

## Cumberland Lodge 2011: Reflections

The LSE Sociology Department's annual Cumberland Lodge weekend took place on 21-23 January 2011. The theme of the weekend was Sociology and the Public – a focus on the role of Sociology at a time of Big Society, education funding cuts, global financial and economic turmoil and social marginalisation.

We can't possibly hope to fully capture the richness of the Cumberland Lodge gathering but we hope that these materials from the weekend provide a useful record of some of what went on and some the insights developed.

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**Programme for Cumberland Lodge Weekend 2011  
21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> January**

**Sociology and the Public**

**All presentations will take place in the Flitcroft Room**

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January**

18.00 Arrival

19.00 Bar

19.15 Gala Dinner

20.15 **Opening Remarks**

Antonia Dawes

20.30 **Session 1 – Fight The Power!**

Chair: Liene Ozolina

Paper 1: Lauren Alexiuk

Paper 2: Robin Burrett

22.00 Bar (until 24.00)

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> January**

08.15 Breakfast

09.00 **Session 2 – Money's Too Tight?**

Chair: Malcolm James

Paper 1: Pantea Javidan

Paper 2: Carsten Jung

10.30 Coffee

11.00 **Session 3 – Changes**

Chair: Katherine Robinson

Paper 1: Des Fitzgerald

Paper 2: Adam Kaasa

12.30 Bar

13.00 Lunch

Free Afternoon

16.00 Tea

16.30 **Session 4 – Let's Stay Together**

Chair: Naaz Rashid

Paper 1: Sanjiv Lingayah

Paper 2: Mutlu Ergun

18.00 Bar

19.15 Dinner

20.30 **Session 5 – Film Viewing**

If

1968 film produced and directed by Lindsay Anderson about life and insurrection at an English public school. The film is associated with counterculture of the 1960s and was produced at the time of the student uprisings in Paris in May 1968.

22.00 Bar and party in basement (closing at 01.00)

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January**

09.00 Breakfast (until 09.45)

10.25 Departure of those attending Matins at Royal Chapel

10.30 Coffee

11.00 **Session 6 – Break Out!**

A break out and group discussion session addressing the issues raised during the weekend.

Question 1

‘The Researcher can only arrive after the show when the lamps are doused and the trestles are stacked away with a performance that has lost all the charms of an improvisation’.

Pierre Bourdieu

Are we [as Sociologists] after the moment or in the moment?

Question 2

In a world where the sociological imagination takes over from economist thinking what would the front page of the Guardian look like?

13.00 Lunch

14.00 Departure

## Opening Remarks – Antonia Dawes

Over the last thirty years the global, neo-liberal, capitalist project has subjected universities across the world to ever-greater bureaucratic scrutiny and control. In *Killing Thinking* (2004), Evans states that the academy is still seen as a rich cultural resource but more and more students are being asked to pay for its maintenance and regulation if they want to access that resource. We are told that this is the best hope for creativity and intellectual vitality in this world, but is this really the case? Cumberland Lodge 2011 was all about marking the shift from a world in which the academy was respected as a font of independent and critical thought to a world where universities are expected to fulfil only the values of the marketplace and the economy (Evans 2004, p.3).

The format was similar to previous years: PhD Sociology students at different stages of their intellectual project presented papers on their work and then responded to questions and comments from the audience. Instead of organizing the weekend around an abstract theme, as had been done very successfully in previous years, the emphasis this year was on relating our work to wider international events such as the global recession, cuts and job losses. To further stimulate debate we watched the 1968 film *If...?* and ran a break out session on the final morning where we discussed the struggles affecting us both inside and outside of the university. Cumberland Lodge is traditionally a student-led and student-run event and we wanted to talk about the future we are inheriting.

## Synopses of Presentations

**Lauren Alexiuk**

### **Sociology as a Vocation: A reflection on Weber and the future of sociological funding**

As competition for whatever funding is left increases in an age marked by cuts to education and learning institutions, so too does the threat of a politicization of that funding, and of that research. Drawing on Weber's lectures, I would like to bring to focus the importance of separation between criminology/sociology and policy debates in the political and public sphere to inspire intellectual thought on the precarious future for sociological research in the coming era.

