroczek. 1997. *Class matters: 'working-class' women's perspectives on social class*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Maitles, Henry. 2007. "'I didn't come into teaching for this!' The impact of the market on teacher professionalism." Pp. 117-135 in *New Labour / Hard Labour?*, edited by G. Mooney and A. Law. Bristol: Policy Press.

Manning, Rachel, Mark Levine, and Alan Collins. 2007. "The Kitty Genovese Murder and the Social Psychology of Helping: The parable of the 38 witnesses." *American Psychologist* 62:555-562.

Marcussen, Kristen, Christian Ritter, and Deborah J. Safron. 2004. "The Role of Identity Salience and Commitment in the Stress Process." *Sociological Perspectives* 47(3):289-312.

Marsh, Ian and Mike Keating. 2005. "Making Sense of Society: An Introduction to Sociology." London: Longman.

Marshall, Gordon. 1990. *In Praise of Sociology*. London: Routledge.

Marshall, Ian M. 2009. "A retrograde step." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*.

Marsland, David. 2004. "Character, liberty and social structure." Pp. 101-114 in *Economy and Virtue*, edited by D. O'Keeffe. London: The Institute for Economic Affairs.

Marx, Karl. 1888. "Theses On Feuerbach." Marxists.org.

Maskell, Duke and Ian Robinson. 2001. *The New Idea of a University*. London: Haven Books.

Maslow, Abraham. 1943. "A Theory of Human Motivation." *Psychological Review* 50:370-396.

—. 1968. *Toward a Psychology of Being*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Mason, Mary Ann and Marc Goulden. 2004. "Marriage and Baby Blues: Redefining Gender Equity in the Academy." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 596:86-103.

Matthews, Kent, Patrick Minford, Stephen Nickell, and Elhanan Helpman. 1987. "Mrs Thatcher's Economic Policies 1979-1987." *Economic Policy* 2(5):59-101.

Mauss, Marcel. 1927 (2005). *The Nature of Sociology*. Translated by W. Jeffrey. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Max-Neef, Manfred A., Antonio Elizalde, and Martin Hopenhayn. 1991. *Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections.* New York: Apex.

McCrone, David. 1992. *Understanding Scotland: Sociology of a Stateless Nation*. London: Routledge.

—. 2004. "Culture, Nationalism, and Scottish Education: Homogeneity and Diversity." in *Scottish Education, Second Edition: Post-Devolution*, edited by T. G. K. Bryce and W. M. Humes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

—. 2005. "The Same, But Different: Why Scotland?" Paper for the *Annual Seminar of the BSA Scottish Studies Study Group,* 27th September 2005.

McCullough, Michael E. 2002. "Savoring Life, Past and Present: Explaining What Hope and Gratitude Share in Common." *Psychological Inquiry* 13(4):302-304.

McDonagh, Edward C. 1943. "Contemporary Leaders of American Sociology." *American Sociological Review* 8(6):717-718.

McGreal, Chris. 2010. “A pilot’s life: exhausting hours for meagre wages.” in *The Guardian*, 11 January 2010.

McIntosh, Alastair. 2001. *Soil and Soul: People Versus Corporate Power*. London: Aurum Press.

McLaughlin, Neil, Lisa Kowalchuk, and Kerry Turcotte. 2005. “Why Sociology Does Not Need to Be Saved: Analytic Reflections on Public Sociologies.” *The American Sociologist* Fall/Winter 2005:133-151.

McNaughton, David. 1994. *Moral Vision: An Introduction to Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Mecklin, John M. 1920. *An Introduction to Social Ethics: Social Conscience in a Democracy*. London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.

Mendoza, Pilar. 2007. “Academic Capitalism and Doctoral Student Socialization: A Case Study.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 78(1):71-96.

Mikes, George. 1986. *How to be a Brit*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Milem, Jeffrey F., Joseph B. Berger, and Eric L. Dey. 2000. “Faculty Time Allocation: A Study of Change over Twenty Years.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 71(4):454-475.

Milgram, Stanley. 1963. “Behavioral Study of Obedience.” *Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology* 67:371-378.

Milkie, Melissa A. and Pia Peltola. 1999. “Playing All the Roles: Gender and the Work-Family Balancing Act.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 61(2):476-490.

Miller, David. 2007. “In Defence of Public Sociology.” in *European Sociological Association 8th Conference*. Glasgow.

Miller, Henry. 1995. “Dons, Domination and the State.” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 16(2):259-266.

Miller, Richard W. 1992. *Moral Differences: Truth, Justice, and Conscience in a World of Conflict*. Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Mills, C. Wright. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

—. 2008. *The Politics of Truth: Selected Writings of C. Wright Mills*, Edited by J. H. Summers. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Misztal, Barbara. 2007. *Intellectuals and the Public Good: Creativity and Civil Courage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mitchell, David. 2009. “Pointless studies are the key to evolution: the demise of the silly survey strikes at the heart of being civilised “ in *The Guardian*, 27 September 2009.

Mooney, Gerry and Alex Law. 2007. *New Labour / Hard Labour? Restructuring and Resistance Inside the Welfare Industry*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Morgan, John. 2009. “Lord Browne Begins.” in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 7 December 2009.

—. 2010. “Audit overload.” in *The Times Higher Education Supplement,* 4 March 2010.

Moriarty, Philip. 2009. “The Impact Factor.” *Universities & Colleges Union Magazine* November 2009:13-15.

Mortimer, Jeylan T. and Jon Lorence. 1979. “Work Experience and Occupational Value Socialization: A Longitudinal Study “ *The American Journal of Sociology* 84(6):1361-1385.

Moses, Ingrid. 1990. “Teaching, Research and Scholarship in Different Disciplines.” *Higher Education* 19(3):351-375.

Mudge, Stephanie Lee. 2008. "What is neo-liberalism?" *Socio-Economic Review* 6:703-31.

Mühlbauer, Peter Josef. 2006. "Frontiers and dystopias: Libertarian ideology in science fiction." Pp. 156-170 in *Neoliberal Hegemony: A Global Critique*, edited by D. Plehwe, B. Walpen, and G. Neunhöffer. London: Routledge.

Mulkay, Michael. 1985. *The Word and the World: Explorations in the Form of Sociological Analysis*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Murlis, Helen and Frank Hartle. 1996. "Does it Pay to Work in Universities?" Pp. 46-57 in *Working in Higher Education*, edited by R. Cuthbert. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Murray, Charles. 1990. *The Emerging British Underclass*. London: The Institute for Economic Affairs Welfare Unit.

Murray, Janet. 2010. "Colleagues and competitors." in *The Guardian*.

Murray, Kate and Ranald MacDonald. 1997. "The Disjunction between Lecturers' Conceptions of Teaching and Their Claimed Educational Practice " *Higher Education* 33(3):331-349.

National Health Service (UK). 2007. "Health Library: Depression (Introduction)."

—. 2010. "Mental Health: One in four affected."

National Union of Students. 2008. "NUS Student Experience Report."

—. 2010. "Commercial Services."

Neafsey, John. 2006. *A Sacred Voice is Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Neave, Guy and Henry Cowper. 1979. "Higher Education in Scotland." *European Journal of Education* 14(1):7-24.

Neumann, Anna. 2006. "Professing Passion: Emotion in the Scholarship of Professors at Research Universities." *American Educational Research Journal* 43(3):381-424.

Newall, David. 2004. "Scottish Higher Education Policy and Funding." in *Scottish Education, Second Edition: Post-Devolution*, edited by T. G. K. Bryce and W. M. Humes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Newell, Mike. 2003. "Mona Lisa Smile." USA: Columbia Pictures.

Newman, Melanie. 2008. "Arts PhDs still out of favour with sheep farmers." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement,* 23 October 2008.

Nixon, Jon. 2001. "'Not without Dust and Heat': The Moral Bases of the 'New' Academic Professionalism." *British Journal of Educational Studies* 49(2):173-186.

Nuehring, Elane M. and Sara Beck Fein. 1978. "Tacit Choices: A Process of Becoming." *The Pacific Sociological Review* 21(2):159-172.

Office for National Statistics. 2002. "Students in further and higher education: by type of course and gender, 1970/71-1997/98: Social Trends 30."

O'Gorman, Francis. 2009. "Goodbye to blue skies research? The new Research Excellence Framework has some dangerous wording about measuring the 'impact' of academic studies." in *The Guardian*, 19 December 2009.

O'Keeffe, Dennis. 2004. "Economy and Virtue: Essays on the Theme of Markets and Morality." London: The Institute of Economic Affairs.

Orwell, George. 1949 (1977). *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. New York: Penguin.

Pantazis, Christina and David Gordon. 2000. *Tackling inequalities: Where are we now and what can be done?* . Bristol: The Policy Press.

Park, Alison 1992. "Women, Men, and the Academic Hierarchy: Exploring the Relationship between Rank and Sex." *Oxford Review of Education* 18(3):227-239.

Park, Shelley M. 1996. "Research, Teaching, and Service: Why Shouldn't Women's Work Count?" *The Journal of Higher Education* 67(1):46-84.

Parker, Wayne D. 1997. "An Empirical Typology of Perfectionism in Academically Talented Children." *American Educational Research Journal* 34(3):545-562.

Pascarella, Ernest T. 1980. "Student-Faculty Informal Contact and College Outcomes." *Review of Educational Research* 50(4):545-595.

Paterson, Lindsay. 2003a. "The Survival of the Democratic Intellect: Academic Values in Scotland and England." *Higher Education Quarterly* 57(1):67-93.

—. 2003b. *Scottish Education in the Twentieth Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Paterson, Lindsay and Ross Bond. 2005. "Higher Education and Critical Citizenship: a survey of academics' views in Scotland and England." *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* 13(2):205-231.

Peck, Jamie, and Adam Tickell. 2002. "Neoliberalizing Space." *Antipode* 34(3):380-404.

Perna, Laura W. 2001. "The Relationship between Family Responsibilities and Employment Status among College and University Faculty." *The Journal of Higher Education* 72(5):584-611.

Phillips, Estelle M. and D. S. Pugh. 1987. *How to Get a PhD: A handbook for students and their supervisors*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Pink, Dan. 2009. "The Surprising Science of Motivation." in *TED Global: The Substance of Things Not Seen*. Oxford.

Polanyi, Karl. 1944 (2001). *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Powdermaker, Hortense. 1966. *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist*. London: W. W. Norton & Company Ltd.

Power, Sally and Geoff Whitty. 2002. "Bernstein and the Middle Class." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 23(4):595-606.

Press, Julie E. and Eleanor Townsley. 1998. "Wives' and Husbands' Housework Reporting: Gender, Class, and Social Desirability." *Gender and Society* 12(2):188-218.

Prichard, Craig and Hugh Willmott. 1997. "Just how managed is the McUniversity?" *Organization Studies* 18(2):287-317.

Putney, Norella M., Dawn E. Alley, and Vern L. Bengtson. 2005. "Social Gerontology as Public Sociology in Action." *The American Sociologist* Fall/Winter 2005:88-104.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. 2000. "Subject Benchmark Statements: Sociology." Gloucester.

RAE. 2005. "RAE 2008: Guidance on Submissions."

Ramsden, Paul. 2007. "Patterns of higher education institutions in the UK: Seventh Report." Universities UK.

Readings, Bill. 1996. *The University in Ruins*. London: Harvard University Press.

Reibig, André. 2005. "Higher Education in Scotland: Second Update Report." Edinburgh: Scottish Funding Council.

Reid, Harry. 2010. "Union could be in jeopardy if the left doesn't get it right." in *The Herald,* 11 May 2010.

Reisz, Matthew. 2009. "You don't have to be fixated to work here..." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement,* 12 March 2009.

Rex, John. 1973. *Discovering Sociology: Studies in Sociological Theory and Method*. London: Routledge.

—. 1997. "Discovering Sociology." Pp. 4-9 in *The Student's Companion to Sociology*, edited by Gubbay, Middleton and Ballard. Oxford: Blackwell's.

