

Institution: University of Leicester
Unit of assessment: 23 Sociology
<p>a. Overview</p> <p>The UoA is located in and supported by the College of Social Science. It is broadly contiguous with the Department of Sociology but also includes Lazaridis (Politics) and O'Reilly (Psychology) who both have long standing links with the UoA. Sociological research at Leicester is structured into two overlapping research groups:</p> <p>The <i>Citizenship and Civil Society</i> group (CCS -- members include Bassel, Carter, Chattoe-Brown, Demir, Hughes, Hutchby, Lazaridis, Misztal, Monforte, Ruzza) incorporates colleagues who work on issues deeply ingrained in the Unit's research culture, building on the work of Elias and others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Civic Engagement</i> – Active citizenship in relation to health, sport, education, science; public opinion and public engagement; political participation, public interest groups, social movements; journalism and participatory media. • <i>Migration and Social Integration</i> – Population movement and issues of social inclusion/exclusion; refugees; social integration and disintegration; politics of immigration; cultural translation, ethno-political identities and diaspora. <p>The <i>Health and Wellbeing</i> group (HWB -- members include Bartram, Bassel, Carter, Demir, Hughes, Hutchby, O'Reilly, Pilcher) draws together research in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sociology of Health</i> – Biomedicine; discourses of health and healthy living; drugs and drug use; sex education; health communication. • <i>Happiness and Wellbeing</i> – The relationship between migration and happiness; discourses of therapy and counselling; families and adult-child relations; emotions, identity and wellbeing within the workplace.
<p>b. Research strategy</p> <p><u>Key developments since RAE 2008</u></p> <p>Established soon after RAE2008, our research strategy for this period has focussed on four core developments: (i) generating critical mass in core research areas. The 'research cluster' approach adopted in RAE 2008 has been replaced by a more focused determinate model. Staffing changes have contributed to this refocussing, with the arrival, since 2008, of Carter, Hughes and Ruzza to Chairs; and Bassel and Monforte to lectureships; (ii) using our research groups to lead cross-disciplinary initiatives across the College of Social Science and the wider University; (iii) laying foundations for research and publications that will span multiple REF periods; (iv) developing clear lines of continuity between the past and present strengths of the Department.</p> <p>The strategy and new appointments have resulted in a major strengthening of our work in social theory, migration and citizenship studies, civil society and political sociology. For example, Ruzza's work on civil society in European politics played a key part in the development of the CCS group. Hughes' work, drawing together health concerns, cultures of consumption, and therapeutic discourses in relation to tobacco use brings added dimensions to the HWB group and allows us to lead wider research networks dealing with issues of addiction with other UoAs (History and Politics). Carter's work on genomes, genealogies and the imagining of race offers new dimensions to the 'social integration' strand in CCS and to the biomedicine strand in HWB. Monforte's appointment to a lectureship in Civil Society strengthens this area of work within CCS, reflecting our strategy to build upon ingrained traditions of work in the UoA whilst contributing to develop vibrant new areas of research. Forthcoming conferences on <i>Norbert Elias</i> and <i>Civil Society</i> evidence the long-term nature of our investment and link to colleagues with shared interests in UoAs such as History and Media/Communications. Since her appointment to a 'New Blood' lectureship (with reduced teaching load for the first 3 years) in 2011 Bassel has had an impact on the research culture not only within the migration and social integration strand of CCS but also cross-departmentally by establishing the <i>Migration Research Network</i>. The network incorporates over 60 members of staff from across the University, and includes Bassel, Bartram, Carter, Demir, Lazaridis and Monforte. In addition, several new appointments have</p>

strengthened the Unit's long-standing association with innovations in social theory. **Hughes'** work on figurational sociology and **Carter's** work on critical realism and Actor Network Theory augment existing strengths, and complement the theoretical work undertaken by **Misztal** on memory and community, **Chattoe-Brown** on simulation and game models, and **Demir** on the history and philosophy of science. We are now in a much strengthened position for grant capture, contribution to the disciplinary infrastructure and PhD recruitment.

Research plans

Our objectives over the coming period centre upon consolidating the developing 'Leicester Sociology' brand. This has increasingly emphasised themes of migration and civil society, and health and wellbeing, both within a local and international context. We will develop this agenda further by: **(i)** building the two research groups through ongoing projects that are working to produce outputs and realise larger grants; by adding capacity through new staffing; a significant expansion of PhD student recruitment and funded postdoctoral scholars through schemes offered by Wellcome Trust, Leverhulme Trust and others; **(ii)** work with interdisciplinary research groups that offer the potential for larger-scale grant income and projects fusing sociological research and methods with those of a wider suite of disciplines.