**Robin Burrett**

### **EMA, Education Cuts and the Governmental**

The paper places the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in the context of New Labour education reforms in the previous decade. I will argue that these reforms, aimed simultaneously at structure, curriculum and pedagogy, sought to produce a workforce that could navigate the pressures induced by the global market. EMA sought to provide fair access for individuals to compete in this market. In this way it could be seen as symbolic of New Labour 'third way' reform.

Rose and Miller's governmental work is useful understanding the creation of this self-governing subject. The advent of large scale contestation Con-Lib policy, however, calls in to question the exclusive use of this method in understanding the trajectory of public policy, and raises the role of sociology within this contestation.

**Des Fitzgerald**

**'Paying the price' – or: a sociology we can live with.**

In the wake of recent funding cuts, this paper argued in favour of more self-critique from within the discipline. It pointed to an internal conceptual problem at the heart of sociology's current financial problems – an intellectual deficit rooted in either the unwillingness or incapacity to engage with a given world of (public) things. Comparing sociology with an apparently more viable and more 'public' discipline, cognitive neuroscience, the paper asked: what kind of sociology can or must we live with in the 21st century?

**Pantea Javidan**

**Public Sociology and the Role of Sociologists in a Time of Economic Crisis**

The aim of this paper is to explore ideas of Public Sociology by analyzing several recent news items related to university tuition hikes and the fate of universities in general, as well as discussions regarding sociology as a discipline. These will be discussed in the context of some important lessons we have learned about the global economic crisis in the last two years or so.

The paper will reference a few examples of the roles sociologists have played at important historical junctures and the significance of the contributions they made, whether negative or positive. It will postulate that an important public debate is already underway and often in the media regarding the global capitalist economy and that Sociologists can and should play a key role in these discussions. Sociologists have the ability to provide context and perspective, thus revealing systemic patterns of socio-economic inequalities and ways of thinking about them that are called for at times like these.

**Carsten Jung**

**Systems of Justification and Economic Policy**

This paper aims to address three issues concerning relevant for a sociological perspective of economic public policy. Firstly, it shows quantitatively, how economic policy is determined by a certain 'system of justification' for economic policies and its cross-country diffusion. Secondly, qualitatively, it shows how this ideology, based on methodological individualism, is being applied in current UK economic policies, thereby indicating that some policies are not as 'inevitable' as the mainstream economic system of justification implies. Thirdly, it is argued how sociology can contribute to the economic policy debates by developing relational analyses of economic institutions.

**Adam Kaasa**

**The ontology of a public sociologist**

Synopsis: disciplines, including Sociology, enter in a call to be more public. Drawing from Butler and Foucault on critique, this paper addresses the ontological limitations of being public by asking the question us, 'What kind of sociologist, given the contemporary order of being, can I be?'

**Sanjiv Lingayah**

**Reconciling the public and the public interest in the 'diverse' nation**

This paper examines the development of discourses of British and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) identities from the beginning of the New Labour period. The paper traces policymaker attempts to collectivise the public based on the nation and to increasingly resist BME group identities as against the 'public interest'.

**Mutlu Ergun**

**Deconstructing "Race" – Empowering Subjectivities: A Sociopsychological Framework of Racialisation (in view of Anti-Islamic Racism), Racial Awareness Training and Empowerment in Germany**

This study aims at developing a theory of racialisation informed by the voices and experiences of Anti-Racism and Empowerment practitioners in Germany. By looking into racialising discourses of the "Muslim Other" in Germany, the study examines how racial subject identities are developed and what the sociopsychological "side-effects" of racialisation are.

## Student Organising Committee Members 2011

Robin Burrett

Antonia Dawes

Louise Ebbesson

Sanjiv Lingayah

Michaela Muscat

Liene Ozolina

Naaz Rashid

Katherine Robinson