Rich, Adrienne. 2001. *Arts of the Possible: Essays and Conversations*. London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Ritter, Christian, D. E. Benson, and Clint Synder. 1990. "Belief in a Just World and Depression." *Sociological Perspectives* 33(2):235-252.

Robertson, David Brian. 1986. "Mrs. Thatcher's Employment Prescription: An Active Neo-Liberal Labor Market Policy." *Journal of Public Policy,* 6(3):275-296.

Rodriguez, Richard. 1982. *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. New York: Dial Press.

Rothblum, Esther D. 1988. "Leaving the Ivory Tower: Factors Contributing to Women's Voluntary Resignation from Academia." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 10(2):14-17.

Rottenberg, Jonathan. 2009 "The continuing stigma of depression." *Psychology Today* 7 November 2009.

Russell Group. 2009. "Research at Russell Group universities." http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/research/ (accessed 10 August 2009).

Rutherford, Jonathan and Hetan Shah. 2006. *The Good Society*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Ryan, Alan. 2005. "New Labour and Higher Education." *Oxford Review of Education* 31(1):87-100.

Salwak, Dale. 2009. "Love me, love my work." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 30 July 2009.

Sayer, Andrew. 2005. *The Moral Significance of Class.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schöller, Oliver and Olaf Groh-Samberg. 2006. "The education of neoliberalism." Pp. 171-187 in *Neoliberal Hegemony: A Global Critique*, edited by D. Plehwe, B. Walpen, and G. Neunhöffer. London: Routledge.

Schumacher, E. F. 1973. *Small is Beautiful: a study of economics as if people mattered.* London: Vintage.

Schwarzweller, Harry K. 1960. "Values and Occupational Choice." *Social Forces* 39(2):126-135.

Scott, Joyce A. and Nancy A. Bereman. 1992. "Competition versus Collegiality: Academe's Dilemma for the 1990s." *The Journal of Higher Education* 63(6):684-698.

Scott, Peter. 2003. "Challenges to Academic Values and the Organization of Academic Work in a Time of Globalization." *Higher Education in Europe* 28(3):295-306.

—. 2010. "The expansion of higher education is a key element in our democracy." in *The Guardian,* 16 March 2010.

Scottish Funding Council. 2009. "Corporate Plan 2009-2012."

Seldon, Arthur. 2007. *Capitalism: A Condensed Version*. London: The Institute for Economic Affairs.

Selznick, Philip. 1992. *The Moral Commonwealth: Social Theory and the Promise of Community.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sharpe, Kevin 2009. “Teach them how to think.” in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 16 July 2009.

Shattock, Michael. 2001. “The Academic Profession in Britain: A Study in the Failure to Adapt to Change.” *Higher Education* 41:27-47.

Shaw, Mary, Daniel Dorling, David Gordon, and George Davey Smith. 1999. *The widening gap: Inequalities and policy in Britain*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Shepherd, Jessica. 2008. “UK is second in the world at research.” in *The Guardian*, 31 July 2008.

—. 2009a. “Humanities research threatened by demands for ‘economic impact’.” in *The Guardian*, 13 October 2009.

—. 2009b. “Overseas students prop up university finances.” in *The Guardian*, 14 October 2009.

—. 2009c. “University students need to be more demanding, says Mandelson.” in *The Guardian*, 20 October 2009.

Silverman, David. 2007. *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book about Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Slaughter, Sheila and Gary Rhoades. 2004. *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy: Market, State and Higher Education*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Smith, Adam. 1759 (2002). *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Edited by Knud Haakonssen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Soffer, Reba N. 1982. “Why Do Disciplines Fail? The Strange Case of British Sociology.” *The English Historical Review* 97(385):767-802.

Stake, Robert E. 1995. *The Art of Case Study Research*. London: Sage.

Staw, Barry M., Robert I. Sutton, and Lisa H. Pelled. 1994. “Employee Positive Emotion and Favorable Outcomes at the Workplace.” *Organization Science* 5(1):51-71.

Steck, Henry. 2003. “Corporatization of the University: Seeking Conceptual Clarity.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 585:66-83.

Steger, Michael F. 2009. “Meaningful Work: What makes work meaningful?” *Psychology Today*, 9 June 2009.

Sutherland, Stewart. 2004. “Current Priorities in Higher Education.” in *Scottish Education, Second Edition: Post-Devolution*, edited by T. G. K. Bryce and W. M. Humes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Swain, Harriet. 2006. “No, life is not just one long holiday.” in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 14 July 2006.

Szafran, Robert F. 1982. “Undergraduates and Sociology.” *Teaching Sociology* 9(2):136-150.

Szreter, Simon. 2001. “A New Political Economy: The Importance of Social Capital.” Pp. 290-299 in *The Global Third Way Debate*, edited by A. Giddens. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Tannen, Deborah. 1986. *That’s Not What I Meant: The Sociolinguistics of Conversation*. London: Virago.

Tasker, Mary and David Packham. 1994. “Changing Cultures? Government Intervention in Higher Education 1987-93.” *British Journal of Educational Studies* 42(2):150-162.

Tate, Gary. 1996. “Review: Working-Class Academics.” *College English* 58(6):716-721.

Technopolis. 2009. “Identification and dissemination of lessons learned by institutions participating in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) bibliometrics pilot.” HEFCE.

Teichler, Ulrich. 2008. "Diversification? Trends and explanations of the shape and size of higher education." *Higher Education* 56:349-379.

Teske, Nathan. 1997. "Beyond Altruism: Identity-Construction as Moral Motive in Political Explanation." *Political Psychology* 18(1):71-91.

Thoits, Peggy A. 1989. "The Sociology of Emotions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 15:317-342.

Thompson, Kenneth and Jeremy Tunstall. 1971. "Sociological Perspectives." London: Penguin.

Thompson, Neil. 1993. *Anti-Discriminatory Practice*. London: Macmillan.

Thoreson, Richard W. 1984. "The Professor at Risk: Alcohol Abuse in Academe." *The Journal of Higher Education* 55(1):56-72.

Thorne, Marie and Rob Cuthbert. 1996. "Autonomy, Bureaucracy and Competition: The ABC of Control in Higher Ecuation." Pp. 170-193 in *Working in Higher Education*, edited by R. Cuthbert. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Thornton, Margaret. 2009. "Universities Upside Down: The Impact of the New Knowledge Economy." *Canadian Journal of Women and Law* 21:375-93.

Thorsen, Elizabeth J. 1996. "Stress in Academe: What Bothers Professors?" *Higher Education* 31(4):471-489

Tien, Flora F. and Robert T. Blackburn. 1996. "Faculty Rank System, Research Motivation, and Faculty Research Productivity: Measure Refinement and Theory Testing." *The Journal of Higher Education* 67(1):2-22.

Tinto, Vincent. 1997. "Classrooms as Communities: Exploring the Educational Character of Student Persistence." *The Journal of Higher Education* 68(6):599-623.

Tittle, Charles. 2004. "The Arrogance of Public Sociology." *Social Forces* 82:1-6.

de Tocqueville, Alexis. 1835 (1998). *Democracy in America*. London: Wordsworth.

Tokarczyk, Michelle M. and Elizabeth A. Fay. 1993. "Working-Class Women in the Academy: Laborers in the Knowledge Factory." Boston: University of Massachusetts Press.

Trow, Martin. 1998. "American Perspectives on British Higher Education under Thatcher and Major." *Oxford Review of Education* 24(1):111-129.

Turner, Jonathan H. 2005. "Is Public Sociology Such a Good Idea?" *The American Sociologist* Fall/Winter 2005:27-45.

Tysome, Tony 2006. "Lecture hours rise." in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*.

Universities and Colleges Union. 2006. "Reform of higher education research funding and assessment: UCU response."

—. 2007a. "Use of fixed-term contracts in the employment of UK academic staff 1995-6 to 2005-6."

—. 2007b. "Fixed-term: the scandal continues."

Universities Scotland. 2006. "Paying Dividends: Measuring the impact of public investment in Scottish higher education."

—. 2008. "Briefing: How is Higher Education Funded?"

The University of Glasgow Story. 2008. "Academic Posts: Sociology." http://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/chair-and-lectureship/?id=821 (accessed 27 April 2010).

University of Strathclyde. 2009. "Code of Practice on Investigations on Human Beings."

University of Strathclyde Planning Team. 2007. "Investing in Excellence: Next Steps 2007-2011." Glasgow.

Välimaa, Jussi. 1998. “Culture and Identity in Higher Education Research.” *Higher Education* 36(2):119-138.

Vallerand, Robert J., Luc G. Pelletier, Marc R. Blais, Nathalie M. Brière, Caroline Senécal, and Evelyne F. Vallières. 1992. “The Academic Motivation Scale: A Measure of Intrinsic, Extrinsic, and Amotivation in Education.” *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 52:1003-1017.

de Valero, Yaritza Ferrer 2001. “Departmental Factors Affecting Time-to-Degree and Completion Rates of Doctoral Students at One Land-Grant Research Institution.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 72(3) 341-367.

Walkerdine, Valerie. 1989. “Femininity as Performance.” *Oxford Review of Education* 15(3):267-279.

Walmsley, Jane. 2003. *Brit-think, Ameri-think: A Transatlantic Survival Guide*. London: Penguin.

Walsh, R. P. 1957. *The Rise of the Social Conscience*. London: Michael Shelton & Murray.

Weber, Max. 1897 (1994). “The Definition of Sociology.” edited by W. Heydebrand: Continuum.

—. 1922. “Science as a Vocation.” Pp. 524-555 in *Gesammelte Aufsatze zur Wissenschaftslehre*. Tubingen: Johannes Winkelmann

Weir, Peter. 1989. “Dead Poets Society.” USA: Touchstone Pictures.

Welch, Anthony. 1998. “The End of Certainty? The Academic Profession and the Challenge of Change.” *Comparative Education Review* 42(1):1-14.

Wennerås, Christine and Agnes Wold. 1997. “Nepotism and sexism in peer-review.” *Nature* 387:341-343.

Werts, Charles E. and Donivan J. Watley. 1968. “Determinants of Changes in Career Plans During College.” *Sociology of Education* 41(4):401-405.

von Werlhof, Claudia. 2008. “The Consequences of Globalization and Neoliberal Policies. What are the Alternatives?” *Global Research*.

Wild, C. Jane. 2008. “2007/08 HESA Non-Credit-Bearing (NCB) Record Collection (Ref: C07015).” Higher Education Statistics Agency.

Williams, Walter E. 2004. “The argument for free markets: morality versus efficiency.” Pp. 34-51 in *Economy and Virtue*, edited by D. O’Keeffe. London: The Institute for Economic Affairs.

Willmott, Hugh. 2003. “Commercialising higher education in the UK: the state, industry and peer review.” *Studies in Higher Education* 28(2):129-141.

Wilson, Tom. 1991. “The proletarianisation of academic labour.” *Human Relations Journal* 22:250-262.

Wilson, Valerie. 1999. *The Secret Life of Money: Exposing the Private Parts of Personal Money*. New York: Allen & Unwin.

Wolf, Alison. 2002. *Does Education Matter? Myths about Education and Economic Growth*. London: Penguin Books.

Wolfe, Alan. 1989. *Whose Keeper? Social Science and Moral Obligation*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Wolff, Jonathan. 2009. “Lecturers who (used to) lunch.” in *The Guardian,* 3 March 2009.

Wolfgang, Mary E. and William D. Dowling. 1981. “Differences in Motivation of Adult and Younger Undergraduates.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 52(6):640-648.

Woolf, Virginia. 1929. *A Room of One’s Own*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Yates, Charlotte. 2002. “In Defence of Unions: A Critique of the Third Way.” *Studies in Political Economy* 67:123-131.

Yin, Robert K. 1994. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (second edition).* London: Sage.

