

**Institution: University of Cambridge**

**Unit of Assessment: UoA 23 Sociology**

**1 Overview**

Cambridge has a strong and vibrant tradition of research in sociology. In previous years, Sociology made a joint submission with Social and Developmental Psychology, but following a reorganization of the social sciences in Cambridge in 2011, Sociology has now been established as an autonomous department within a multidisciplinary Faculty of Human, Social and Political Science (HSPS) located within the School of the Humanities and Social Sciences, while Social and Developmental Psychology has been merged with Experimental Psychology to form a unified Department of Psychology. Sociology is therefore submitting on its own to UoA 23.

The Faculty of HSPS is made up of three departments: in addition to the Department of Sociology, it includes the Department of Politics and International Studies (POLIS) and the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology. As one of the three constituent departments in HSPS, Sociology is in a strong position to expand as a subject and to play a key role as part of the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary development of the social sciences in Cambridge. While the department is small by comparison with other sociology departments in the UK, it is growing both through new strategic appointments funded by the University and through securing external research funds. Moreover, the department is an integral part of a much larger social science faculty and social science research base in Cambridge where multiple forms of cross-departmental and interdisciplinary collaboration are actively encouraged and supported.

**2 Research strategy**

As a small department we cannot cover all areas of sociology, so our research strategy since the late 1990s has been to focus on a limited number of carefully selected areas and to build systematically our research capacity in each of these areas, while at the same time maintaining the flexibility to develop new areas of research when we see the importance of doing so. The Department is committed to promoting individual scholarship of the highest quality; at the same time, we have sought to build up research groups and to create an environment that actively encourages and supports collaborative research. Each research group is led by one or two senior members of the Department, and some members of the Department participate in two or more of the research groups. The research activity of the Department is organized into the following five groups:

Research group	Staff
1 Social theory	Mann, Therborn, Thompson, Castells, Baert, Alexander, Franklin, Morgan
2 Economic and political sociology	King, Mann, Therborn, Burchell, Miley, Kandil, Desai, Lehmann, Pasquetti, Kennedy
3 Media, technology and culture	Castells, Thompson, Webb, Alexander, Baert, Lehmann, McPherson
4 Gender, reproduction and the family	Scott, Franklin, Iacovou, Therborn, Mottier, Coulter, Gurtin, Barnes
5 Public health and biomedicine	King, Franklin, Weinberg, Gurtin, Kennedy

These five groups are similar to the five research groups highlighted in our submission to RAE 2008 but there are two significant changes. First, with the transfer of the social and developmental

psychologists to the new Department of Psychology, child development is no longer a key research focus for our department. Second, with the appointments of Larry King and Sarah Franklin, we have created a strong research cluster in public health and the sociology of biomedicine and we expect this area to expand significantly in the coming years.

1 Social Theory This has long been one of the strengths of Cambridge. Since the 1980s Cambridge has been well known as a leading international centre for social theory, with a sequence of Professors who were widely recognized as among the world's leading social theorists, including Anthony Giddens, Bryan Turner and Goran Therborn. The Department has also built strong collaborations over many years with Michael Mann and Jeffrey Alexander. Mann was the Pitt Professor in 2004-2005 and was elected to an Honorary Professorship in 2006; he has taught for the Department ever since and is now a Director of Research. Alexander is the Pitt Professor in 2012-13 and a Director of Research in the Department; he teaches several courses for the Department, gives research seminars and collaborates with several members of staff. Other members of the social theory group include Goran Therborn, John Thompson, Manuel Castells, Patrick Baert and Sarah Franklin, as well as younger scholars like Marcus Morgan. The members of this group are producing work that challenges established theoretical frameworks, develops fresh ways of thinking and engages with new, emerging and neglected features of social and political life. Some recent examples are: Mann's influential work on power as developed in the final two volumes of his multi-volume work *The Sources of Social Power*, Therborn's wide-ranging analysis of the drivers of global social change as developed in *The World and The Killing Fields of Inequality*; Thompson's work on the social and political impact of communication media and the shifting boundaries between public and private life; Baert's work on the sociology of intellectuals; and Franklin's work on the social implications of reproductive and genetic technologies.