Key to building long-term research and developing capacity will be the up-scaling and completion of ongoing funded research projects. To take three examples:

- **Bassel, Bartram, Monforte** and **Misztal** were recently awarded an ESRC research grant to explore immigrants' experiences of the UK Citizenship Test (£351,276 2013-16). In addition to bringing in new RAs, this will generate a range of research outputs that will cross the agendas of the CCS and HWB groups.
- **Demir's** participation in EU FP7 funded project BioSHaRE-EU (£41k to Leicester, 2010-15) is linking the interests of HWB to an international interdisciplinary research network, including biostatisticians, geneticists, ethico-legal scholars, epidemiologists and sociologists exploring the scientific, ethical, epistemological and social barriers to data sharing across biobanks. This work will generate significant outputs.
- **Hutchby** is collaborating with **O'Reilly** and psychiatric clinicians on an NHS-funded project investigating video-recorded data of child psychiatric assessments (£21,669, 2010-14). Conversation analysis is being used to reveal the interactional processes underpinning clinical evaluation of emotional and behavioural difficulties in children. This project is currently completing data collection and transcription, and will produce a range of outputs aimed at both basic and applied (clinical) research journals.

We will generate critical mass by working systematically to capture similar grants, PhD studentships (from, e.g. Wellcome Trust) and postdoctoral fellowships. Alongside the existing activity of the Unit (weekly seminars, workshops, conference programmes and grant mentoring) this capacity-building will generate a larger, highly focussed group of scholars to enhance the reach and impact of the Unit's research across the next assessment period.

Key to our aspiration to lead wider interdisciplinary research groupings is the development of two large inter-departmental networks. The first is the *Migration Research Network*, which brings together interdisciplinary perspectives cutting across conventional lines of enquiry. Its location in Leicester, a city that continues to be shaped by its unique history of migration, provides a distinctive opportunity for academic research that is developed in partnership with the community. An early highlight was an event funded by the ESRC Festival of Social Science, 'Our Leicester: Understanding a Multicultural City' (Nov 2012) involving young people from local colleges and youth groups with representatives of the City Council and the Mayor's office. The second is a new *Centre for Diversity, Migration and Citizenship*, a collaboration between Sociology and other University departments, and philanthropic and business interests within the City of Leicester. The Centre spans a number of interconnected research areas including education and family policy; disability and health studies; crime and public order; political movements, inclusion and representation; communications; religion; social integration; sport and leisure; housing and employment, and many more. It will develop a pool of PGT and PGR students, which will facilitate further development of the Unit's research environment. Both of these initiatives represent fertile areas for grant funding applications and research publication initiatives through new and exciting collaborations. We plan to make large bids to funding councils and charitable trusts, including for

instance the AHRC, ESRC and Horizon 2020 schemes. In relation to the latter, concrete proposals are in development for a multi-centre bid co-ordinated from Leicester to the 'Societal Challenges' stream (part 6) which calls for research into 'migration, prosperity and growth' (topic 11); and individual reactions to the crisis and challenges of European solidarity (topic 12), which makes explicit reference to 'processes of civilisation' in Europe (a reference to the concepts of Elias) and their relationship to the formation of 'new psychopathologies in modern life'. In this respect, we plan to build further upon the success by **Lazaridis** in obtaining two pan-European network grants which investigate migration and integration.

c. People

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

Staffing policy

Broad staffing policy in the assessment period has been to replace departing or retiring staff with new colleagues who have an established or developing national and international research profile, depending on seniority. Reflecting our research strategy for this period, we have set out to recruit colleagues who can provide leadership to our two research groupings and (with the substantial support from the University and the College of Social Science) to create a continuum of early career and new blood staff who will provide the future leadership of our groups and interdisciplinary networks. As a consequence, the demographic profile of the UoA shows a good spread across the age range 25-65 with plenty of opportunity for internal promotions to Senior Lecturer, Reader and also Chair positions within the next five years. In terms of a staffing overview, departures at Chair level during the period include Annandale (to a Chair and Headship at the University of York), Barbalet (to a Chair at Australian National University); and at Lecturer level, Bielsa (to a post in Spain). These departures have been more than compensated for by the five new arrivals: **Carter**, **Hughes** and **Ruzza** at Chair Level; **Bassel** and **Monforte** at Lecturer level. The grant success of these new colleagues is testimony to the success of the recruitment policy and evidence of the mechanisms in place to support colleagues in developing their research agendas.