Ylijoki, Oili-Helena. 2003. “Entangled in academic capitalism? A case-study on changing ideals and practices of university research.” *Higher Education* 45:307-335.

van Yperen, Nico W. and Mariët Hagedoorn. 2003. “Do High Job Demands Increase Intrinsic Motivation or Fatigue or Both? The Role of Job Control and Job Social Support.” *The Academy of Management Journal* 46(3):339-348.

de Zilwa, Deanna. 2005. “Using Entrepreneurial Activities as a Means of Survival: Investigating the Processes Used by Australian Universities to Diversify Their Revenue Streams.” *Higher Education* 50(3):387-411.

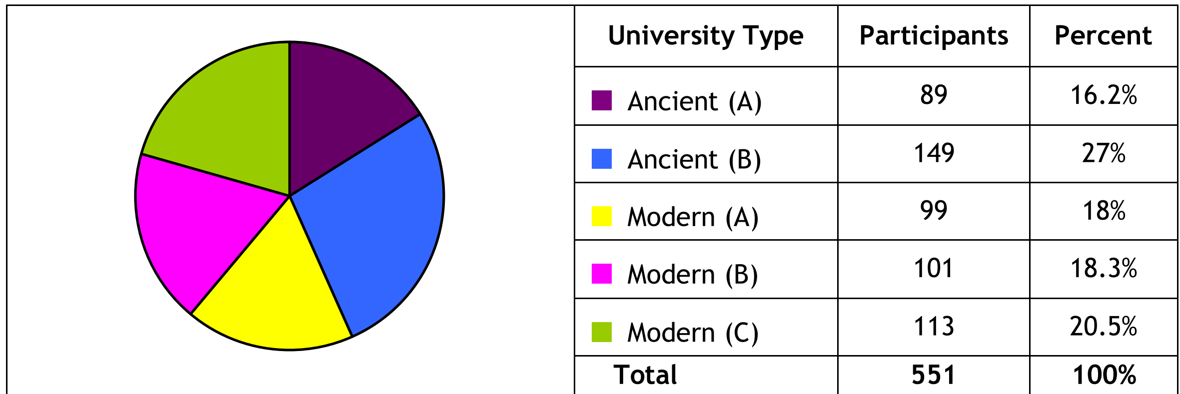
Appendix
Undergraduate Survey Data

Anonymous online surveys were conducted between April and June 2008, with 551 undergraduate sociology students at five universities in Scotland. The surveys were hosted on Surveymonkey.com, and all data was stored securely. Questions were all multiple-choice, with the possibility of writing in additional answers. Some allowed a single answer, presented below with pie charts or stacked-bar graphs,[119] and some allowed multiple answers, presented with tables or bar graphs. The following text was presented at the start of each survey:

> Thank you for choosing to participate in this survey.
>
> Please answer as many questions as you can – but don't feel pressured to answer all of them if you don't want to. Also, **please remember to click "done" at the end!**
>
> This survey consists of 20 questions plus a demographic section. It should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers, and all information will be kept anonymous and confidential. **Please be honest**!
>
> When I ask about social problems, this means **whatever you consider to be a social problem**. This survey is not about your political views, and I've tried to make it as neutral as possible.
>
> **Many multiple-choice questions are randomised,** so answers will be in a different order each time the page is loaded. This is to ensure that responses are not biased due to the order of available answers.
>
> At the end of the survey, you will be invited to enter your e-mail address for a chance to win a £50 book voucher, as a thank-you for taking the survey – this will happen after your answers have been submitted, so your e-mail address will not be connected to your answers in any way. You will receive an e-mail in summer 2008 to notify you whether you have won.
>
> **About the Project**
>
> The primary investigator is Myshele Goldberg, a PhD student at the University of Strathclyde. Her e-mail is myshele @ gmail . com (no spaces). This project seeks to take a closer look at the attitudes of sociologists and sociology students in Scotland, in particular motivations for studying sociology, and attitudes about social problems, social conscience, and sociology's wider role in society. If you require an independent contact for any questions or concerns, please contact Professor David Miller, davidmiller @ strath . ac . uk (no spaces).

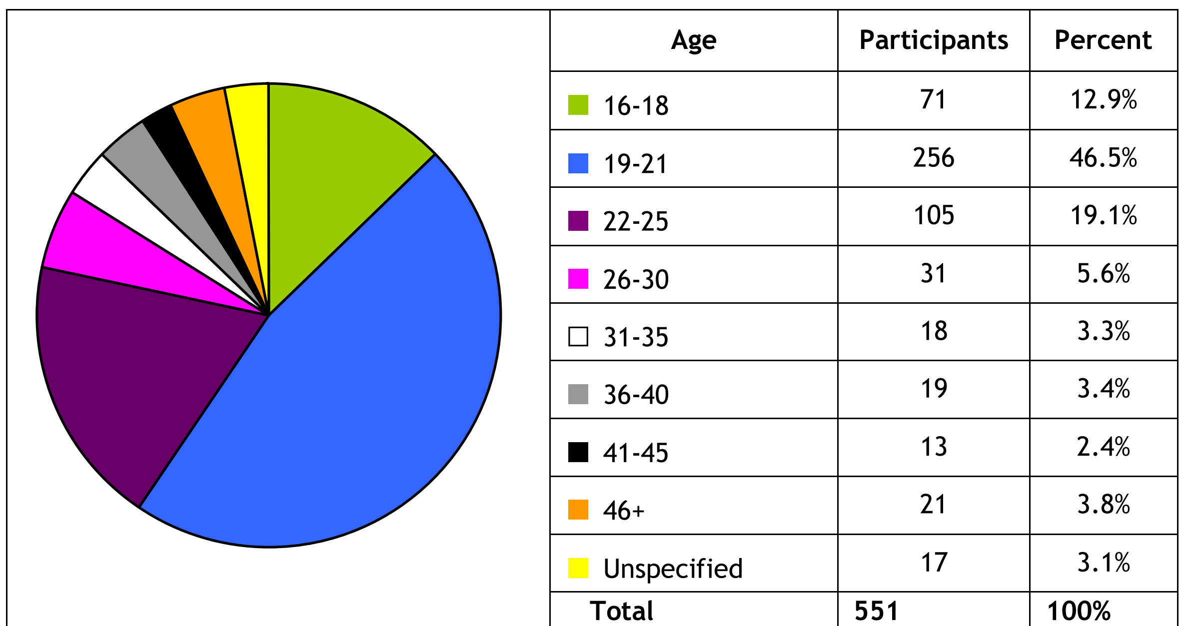
[119] Figures of less than 5% are not written on the stacked-bar graphs for the sake of legibility.

Universities Represented



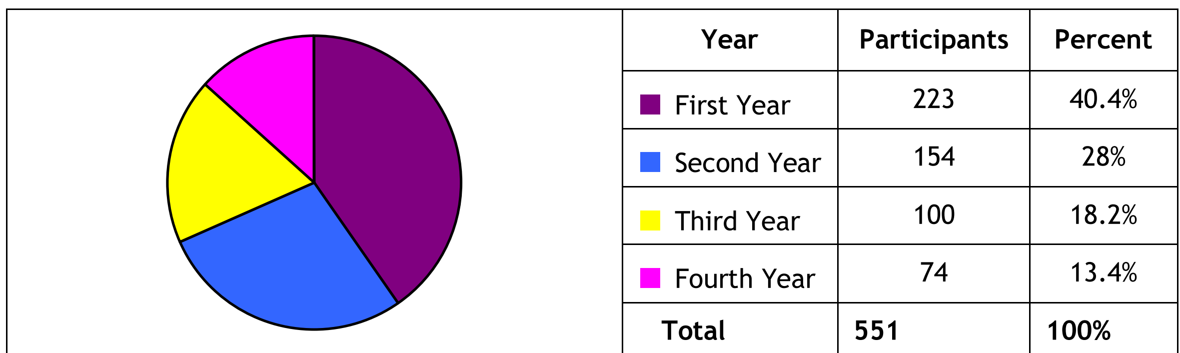
University Type	Participants	Percent
Ancient (A)	89	16.2%
Ancient (B)	149	27%
Modern (A)	99	18%
Modern (B)	101	18.3%
Modern (C)	113	20.5%
Total	**551**	**100%**

Age Range



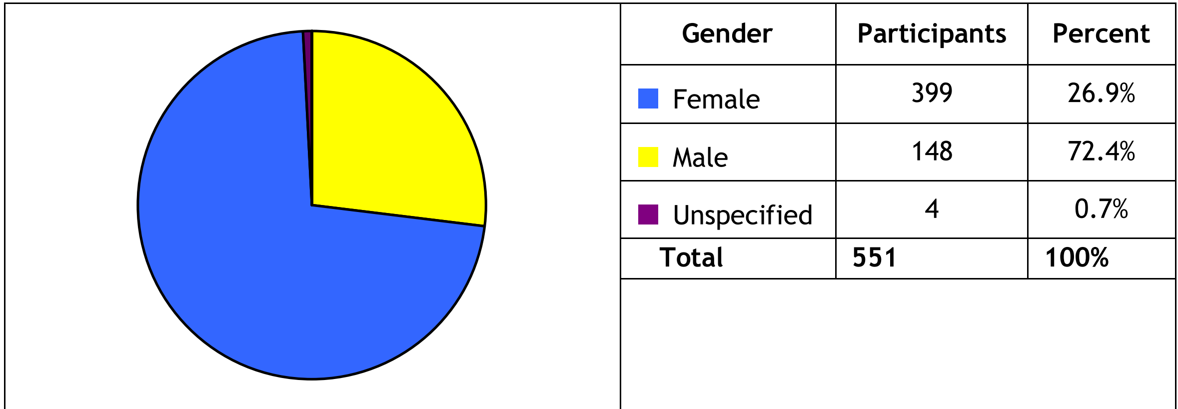
Age	Participants	Percent
16-18	71	12.9%
19-21	256	46.5%
22-25	105	19.1%
26-30	31	5.6%
31-35	18	3.3%
36-40	19	3.4%
41-45	13	2.4%
46+	21	3.8%
Unspecified	17	3.1%
Total	**551**	**100%**

Year at University



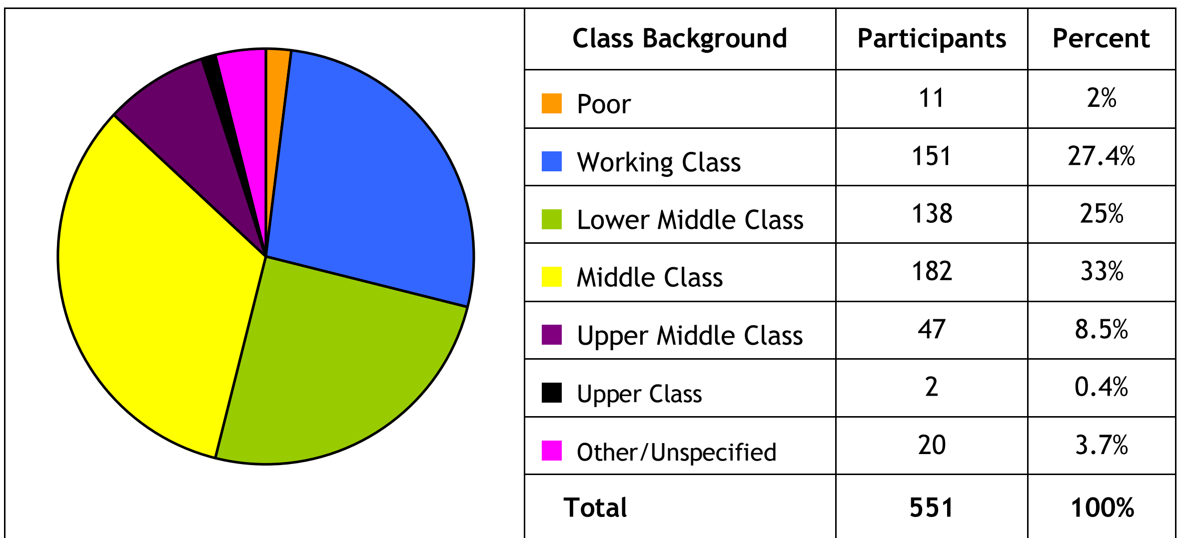
Year	Participants	Percent
First Year	223	40.4%
Second Year	154	28%
Third Year	100	18.2%
Fourth Year	74	13.4%
Total	**551**	**100%**