2 Economic and political sociology Cambridge has an equally long tradition of research in economic and political sociology that can be traced back to the work on stratification and inequality that was done by the Sociological Research Group. We have maintained this tradition by appointing Mann as a Director of Research and making several other strategic appointments in economic and political sociology including Larry King, Jeff Miley, Hazem Kandil and Manali Desai; this now forms a strong and cohesive research group in the Department. King's work on the impact of privatization programmes and macroeconomic policies on global health, funded by a major ERC grant (see below), represents a rigorous and sustained assessment of macroeconomic policy. Brendan Burchell's work on labour markets, job insecurity and work intensification has had a wide influence, especially on policy debates in Europe. Miley's work on nationalism and national identity in Spain, Kandil's work on the shifting relations between military, security and political institutions in Egypt, Iran and Turkey and on the social conditions of the Egyptian revolution and Desai's work on parties, social movements and ethnic violence in South Asia continue the Department's long-standing tradition of producing outstanding work in political sociology while at the same time greatly extending the range of our geographical coverage.

3 Media, technology and culture This has been a key area of research for the Department for more than a decade and it attracts both substantial research funding and large numbers of research students. Since 2000 Thompson has carried out research, funded by two grants from the ESRC and one from the Mellon Foundation, on the structural transformation of the book publishing industry in Britain and the US, with a particular emphasis on social and technological change; his two recent books, *Books in the Digital Age* and *Merchants of Culture*, now represent the most sustained analysis of the contemporary book publishing industry available in any language.

Thompson collaborates closely with Manuel Castells, whose pioneering work on the information revolution has reshaped the field of media and communications research; Castells is a Director of Research in the Department and he teaches advanced undergraduates and graduate students. Peter Webb's work on the cultural milieu of popular music and the impact of digitization on the music industry continues the Department's emphasis on technological change in the cultural industries. Alexander's work on performance and power, his 'strong programme' of the sociology of culture and his writings on iconic experience and consciousness are landmark contributions in cultural sociology. Baert's new work on the rise of French existentialism, which is supported by the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust, makes an original contribution to the sociology of culture and of intellectuals. David Lehmann has continued his research on religion and culture in Latin America by winning a British Academy grant to study the spread of multiculturalism in the region, focusing on Mexico, Brazil and Peru.

4 Gender, reproduction and the family Work on gender has been central to the Department's research strategy for many years. A focus on gender was a crucial part of the work that was done by the Sociological Research Group in the 1980s and 1990s, and large-scale empirical research on gender inequalities has been undertaken in more recent years by Jacqueline Scott and her colleagues. From 2004 to 2009 the Department hosted the ESRC Research Priority Network on Gender Inequalities in Production and Reproduction (GeNet) directed by Scott – the largest research project of its kind in the UK, with funding of £3.3 million. The research examined inter-related aspects of gendered pathways from childhood to adulthood, resource inequalities and policy initiatives and outcomes, and the publications stemming from this research have been influential in shaping government priorities concerned with social exclusion. The recent appointment of Maria Iacovou, who specializes in the quantitative analysis of household composition and family structure, strengthens the Department's capacity to develop large-scale research initiatives in this area. The Department has also supported the development of gender research in other fields as exemplified by Veronique Mottier's work on gender and eugenics and Franklin's work on gender and kinship in relation to new reproductive technologies. This research group is strengthened by the participation of Therborn, whose book *Sex and Power* remains a classic text in the field.