Mechanisms to support staff include annual research interviews conducted as part of a wider appraisal process, the assignment of mentors to junior and mid-career staff, support for research leave (see below) and mentoring of applications for promotion by professorial members of our two research groups. The annual research reviews provide a forum for each member of staff to discuss their short and longer terms research plans with a senior colleague. Early career colleagues in particular benefit from the chance to discuss priorities and plans with an experienced colleague.

We have been particularly successful in generating pump priming money to provide platforms from which larger scale activities can build. Over the period, for instance, colleagues in the Unit have obtained over £17k from College Research Fund (a competitively awarded fund to which departments in the College of Social Sciences contribute) for this purpose. Our Graduate Teaching Assistants (see below) spend 20% of their time supporting teaching and research within the Unit. By using this time strategically, we have been able to provide additional research assistant support or teaching relief for colleagues developing research projects. The benefit of these support and mentoring mechanisms can be seen in the success of colleagues when applying for promotion, which during this assessment period has included two promotions from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer and one promotion from Reader to Chair.

These internal support mechanisms have also been effective in assisting staff to win research fellowships during the assessment period. **Demir** won a competitive early career research fellowship from the AHRC in 2012-2013. Her project – Diasporic Brokers: Reviving and Translating Kurdish Culture in London – has enabled **Demir** to develop work significantly on the translation of cultures among migrant communities in interaction with the homeland and the host country. Several publications have been and continue to be produced, and the project has contributed importantly to the impacts of the CSS group's research through active connections **Demir** has made with migrant Kurdish community organisations and political actors.

Equality of opportunity

Research activity within the Unit is supported by the University's research leave system. Staff are

eligible to apply for one semester's leave in every seven and are required to bid for research funding to support their research. Post leave outcomes are assessed by a sub group of the College Research Committee and entitlement to apply for further research leave is dependent on the timely provision of an acceptable post-leave report indicating that the proposed outcomes have been achieved. During the assessment period, **Bartram, Chattoe-Brown, Demir, Hutchby, Misztal** and **Pilcher** have all had semester-long periods of research leave and many of the publications submitted for assessment (**Demir-1; Hutchby-3**, for instance) arise directly from this. During the next REF cycle, recent appointees will become eligible for the scheme and we will actively support them in applying and (through the use of mentors) ensuring that arising outputs demonstrate the reach and ambition to which we aspire through our research groupings.

All staff are expected to disseminate research at conferences, and support funds are provided by the department. Planned attendance at conferences is discussed by staff and PGR students at the start and mid-point of the academic year and funds allocated within budgets established at the start of each academic year. The amounts available enable staff to attend at least one international conference in the year and sometimes more where budget surpluses exist. Staff are encouraged to bid to the College Research Fund or externally, for example to the British Academy, for additional funds where needed. **Bartram, Bassell, Pilcher** and **Chattoe-Brown** have all been supported in this way.

The University is a signatory to the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*, and has recently been awarded the 'HR Excellence in Research Award' which acknowledges the University's alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. An action plan underlines our commitment and examines where Leicester is in line with, or goes beyond, the requirements of the Concordat. Areas for further work have been identified, against key milestones and timelines, and these are being monitored by the Concordat Steering Group, which is chaired by the PVC for Research and Enterprise, and has representation from research and academic staff members from the University's four constituent colleges, Human Resources, and the Academic Practice Unit. This has facilitated specific changes at departmental level. For example, post-doctoral researchers are now represented in the departmental Research Committee, and the departmental meeting, and so are involved in key discussions and decision-making at this level. In addition, post-doctoral researchers are invited to the annual departmental research away day.

The Department actively complies with the University's Equal Opportunities Policy. All current Category A staff are on open-ended contracts. Most are also on 100% FTE; three members of the Unit are currently on fractional contracts by choice.

Standards of quality and integrity in research

Research quality and integrity is maintained through a number of procedures and policies. The departmental Research Committee is chaired by the Director of Research (**Carter**), who works closely with the Head of Department (**Hutchby**) to oversee the strategic development of the Unit's research. The Research Committee meets twice a semester and, as well as developing and implementing strategies in response to wider University and national imperatives, monitors the progress of the research groups within the Unit and considers progress reports on grant applications and funding provided on a regular monthly basis by the University Research Support Office (RSO). The Director of Research sits on the College Research Committee and provides a direct line of communication regarding College research initiatives and funding opportunities, including the pump-priming research grant fund mentioned above, an infrastructure fund (University-level, to which the College bids), and a research student scholarship fund (see below).