Gender



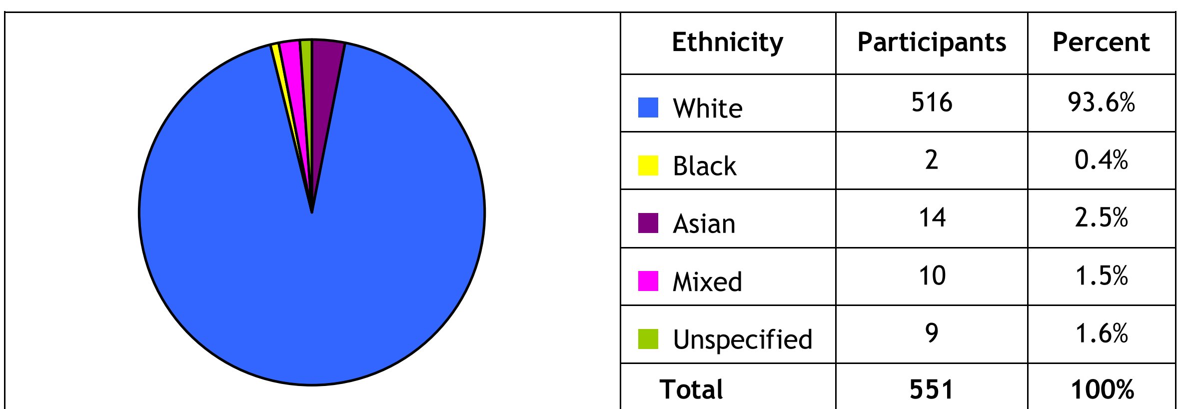
Gender	Participants	Percent
Female	399	26.9%
Male	148	72.4%
Unspecified	4	0.7%
Total	**551**	**100%**

Class Background



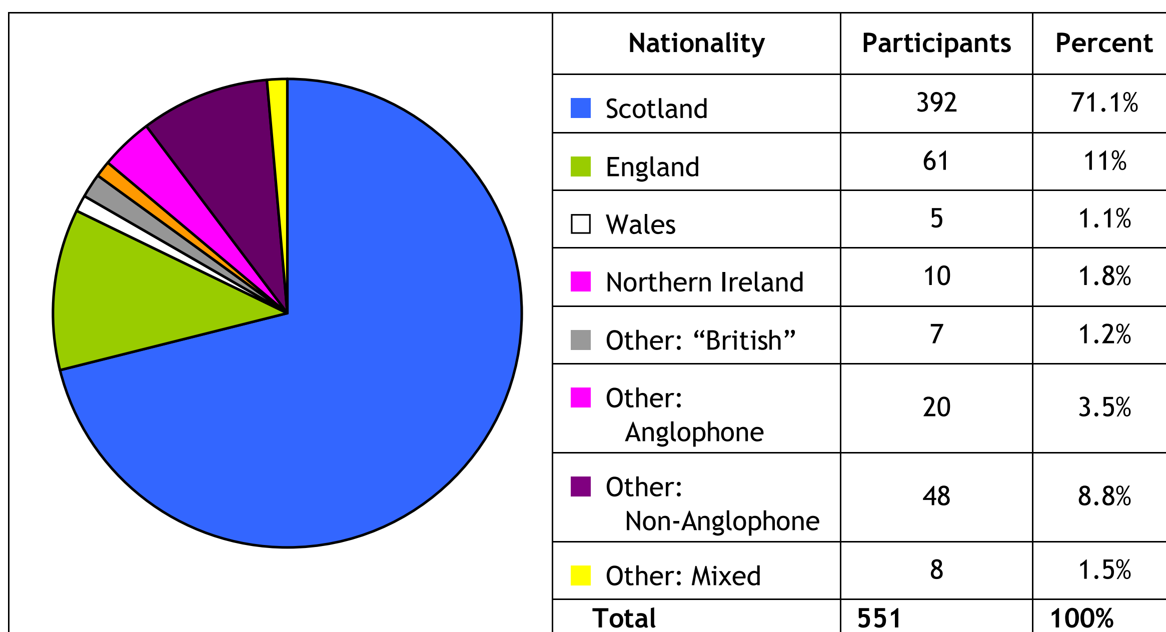
Class Background	Participants	Percent
Poor	11	2%
Working Class	151	27.4%
Lower Middle Class	138	25%
Middle Class	182	33%
Upper Middle Class	47	8.5%
Upper Class	2	0.4%
Other/Unspecified	20	3.7%
Total	**551**	**100%**

Ethnicity



Ethnicity	Participants	Percent
White	516	93.6%
Black	2	0.4%
Asian	14	2.5%
Mixed	10	1.5%
Unspecified	9	1.6%
Total	**551**	**100%**

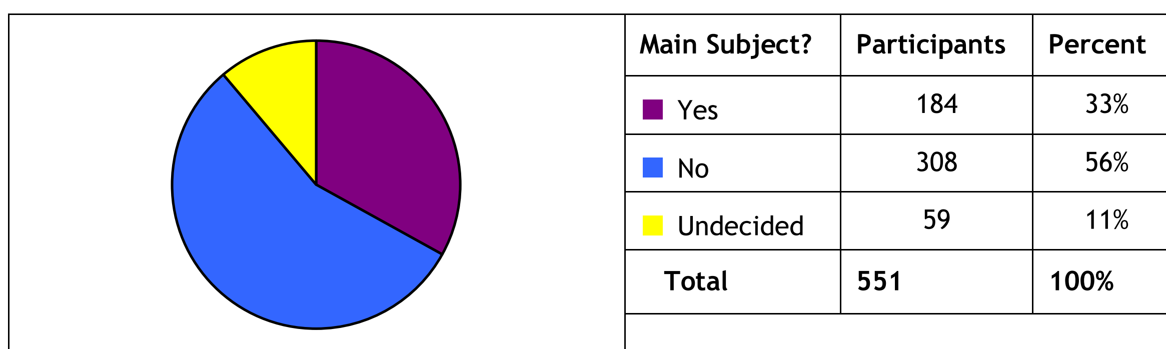
Nationality



Nationality	Participants	Percent
Scotland	392	71.1%
England	61	11%
Wales	5	1.1%
Northern Ireland	10	1.8%
Other: “British”	7	1.2%
Other: Anglophone	20	3.5%
Other: Non-Anglophone	48	8.8%
Other: Mixed	8	1.5%
Total	**551**	**100%**

Anglophone Countries: Australia, Ireland, Isle of Man, South Africa, USA.
Non-Anglophone Countries: Brazil, Bulgaria, Israel, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Faeroe Islands, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Tunisia, Zimbabwe.

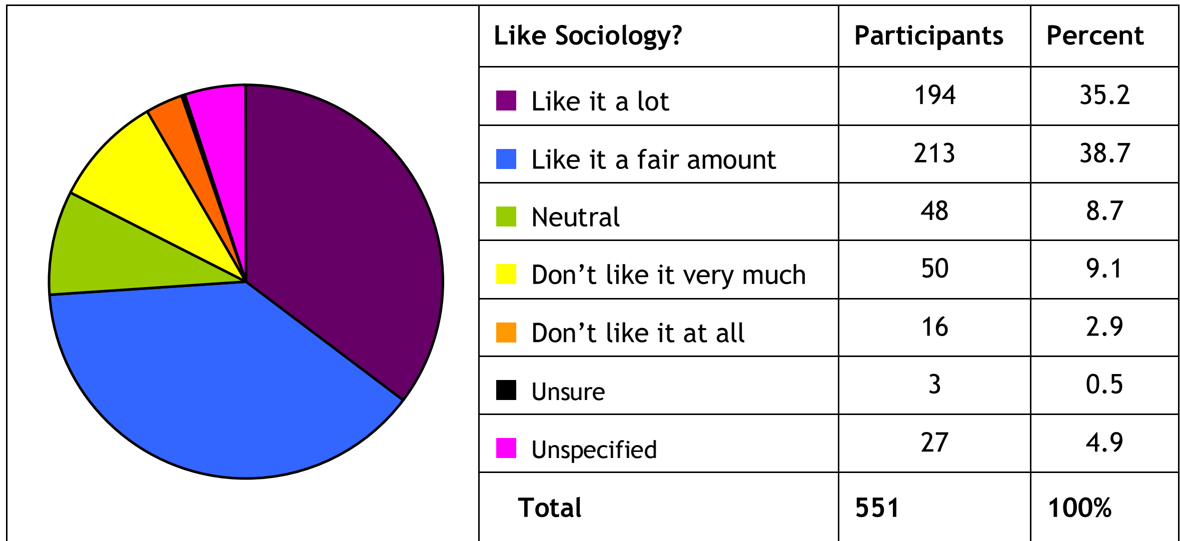
Is sociology your main subject?



Main Subject?	Participants	Percent
Yes	184	33%
No	308	56%
Undecided	59	11%
Total	**551**	**100%**

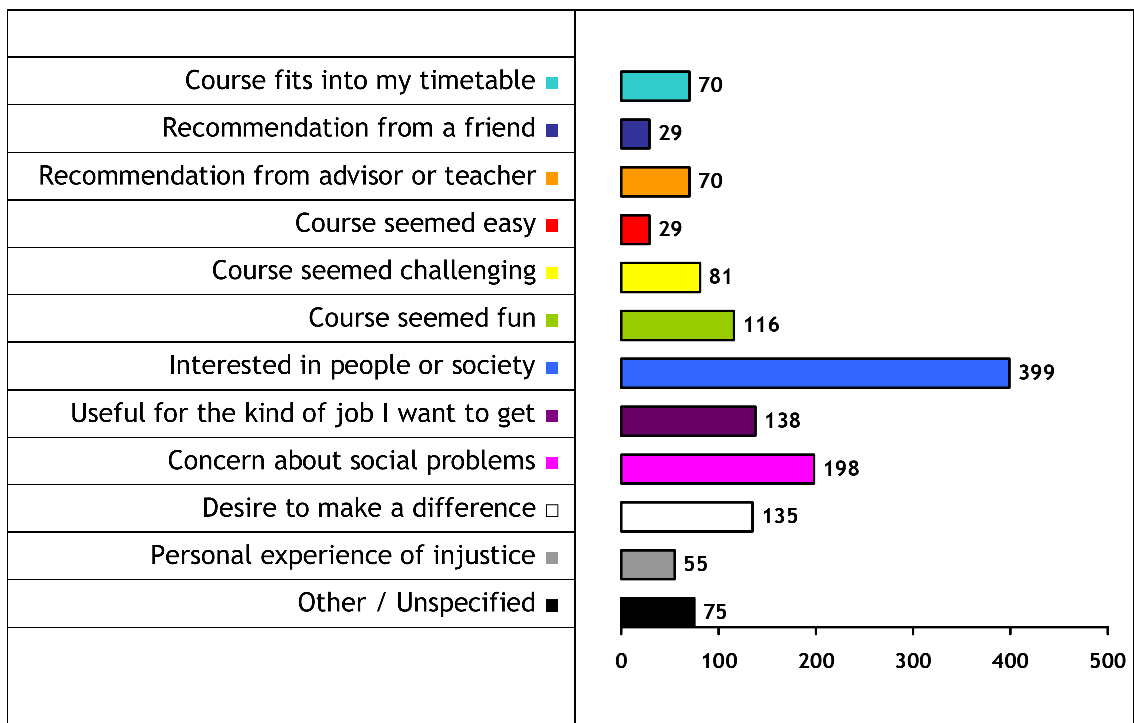
Other Subjects Studied: Psychology (240), Politics & Government (202), History - including art & social history (162), Anthropology (68), Economics (68), Linguistics & Languages (51), Literature (48), Geography (38), Criminology (35), Culture Studies, Film & Media Studies (32), Business, Management & Human Resources (32), Education (31), Gender Studies (20), Law (20), Philosophy (18), Social Policy (14), Maths & Computing Sciences (12), Area & Ethnic Studies (9), Religious Studies (9), Physiology & Health (7), International Relations (6), Journalism & Creative Writing (5), Biology (4), Social Work (4), Marketing (1), Theatre (1).