5 Public health and biomedicine Whereas the previous four research groups have been integral to the Department for more than a decade, the emphasis on public health and the sociology of biomedicine is relatively new and is part of the Department's strategy for expansion and growth. This development will enable us to strengthen our collaboration with colleagues in other departments in Cambridge, including Public Health, Social Anthropology and History and Philosophy of Science, and to participate in relevant research networks that already exist in Cambridge, including the Cambridge Public Health Research Network; it will also enable us to develop our research agenda in a way that takes advantage of the fact that Cambridge is one of the world's leading universities for scientific research in health, biomedicine and bioscience. There are two strands to this part of our research strategy. One is to develop our research on the political economy of public health; the recruitment of Larry King from Yale has established a strong core of funded research in this area. King has been awarded £2.8 million for his ERC Advanced Investigator Award on Privatisation and Mortality in Post-Communism. This project, which runs from 2011 to 2016, brings together a stellar group of investigators to investigate the way health funding is related to excessive mortality in post-communist regimes. The second strand of our strategy in this area is to expand our research on the social aspects of biomedicine and bioscience. This initiative is led by Sarah Franklin, who has strong connections with the medical

and life sciences in Cambridge and with the Department of History and Philosophy of Science through research on the history of modern embryology and IVF. Franklin has been awarded £1 million for a Wellcome Senior Investigator Award on Histories and Cultures of In Vitro Fertilisation and she is building a strong research group focused on aspects of biomedicine. With the recent appointments of King and Franklin, Cambridge is well-placed to become a world leader in the sociology of public health and the social study of biomedicine and bioscience.

While each research group operates autonomously, the Department has a Research Committee that oversees the research activity of the Department, helps to develop strategy and facilitates collaborations. The Department also runs a research seminar which provides a central forum for interaction and debate (see below).

The aims of the Department for the period 2014-19 are to see each of the five research groups expand and flourish, strengthen them where possible, develop innovative research collaborations both within and outside of Cambridge and produce high-quality, cutting-edge research that is funded by major funding bodies.

### 3 People

*Staffing strategy and staff development* Our staffing policy has been to appoint staff of the very highest calibre within our existing research groups while at the same time seeking to foster new research initiatives by making carefully considered strategic appointments. In the period since 2008 we have made seven full-time permanent appointments and one temporary appointment, mostly in the wake of retirements; given that the Department has 11 full-time permanent University Teaching Officers (UTOs), this represents a substantial turnover of staff and it has enabled us greatly to strengthen the Department in key areas. The appointments of King (from Yale) to a Readership in Economic Sociology (subsequently promoted to a Professorship) enabled us to build on our strengths in economic sociology while at the same time fostering new research on the political economy of public health. The appointments of Miley (Yale), Kandil (UCLA) and Desai (LSE) to Lectureships enabled us to increase substantially our strength in political sociology. The appointment of Franklin (LSE) strengthened our research in gender and kinship while at the same time enabling us to build a major new research initiative in the sociology of biomedicine and reproductive technologies. The appointment of Iacovou (ISER, Essex) to a Readership in Quantitative Sociology augmented our capacity to win large research grants and host large research projects involving the use of quantitative methods. The University has approved a new position in the Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, which will be filled in 2014 and will tie in closely to the work being done in economic and political sociology by Burchell, Miley, Kandil and Desai. The appointment of Mann and Castells as Directors of Research, and Alexander as Pitt Professor and Director of Research, has provided additional leadership for our research groups and significantly strengthened our graduate teaching. While we have lost several members of staff since 2008 through retirement or departure, we have succeeded in making excellent appointments that build on our core strengths while at the same time developing new research initiatives. In terms of age profile, the Department is now relatively young; of our full-time permanent UTOs, only two (Scott and Thompson) are due to retire before 2025.