Research ethics monitoring is enabled by a robust and multi-level system of Research Ethics Committees. The Department has a Research Ethics Officer (REO) who convenes a Research Ethics Committee (REC). All research applications, whether from staff, postgraduate students or undergraduate students (e.g. dissertations), are reviewed by the REO and the REC, with cases constituting more than a 'minimal' ethical risk being further reviewed by a College REC. The system is overseen and audited by a University REC. The University issues clear authorship guidelines to staff in its Research Code of Conduct.

ii. Research students

PhD completions during the period (7.5) reflect staff turnover and the appointment of a new professorial staff cohort late in the REF period. The current trajectory is, however, rather stronger. We leave the assessment period with 16 FTE PGR students and having won a number of prestigious or competitive scholarships for supporting research students. These include studentships funded by ESRC +3 (3 students); College-funded four year GTA studentships (3), University Scholarships (3); as well as various overseas awards (e.g. Royal Thai Government scholarship, Government of Kazakhstan scholarship). We have thus assembled a critical mass of PhD students to support our two core research groups and to underpin a programme of applications for postdoctoral scholarships. Further applications for studentships – to the HEA and the AHRC – are currently under review, and will form part of a major initiative to expand the postgraduate research community for the Unit over the next three years.

PGR students are overseen by the Director of PhD Programmes (**Misztal**), with the assistance of a PG administrator, who regularly monitors student progress through Thesis Committees (twice yearly for full-time, and annually for part-time students), upgrading (from Advanced Postgraduate to full PhD status, generally at the end of the first year) and the organisation of viva voce exams. The University Graduate School provides a wider forum for discussion and implementation of best practice in postgraduate education.

PGR students are involved in the Unit's research environment in a range of ways. They are expected to attend Departmental Research Seminars that run weekly or fortnightly during term time. Advanced PGRs present papers in these seminars. The Department organises an annual PhD day conference, at which all students present their ongoing research for feedback from fellow students and academic staff from their research group. The Department runs a Postgraduate Forum offering a number of opportunities for students to build their career profile during their studies. Recent PG Fora have focused on publishing strategy and practicalities, talks by PhD graduates on 'tips for succeeding' in the PhD and developing academic careers, and sessions from academic staff on career and publishing options and how to develop a strong academic CV.

In addition to these departmental activities, PGRs also take advantage of a range of researcher training within the College, the Graduate School and the wider University. These include the Social Sciences Doctoral Training Programme which runs through the first year of registration for all PhD candidates and to which Sociology staff contribute both as module convenors and contributors, as well as sessions offered by the Academic Practice Unit in their Intrepid Researcher and Enterprising Researcher series where experts provide workshops on advanced topics. Our PGRs have also been involved in the University's annual Festival of Postgraduate Research at which PhD candidates present and defend posters describing their research to judges drawn from the local area, such as business leaders and the Mayor; five students have taken this opportunity during the assessment period. The College runs, for graduating PhD students, the annual Doctoral Inaugural Lectures which are allocated on a competitive basis: in 2009, 2010 and 2013, Sociology doctoral graduates were among those selected to give a public lecture in this series.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Research funding

As well as grants mentioned elsewhere, a number of projects have been funded as part of larger research consortia during the assessment period. These grants demonstrate how we will approach the development and leadership of interdisciplinary research groupings across the College and University during the next period and include:

SIMIAN (Simulation Innovation): £1,000,000 from ESRC National Centre for Research Methods with University of Surrey (**Chattoe-Brown**, 2008-12 £300,000 Leicester). This four year programme focussed on the development of computer-based social simulation methodology. , The project was the basis for journal articles and book chapters (e.g. **Chattoe-Brown-1**) and training and capacity building activities: nine 'taster' courses, seven 'build-a-model' courses, five

'advanced training' courses, three User Fellowships, 66 outreach presentations, and a Summer School. This fusion of research and capacity building is typical of the model that we will develop during the next assessment period.

CINEFOGO (Civil Society and New Forms of Government in Europe): a 43 institution EU FP6 NoE project (**Ruzza** Co-Investigator, originally at Trento then 2009-11 at Leicester; £33k Leicester). This Network focussed on the relationship between civil society and citizenship in an increasingly diverse and multi-cultural European political framework which is simultaneously trying to achieve greater integration. Five international workshops were held in Leicester on the role of civil society in the public sphere, civil society and ethno-nationalist associations, patients' associations in relation to ethnicity and health, relations between the public sector and civil society.

BioSHaRE-EU: Biobank Standardisation and Harmonisation for Research Excellence in the European Union: an interdisciplinary programme funded by EU FP7 investigating ethical, political, scientific, epistemological and social dimensions of biobank data sharing (**Demir** Co-Investigator, 2010-15; £41,000 Leicester). This project has begun to produce outputs (e.g. **Demir-1**) and is a priority developmental area for the coming period.