Do you like studying sociology?



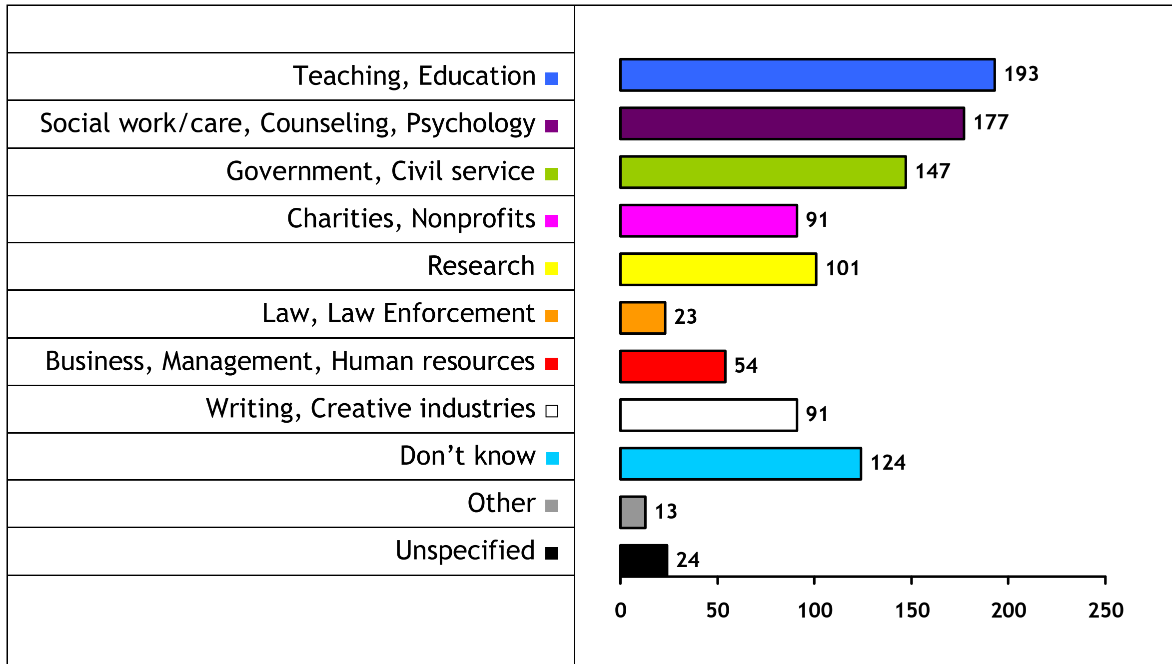
Like Sociology?	Participants	Percent
Like it a lot	194	35.2
Like it a fair amount	213	38.7
Neutral	48	8.7
Don't like it very much	50	9.1
Don't like it at all	16	2.9
Unsure	3	0.5
Unspecified	27	4.9
Total	**551**	**100%**

Why did you choose to study sociology?



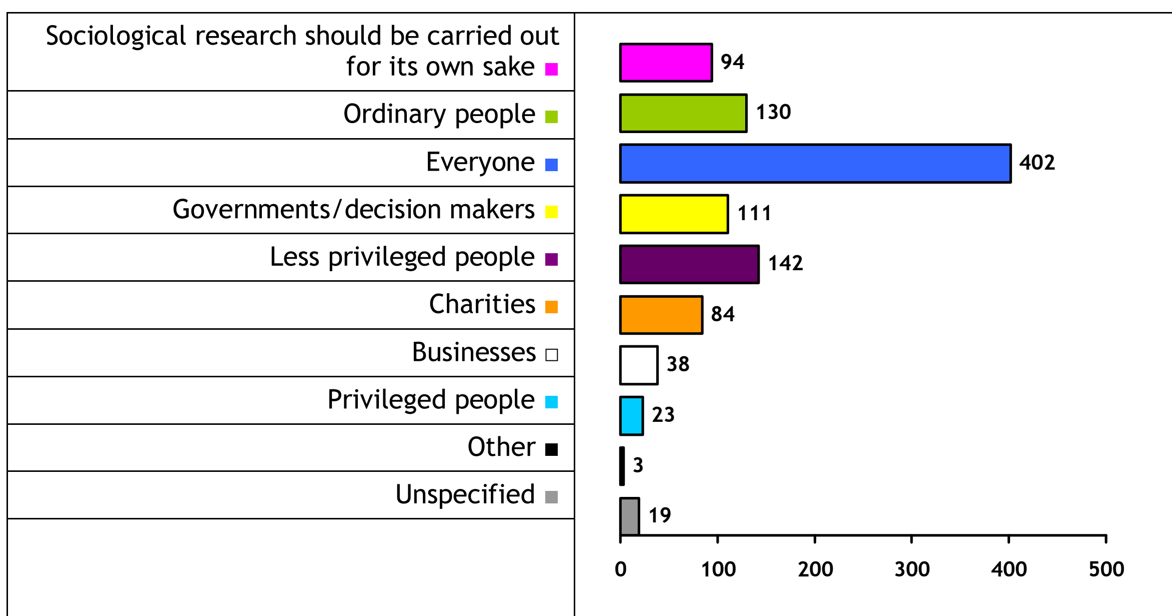
Other reasons: Requirement for degree (17), studied previously - including Modern Studies (16), good complement to main subject (8), did not get into preferred course (3), not sure what else to study (2), "perception of sociology as 'good'" (1).

What field do you want to work in after you've finished uni?



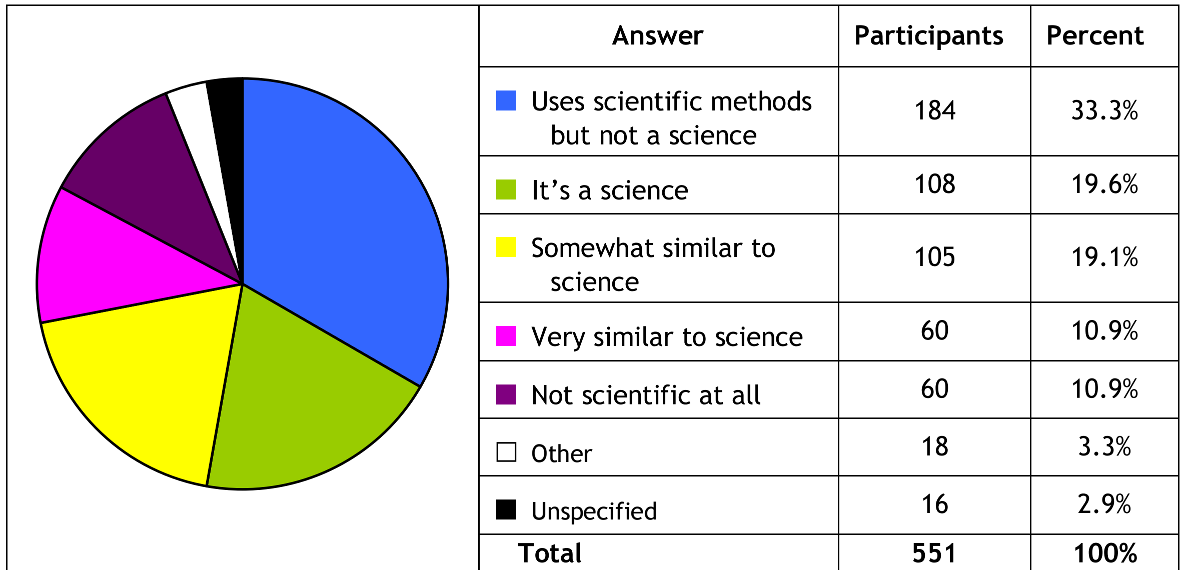
Other fields: Events/Entertainment/Tourism (6), International agencies (2), Medicine (2), Museums/Archives (2), N/A - Retired (1).

Who do you think should benefit the *most* from sociological research?



Other answers: No one (1), Students (1), The people paying for it (1).

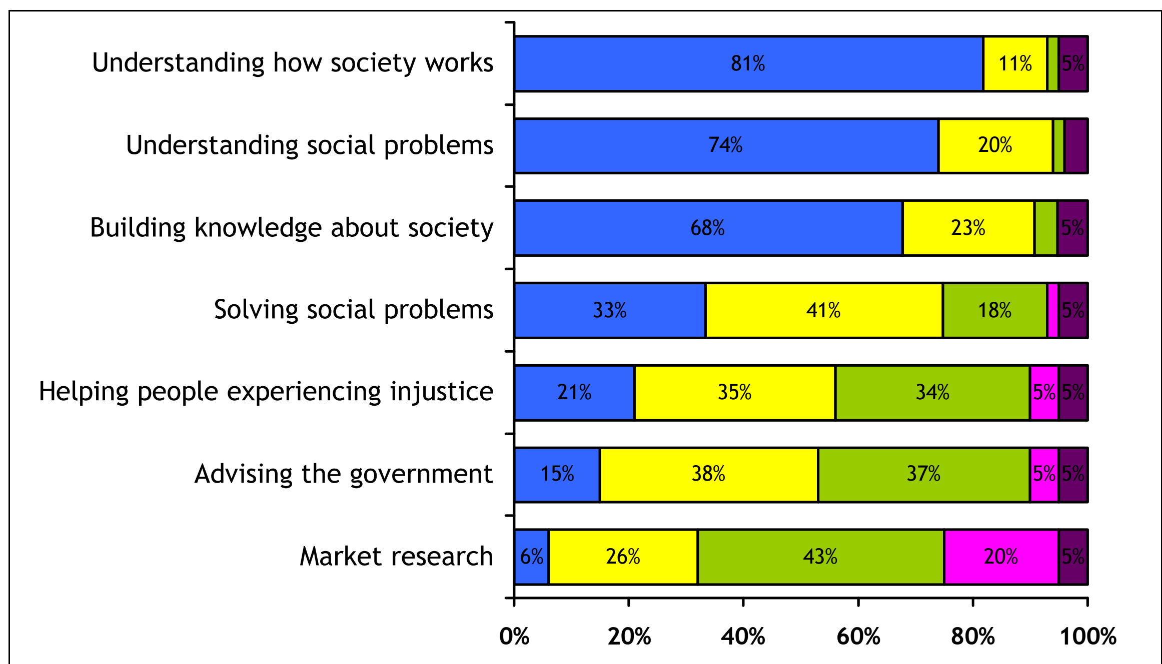
Do you consider sociology a science?