Newly appointed members of staff are assigned a mentor to provide guidance and support. They are also given a lighter teaching load in the first year to facilitate their integration in the Department and give them time to establish their research and make grant applications. All University staff are subject to an appraisal system that is based on a framework approved by the central administration but adapted to the needs of the Department; appraisals are geared to career development and

provide an opportunity for members of staff to discuss their research plans and needs. The Department adheres to the University's Equal Opportunities Policy and its Disability and Employment Policy in all matters relating to staffing. The University promotes the career development of all staff members through its Emerging Leaders Programme and Senior Academic Promotions CV Mentoring Scheme. In addition, the University offers more generous maternity, paternity and adoption leave provision than that required by law, with further provision for graduated return to work plans and flexible working arrangements. The University has introduced a new Returning Carers Scheme to help staff resume their research following a career break arising from caring responsibilities. The University has received a number of awards for staff provisions, including being ranked 11<sup>th</sup> (the highest for a UK HEI) on the Stonewall list (in 2012 and 2013) and winning the inaugural Employee Engagement award from the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (2012). Since 2008, four members of the Department – Baert, Burchell, King and Weinberg – have been promoted to Readerships or Professorships. All established members of staff are entitled to sabbatical leave (one term for every six terms of service) and the Department takes steps to ensure that staff are able to take advantage of this entitlement without disrupting teaching and administrative activities. Since 2008, Baert, Burchell, King, Lehmann and Scott have taken one or more terms of sabbatical leave to pursue their research; this represents 42% of our established UTOs. The Department also encourages staff to apply for research funding that includes a complete or partial buy-out of their time; since 2008, Scott, King and Baert have held grants involving buy-outs. The Department provides a very supportive environment for early career researchers, whether they hold college research fellowships, post-doctoral fellowships supported by funding bodies or research assistant posts on funded projects. Since 2008 the Department has hosted one Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship and one ESRC Future Research Leader Fellowship (in each case 40% of the salary is paid by the University's Isaac Newton Trust), two college research fellows and 12 post-doctoral researchers working on funded research projects. We have a successful record in fostering research talent and many of our researchers, such as Plagnol and Gaunt, have gone on to secure lectureships and senior research positions in other institutions.

*Research students* The Department has a large body of graduate students that has grown steadily in recent years. In 2008-09 we had a total of 87 graduate students in Sociology, which included 26 MPhil students and 61 PhD students; in 2012-13 we had 106 graduate students, including 21 MPhil students and 85 PhD students. Three-quarters of our graduate students are from overseas. The Department provides a very supportive environment for research students and takes care to ensure that their progress is closely monitored. All PhD students are assigned both a supervisor and a faculty advisor, and the progress of each student is monitored closely by the Department's Graduate Education Committee (GEC). PhD students submit written work in their first year, second year and third year; this work is assessed by two senior members of staff, and students must demonstrate that they are making satisfactory progress before they are allowed to proceed to the next stage of their research. Cambridge was awarded an ESRC Doctoral Training Centre in which Sociology participates fully. Training in research methods is provided by the Social Science Research Training Programme, which delivers research training in methods and techniques that are applicable across the social sciences; the programme also offers dedicated workshops for PhD students to support their research, from initial research design through to writing up. The Department runs a fortnightly research seminar in sociology and all graduate students – PhD and MPhil – are strongly encouraged to attend. Many of our PhD students also participate in more specialized research groups in the Department, such as the Individual in the Labour Market reading group, and they run their own reading groups and seminar series, supported by the

## Environment template (REF5)

Department.

Our MPhil programme has around 25 students a year and is an excellent mechanism for recruiting high-quality PhD students. The MPhil research training is part of the Cambridge Doctoral Training Centre from which we receive our allocated ESRC studentships and participate in the generic social science training. Our in-house training programme is designed to reflect the research strengths of the Department in both quantitative and qualitative sociological methodology. All students on the MPhil programme write a dissertation based on original research. Each year 6-7 of the best of our MPhil students proceed to the PhD programme; this represents around 35-40% of our total annual PhD intake.

Among our research students, 8 currently hold ESRC Studentships, 3 hold Cambridge International Scholarships, 7 hold Gates Fellowships and 3 hold College Studentships. The Department has a ring-fenced annual fund of £2,200 to support doctoral students' expenses for fieldwork, conference attendance and professional development. Graduate students are also members of colleges which provide them with various forms of support including accommodation and hardship funds and to which they can apply for additional resources to support their research. The calibre of our research students is shown not only by their success in winning competitive studentships but also by a number of publications in high-ranking journals and by their success in securing academic posts on completion of their PhDs.

### 4 Income, infrastructure and facilities

The Department has been very successful in winning competitive research grants. The total value of all grants held by members of the Department in each year from 2008-09 to 2012-13 is shown below:

08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
£4,205,180	£4,258,634	£1,086,249	£4,023,709	£6,713,593

The total value of new grants won by members of the Department in the same years was:

08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
£245,301	£113,084	£554,267	£3,147,210	£1,336,132

In 2012-13 grants worth more than £6.7 million were held in the Department, and between 2008-09 and 2012-13 members of the Department won around £5.4 million of new grants. Grants held in the Department during this period include an ESRC Priority Network (£3.3 million, £1.2 million to Cambridge), which ran from 2004 to 2009, an ERC Advanced Investigator Award (£2.8 million), which runs from 2011 to 2016, a Wellcome Senior Investigator Award (£1 million), which runs from 2013 to 2018, and an EU grant (€2.5 million, €300,000 to Cambridge), which runs from 2013 to 2017. The Department has also won many smaller grants that have supported the research of individual members of staff including a grant from the British Academy to study multiculturalism in Latin America (£75k), a grant from the Leverhulme Trust to study the rise of French existentialism (£40k), a grant from the British Academy to study the history of IVF (£25k), a grant from the EU-FP7 to study poverty reduction and health inequalities (£264k), a grant from The European Foundation to study gender and working conditions (£50k), a grant from the Mellon Foundation to study the digital revolution in publishing (£90k), a grant from the Philomathia Foundation to study (in)fertility, education and reproductive health (£110k) and a grant from the Balzan Foundation to study the human and social costs of the financial crisis in Europe (£112k).

The research infrastructure in Cambridge is excellent, with state-of-the-art central computing services and departmental computing support, outstanding library facilities including the University Library (one of six copyright libraries in the British Isles with holdings of over 8 million items) and several specialist libraries and collections in the social sciences, history and area studies.

University staff can apply for University funds to support travel to conferences and research network activities. Most members of staff also have college fellowships which provide additional research support – including, in many cases, annual research funds.

The University has a centralized and well-staffed Research Grants Division which disseminates information on funding opportunities, helps with large and multi-partner applications, negotiates contracts and manages the transfer of funds as well as the post-award reconciliation of funds and the final reporting. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences has two full-time research facilitators who provide training in research applications among other things. The School also administers the Cambridge Humanities Research Grant Scheme, which is open to all members of staff and designed to enable researchers to carry out small-scale research projects and/or develop bids for large-scale funding; the Scheme has funds of £300k a year and makes grants of up to £20k to individual researchers. The Department has its own infrastructure for facilitating grant applications and managing existing grants, including three members of staff who provide advice on grants, terms and conditions, prepare budgets, facilitate applications, advise on HR regulations and procedures, assist with procurement and with the processing of invoices and expenses and provide support on all aspects of grant management and administration.

All members of staff have an office in the Department, which is located on the first floor of the Old Cavendish building on Free School Lane. There is dedicated space for research staff on the second floor of the Old Cavendish and in an adjacent building on the site (the Mond Building); this space is allocated to researchers and research projects on a need basis. The Department has 32 desks in a dedicated space for graduate students; the desks are allocated to PhD students who are at an advance stage of their research or in the process of writing up. Research students have the use of a computer-equipped study room in the Department as well as libraries and extensive computer facilities in the Colleges. CRASSH (Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities), housed in a new building with state-of-the-art facilities, provides support for interdisciplinary research and hosts a wide range of lectures, conferences and workshops.