Answer	Participants	Percent
Uses scientific methods but not a science	184	33.3%
It's a science	108	19.6%
Somewhat similar to science	105	19.1%
Very similar to science	60	10.9%
Not scientific at all	60	10.9%
Other	18	3.3%
Unspecified	16	2.9%
Total	**551**	**100%**

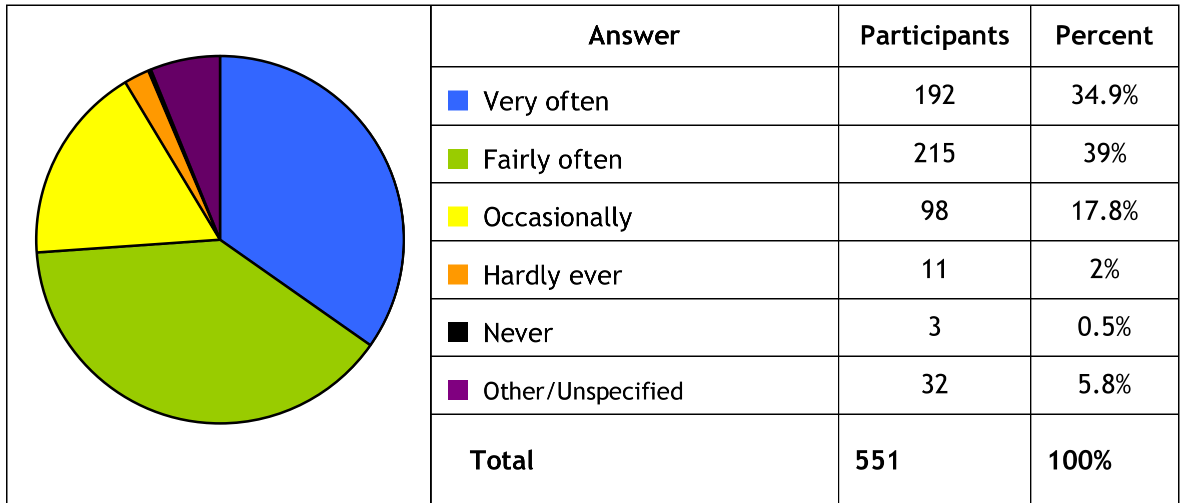
Other answers: Social science (8), Not a helpful distinction (5), Common sense (1), Preferable to science (1), Set of methods (1), Subjective (1), Unsure (1).

Based on your understanding of sociology, how would you rate each of the following?



Central to Sociology | Important to Sociology | Related to Sociology | Outside of Sociology's concern | Unspecified

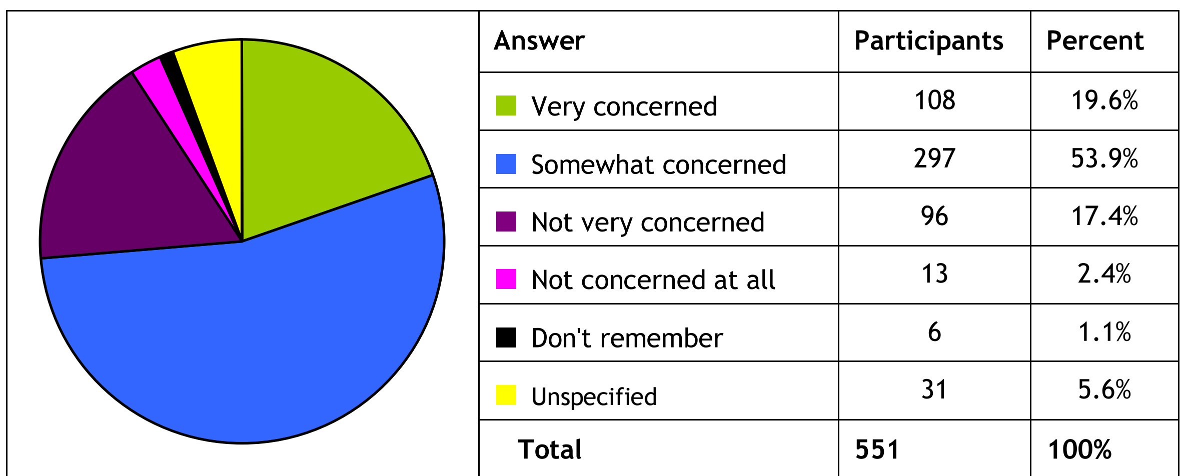
How often do you think about social problems?



Answer	Participants	Percent
Very often	192	34.9%
Fairly often	215	39%
Occasionally	98	17.8%
Hardly ever	11	2%
Never	3	0.5%
Other/Unspecified	32	5.8%
Total	**551**	**100%**

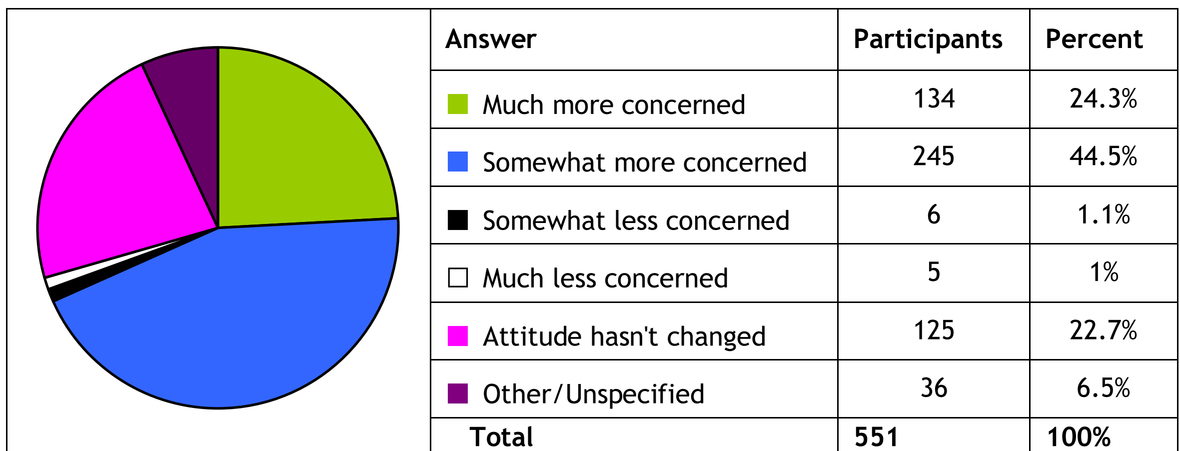
Other Answers: When problems are in the news (3).

Were you concerned about social problems before studying sociology?



Answer	Participants	Percent
Very concerned	108	19.6%
Somewhat concerned	297	53.9%
Not very concerned	96	17.4%
Not concerned at all	13	2.4%
Don't remember	6	1.1%
Unspecified	31	5.6%
Total	**551**	**100%**

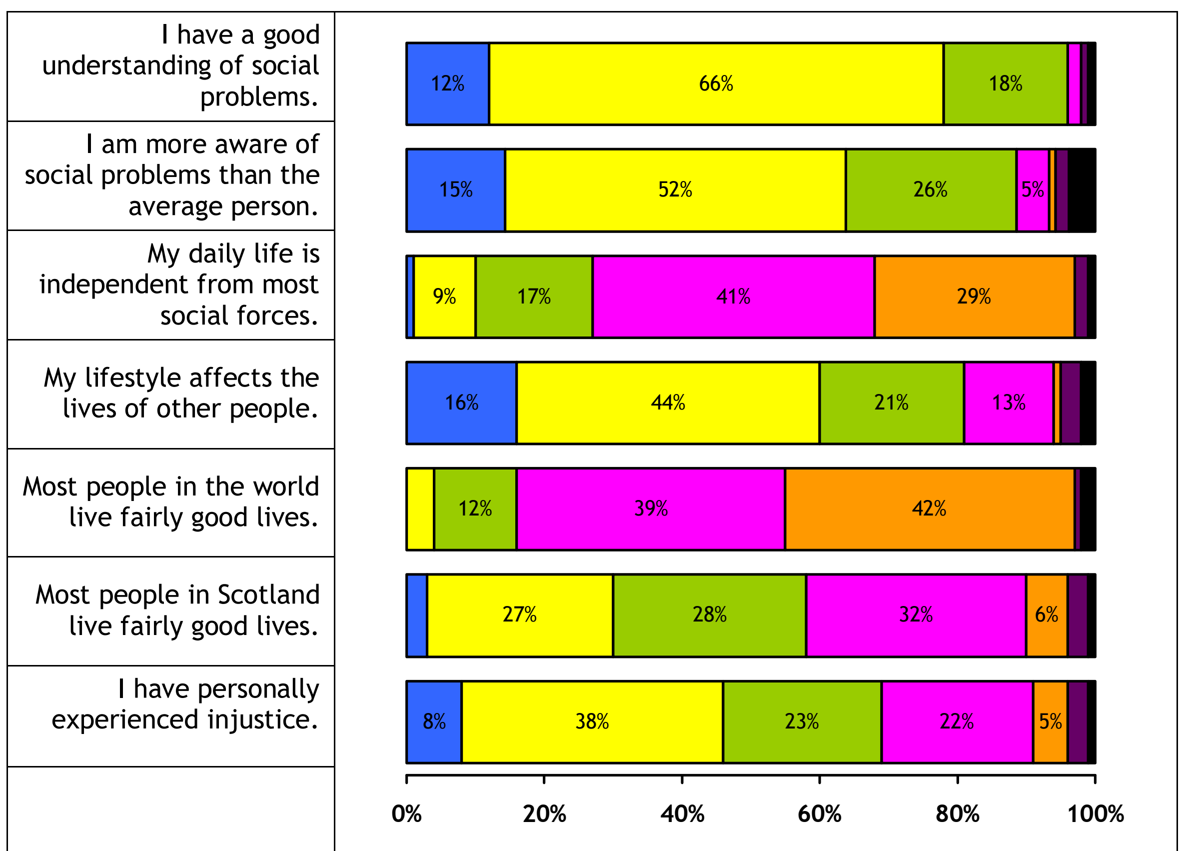
Has your attitude towards social problems changed since you began studying sociology?



Answer	Participants	Percent
Much more concerned	134	24.3%
Somewhat more concerned	245	44.5%
Somewhat less concerned	6	1.1%
Much less concerned	5	1%
Attitude hasn't changed	125	22.7%
Other/Unspecified	36	6.5%
Total	**551**	**100%**

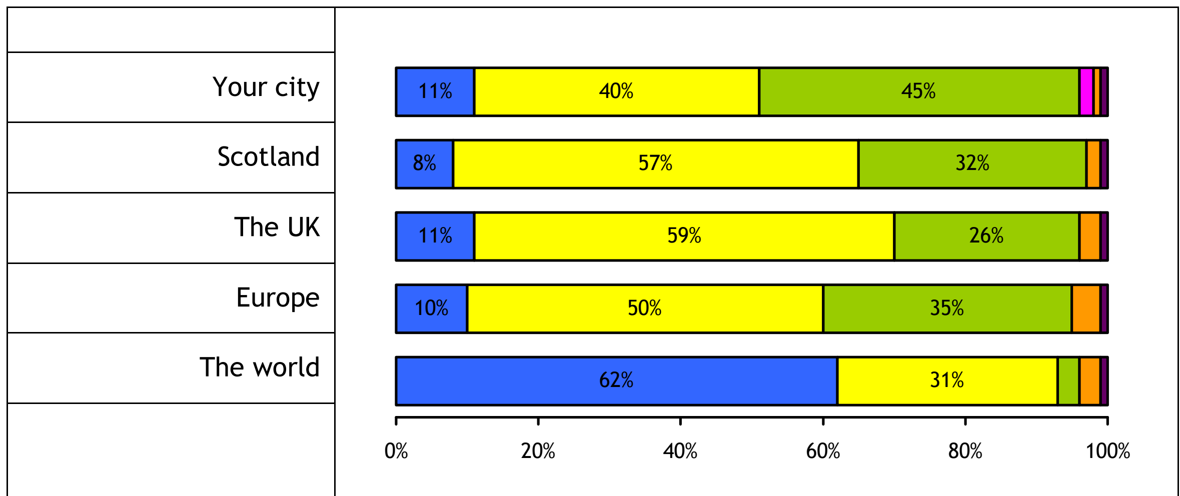
Other answers: More aware/better understanding (7), More cynical/pessimistic (2).

Would you agree or disagree with the following statements?



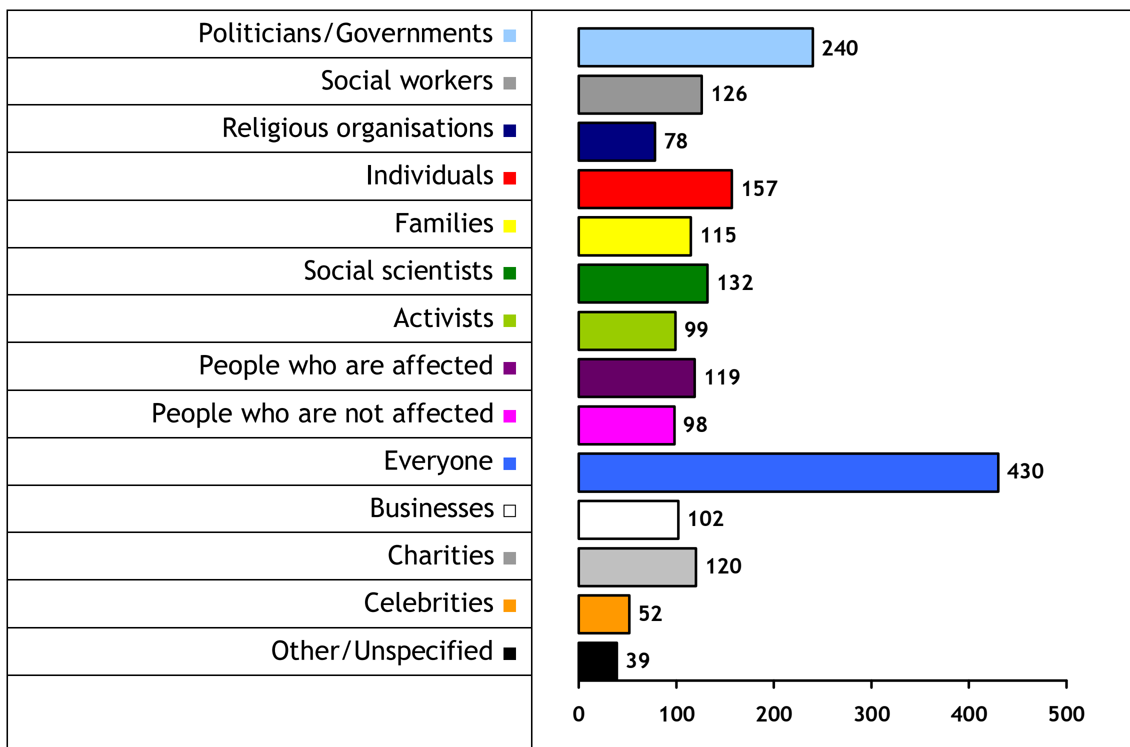
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree ■ Unsure ■ Unspecified

How severe do you consider social problems to be in each of the following places?



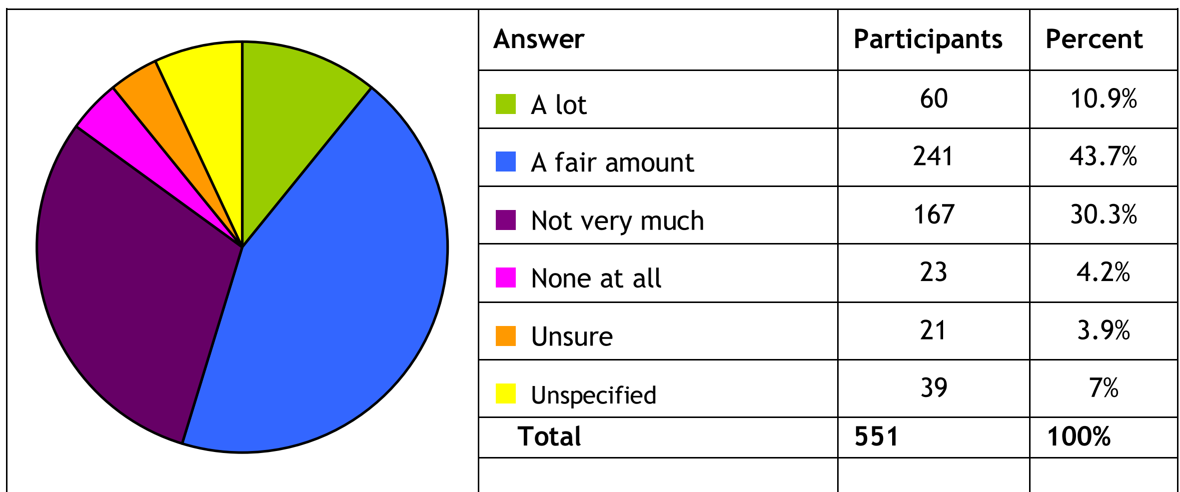
Very severe · Fairly bad · Mild
Nonexistent / No problems · Unsure · Unspecified

Whose responsibility is it to solve social problems?



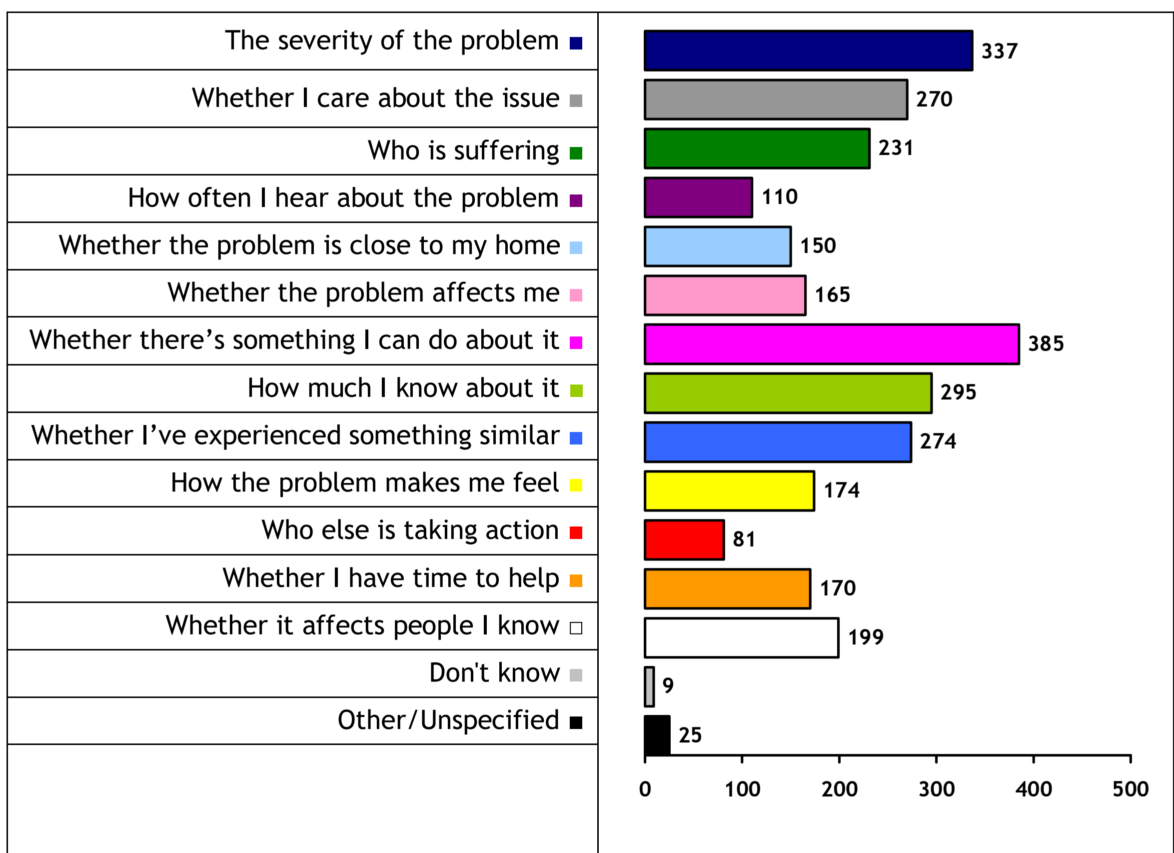
Average number of answers per person: 3.59 (1879 total, 28 skipped)
Other answers: No one (4), Media (2), People with power (2), Police (1), Whoever chooses (1), Celebrities, religious organisations and politicians do more harm than good (1).

Do you feel personal responsibility for helping solve social problems?



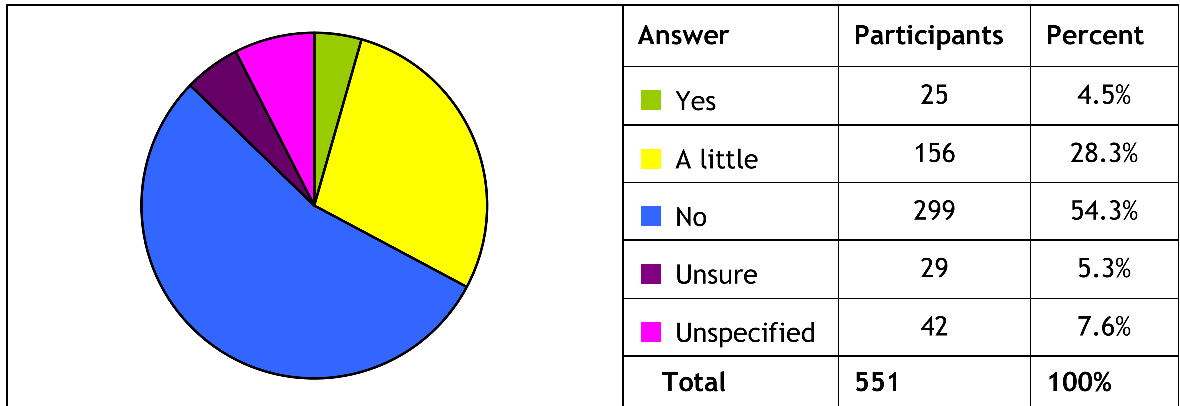
Answer	Participants	Percent
A lot	60	10.9%
A fair amount	241	43.7%
Not very much	167	30.3%
None at all	23	4.2%
Unsure	21	3.9%
Unspecified	39	7%
Total	**551**	**100%**

What would be the *most important* factors in your choice to do something (or not) about a social problem?



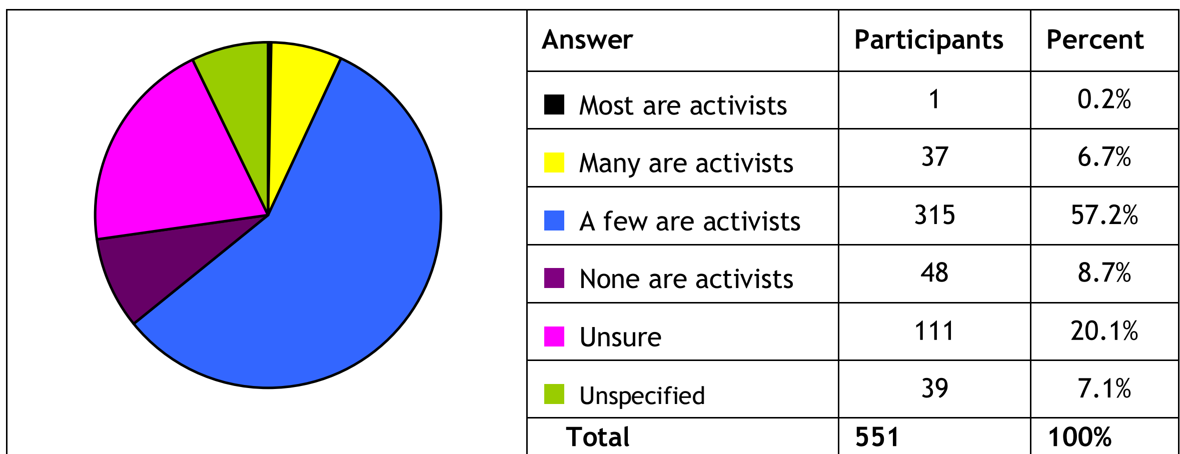
Other answers: Whether I have something to gain by helping (1), whether I have been called by God to help (1).