#### **5 Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base**

The Department of Sociology has extensive collaborations with universities and research institutes elsewhere in the UK and Europe. This takes the form of joint research projects as well as looser networks of research collaboration. Joint research projects include the following: the ESRC Priority Network on gender inequality involved 8 institutions and over 25 funded research posts with 5 technical support posts, including the two research posts and Network administrator attached to the project at Cambridge; the network produced 22 books, 203 refereed articles, 120 book chapters and 99 working papers, and it contributed to capacity building in so far as many of the early career researchers employed on research contracts subsequently took up lectureships and research posts at top research universities including the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Oxford University, Dublin University, Royal Holloway, the Open University, University of Adelaide and University of Texas (Austin). King is collaborating with public health and medical researchers in the Department of Public Health and Primary Care in Cambridge, UCL and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, a demographer at the LSE, economists at the Higher School of Education, Moscow, and the Belarusian Academy of Sciences and sociologists at

NYU on a large scale inter-disciplinary grant from the ERC to study privatization and mortality in the former Soviet economies. Franklin's research on reproductive technology and the history of IVF, funded by the Wellcome Trust and the British Academy, involves collaboration with the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, the Centre for Family Research, the Department of Physiology, Development and Neuroscience and the Medical School in Cambridge and with the British Library and the LSE Library. The EU-FP7 project on International Cooperation in the Social Sciences and Humanities, in which Baert is a PI, involves collaboration with the CNRS in Paris, University of Graz, University of Bologna, Erasmus University, John Wesley Theological College Budapest and Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Cientificas y Tecnicas in Argentina. Burchell's project on gender and working conditions, funded by The European Foundation, involves collaboration with University of Manchester and University of Grenoble.

Apart from these joint research projects, all our staff are involved in looser networks of research collaboration including the following: Thompson and Castells have worked closely with a group of leading scholars from Europe and the US to study the aftermath of the 2007-08 financial crisis; funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation, the group met annually in Lisbon from 2009 to 2011 and produced a documentary film and a collaborative book; they are now collaborating on a new project on the crisis in Europe funded by the Balzan Foundation and others. King has worked closely with sociologists at Oxford and Bath, public health and medical scholars at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the University of San Francisco and an economist at UC Davis on 19 refereed articles and one book chapter since 2008. Miley is collaborating with a team of over 20 Spanish sociologists and political scientists on research on democratic representation in Spain; the project, funded by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas in Spain, includes elite surveys with approximately 600 representatives from the Spanish Congress, Senate and all 17 regional parliaments, as well as a survey of the general population.

Contributions to the professional development of the discipline include: Thompson is Director of Polity Press and has been largely responsible for building it as one of the world's leading publishers in sociology and the social sciences; with a publishing programme of over 150 books a year, Polity publishes some of the best scholarship in sociology and social theory and some of the leading textbooks in the field, thereby contributing both to the dissemination of high-quality research and scholarship and to the training of students and younger scholars. Alexander is the editor of book series in sociology at Norton, Cambridge University Press, Palgrave-Macmillan and Paradigm. Journal Editors include Therborn, *European Societies*; Alexander, *The American Journal of Cultural Sociology*, *Sociological Theory*; Baert, *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*. Members of Editorial Boards of Journals include Alexander, *European Journal of Social Theory*, *Sociological Perspectives*, *Citizenship Studies*, *Thesis Eleven*, *Teoria Sociologia*; Baert, *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory*, *Journal of Classical Sociology*, *European Journal of Social Theory*; King, *Cambridge Journal of Economics, Employment and Economy in Central and Eastern Europe*; Thompson, *The International Journal of Communications, Matrices, Estudios Publicos, Logos*. Appointments and Service include Therborn, Program Committee, ISA; Thompson, European Research Council; Baert, Executive of Research Committee for Sociological Theory, ISA. Keynote and Distinguished or named Lectures since 2008 include Castells (48), Thompson (18), Therborn (15), Alexander (11), Franklin (9), King (5). Prizes and Awards include Castells, Holberg Memorial Prize (2012), Balzan Prize for Sociology (2013); Mann, Robin Williams Jr. Award for Distinguished Scholarship, ASA (2012); Alexander, The Foundation Mattei Dogan Prize in Sociology, ISA (2010).