Do you consider yourself an activist?



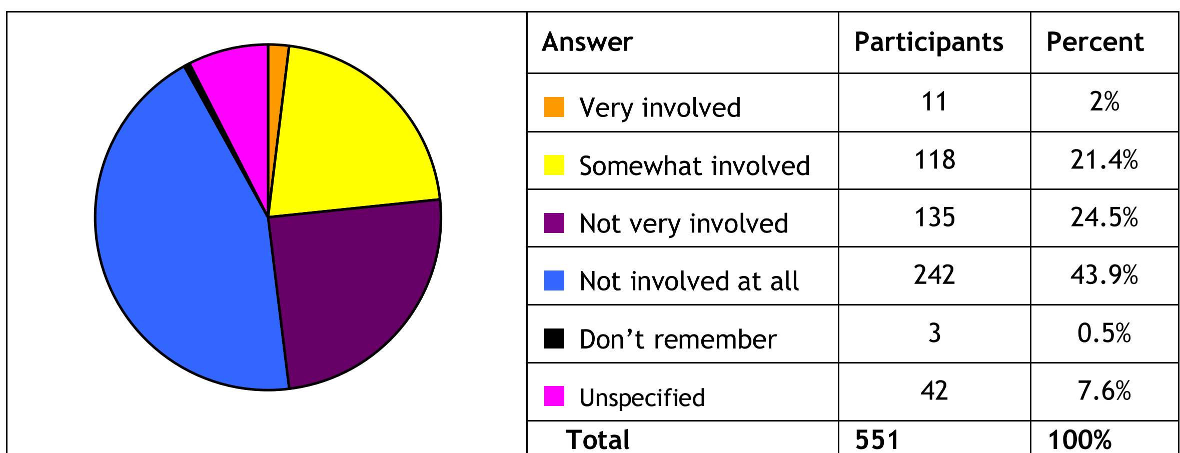
Answer	Participants	Percent
Yes	25	4.5%
A little	156	28.3%
No	299	54.3%
Unsure	29	5.3%
Unspecified	42	7.6%
Total	**551**	**100%**

Do you think that many of your sociology course mates are activists?



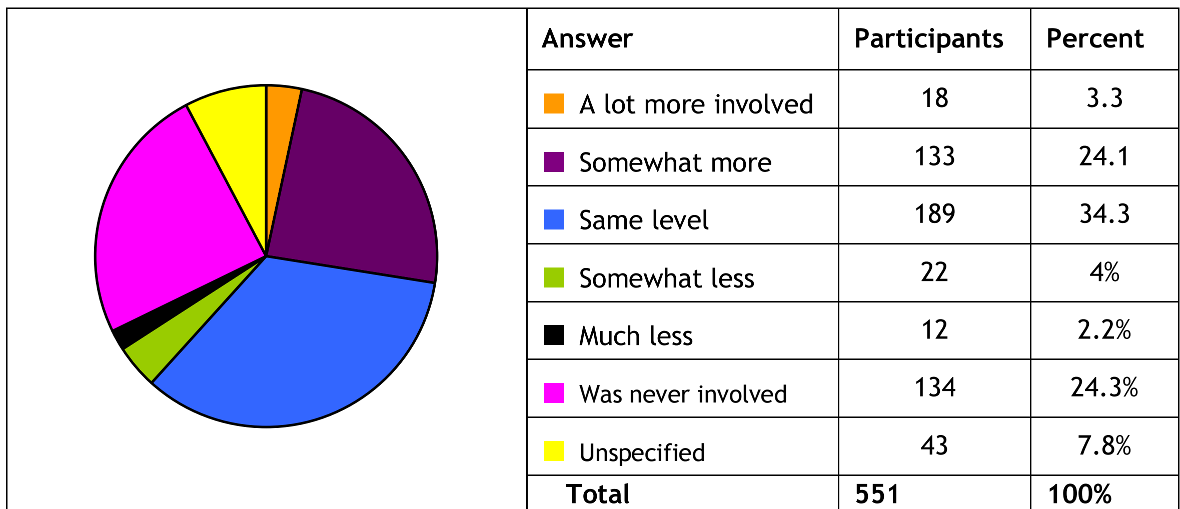
Answer	Participants	Percent
Most are activists	1	0.2%
Many are activists	37	6.7%
A few are activists	315	57.2%
None are activists	48	8.7%
Unsure	111	20.1%
Unspecified	39	7.1%
Total	**551**	**100%**

Were you involved with activism or politics before you began studying sociology?



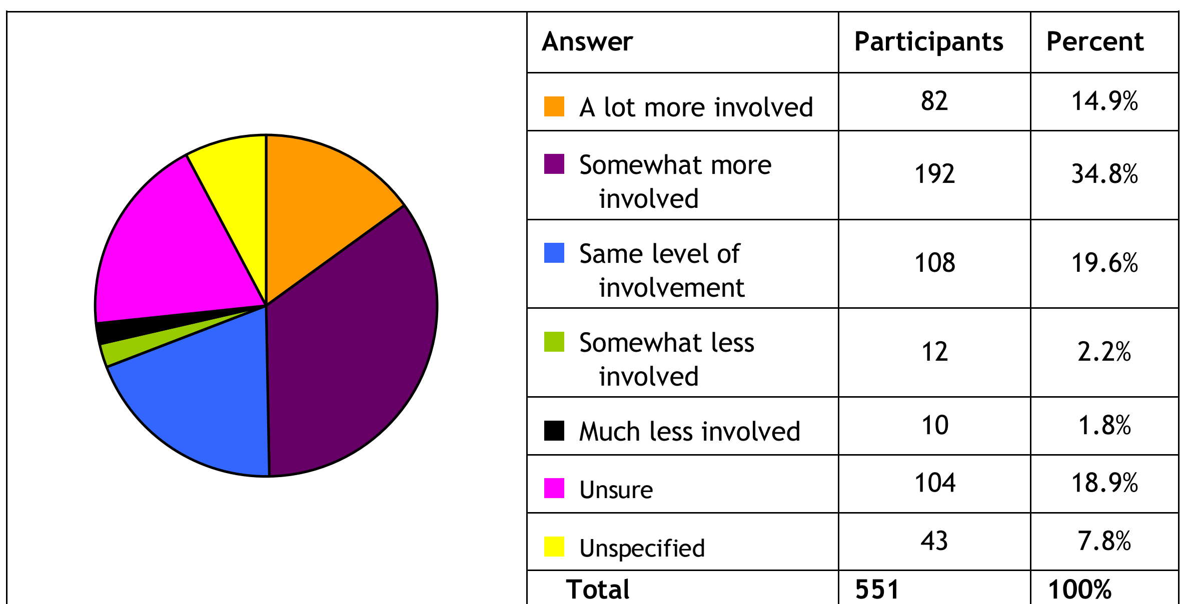
Answer	Participants	Percent
Very involved	11	2%
Somewhat involved	118	21.4%
Not very involved	135	24.5%
Not involved at all	242	43.9%
Don’t remember	3	0.5%
Unspecified	42	7.6%
Total	**551**	**100%**

Have you become more involved with activism or politics since you began studying sociology?



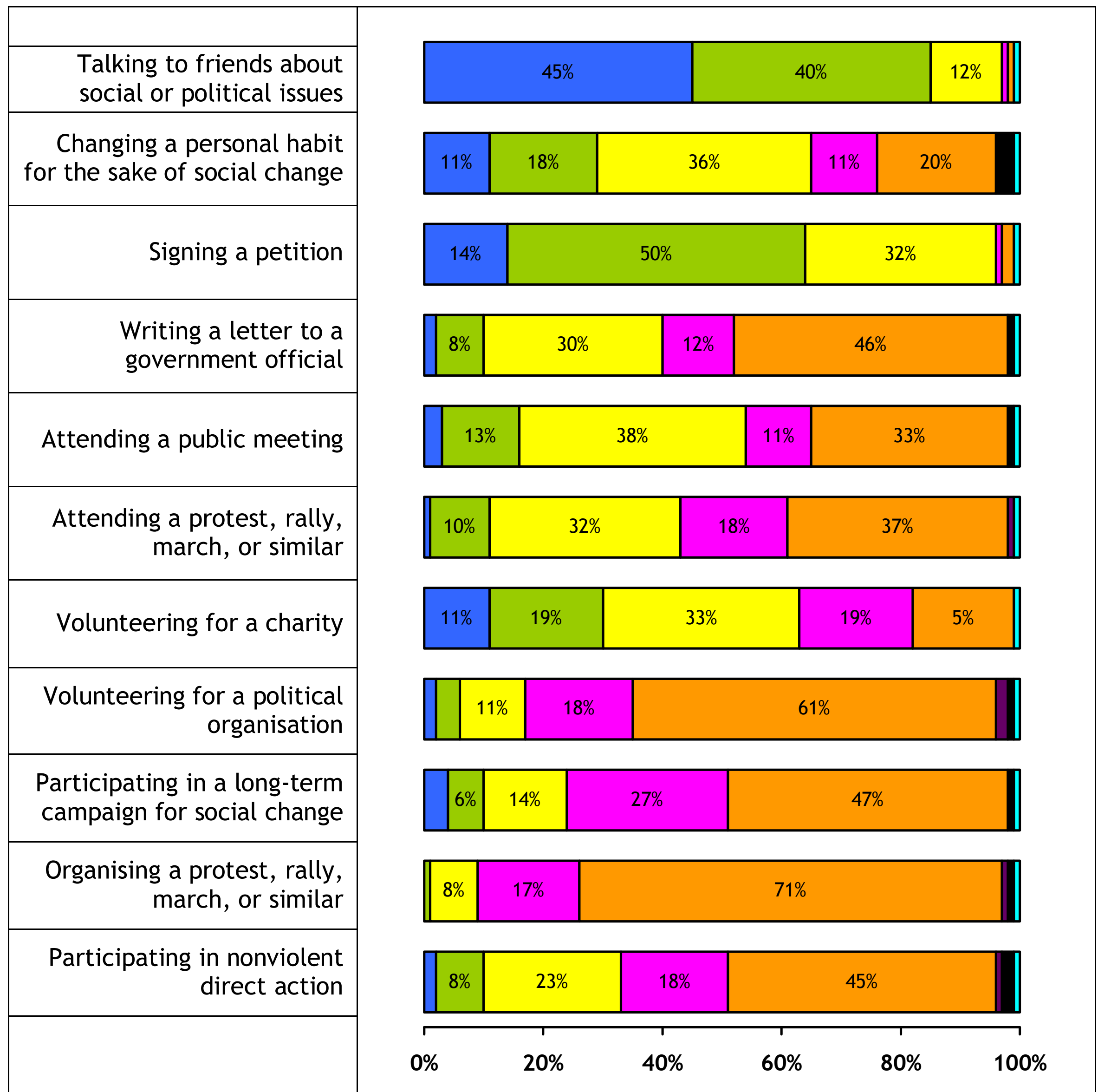
Answer	Participants	Percent
A lot more involved	18	3.3
Somewhat more	133	24.1
Same level	189	34.3
Somewhat less	22	4%
Much less	12	2.2%
Was never involved	134	24.3%
Unspecified	43	7.8%
Total	**551**	**100%**

Do you think you'll get more involved with activism or politics after you finish university?



Answer	Participants	Percent
A lot more involved	82	14.9%
Somewhat more involved	192	34.8%
Same level of involvement	108	19.6%
Somewhat less involved	12	2.2%
Much less involved	10	1.8%
Unsure	104	18.9%
Unspecified	43	7.8%
Total	**551**	**100%**

Have you ever participated in the following kinds of activities?



- Do regularly
- Done many times
- Tried once or twice
- Would like to try
- Never done
- Opposed to this
- Unsure
- Unspecified

Thinking about the above kinds of activities, why did you choose to participate in them – or why might you want to participate in the future?