Strategies for developing grant income

Grant-seeking is an expected part of the research work of staff. The annual appraisal system incorporates a requirement for staff to outline their planned grant applications over the coming year with the Director of Research (**Carter**), who oversees and supports these grant plans (see above). **Carter** and the senior members of the research groups actively pursue grant opportunities, and help staff to increase the ambition of their grants. Quality assurance and peer support are an important factor, and all grant applications are subject to an internal peer-review system prior to sign-off by the RSO. Smaller grant applications are reviewed via nominated colleagues as part of a departmental system for providing feedback; while larger grant applications (>£50k) are routed through the College system and reviewed by senior colleagues from across the College, or more widely where applicable. These reviewers have all held major funding from multiple providers and most are current members of peer review Colleges or chairs of funding committees. Staff are encouraged to work with grant holders and members of review panels when developing bids to develop expertise. RSO also provide support in costing applications, developing ideas and have examples of successful bids to a wide range of funders available as exemplars. **Lazaridis**, **Bartram** and **Bassel** have all obtained individual or collaborative grant funding (from the EU and ESRC respectively) after such mentoring has taken place. Links built up through our two interdisciplinary groups are also important as conduits for advice, mentoring and developing the ambition of grants.

Infrastructure and facilities

The Unit is housed in one building on the central campus, which contains both office space and a range of meeting rooms. This allows easy access for discussions, networking, research collaboration meetings, and so on. All staff have ready access to the University's IT networks from their office, as do research students who occupy shared office space, and all can access centrally held software and databases through secure remote connections.

Sociological research is well-supported by University infrastructure, including the Library which provides access to a large range of journals. Funds are available to purchase relevant books. The Library also contains dedicated PGR rooms, providing additional space for group work for our students. Services specifically designed to support the research process are delivered by expert Information Librarians who each have responsibility for supporting the information and library needs of a small group of academic departments, including: research skills training and one-to-one support for research students and ECRs; information searching, discovery and retrieval, critical evaluation and bibliographic citation advice; publication advice for new researchers, including analysis of impact factors; and a series of web pages geared to research support.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

Members of the Unit play a significant part in research collaborations at national and international level; in editing journals; in organising conferences and symposia on key research themes often with invited international speakers; and in contributing to the large scale international research

dissemination activities of associations such as the BSA and the ESA. A singular feature of the grant successes of the UoA (for instance two EU grants held by **Lazaridis** or the three large collaborative grants detailed under section d) has been the degree to which they link individuals and the research groups to which they belong to other colleagues on the national and international stage. Such grants reflect our research strategy and our engagement with the disciplinary infrastructure of conferences, seminars and service with professional bodies, and our wider role in developing disciplinary capacity. **SIMIAN**, **BioShare** and **CINEFOGO** all evidence how members of the Unit have collaborated both nationally and internationally with sociologists and, in the case of **BioShare** particularly, other disciplines such as law, politics, ethics and the natural sciences.

Seminar series, editorships, conference organisation

The Unit organises a research seminar series during term time where external speakers are regularly invited to present papers. High profile invited speakers have given public lectures on issues that relate to our research groups, such as nationalism and civil society (John Hall, McGill University) and the politics of climate change (Anthony Giddens, LSE).

The journal *Social Science and Medicine* had its editorial base in the Department of Sociology between 2008-2011 (Professor Ellen Annandale, Editor-in-Chief, and Dr Ryan Mowat, Managing Editor of the journal).

Members of the Unit currently belong to the Editorial Boards of: *Discourse, Context and Media* (**Hutchby**); *Historical Social Research* (**Hughes**); *Human Figurations* (**Hughes**); *International Journal of Happiness and Development* (**Bartram**); *Journal of Classical Sociology* (**Misztal**); *Journal of Critical Realism* (**Carter**); *Journal of Kurdish Studies* (**Demir**); *Journal of Qualitative Sociology* (**Misztal**); *Journal of Social Research and Policy* (**Bartram**); *Language@Internet* (**Hutchby**); *Millenium Journal for International Relations* (**Carter**); *Research on Language and Social Interaction* (**Hutchby**, to 2012); *Sociological Research Online* (**Pilcher**); *Sociology* (**Carter**, **Pilcher**); *Studia Socjologiczne* (**Misztal**); *Work, Employment and Society* (**Hughes**, to 2009).

Staff have organised conferences and symposia: 'Understanding Diaspora: The Case of Kurds in London' (symposium - **Demir**, 2009); 'English "Riots": Civic Responses and Sociological Perspectives' (public symposium with BSA - **Demir**, **Bassel**, 2011); 'The Crisis of Theory, the Crisis of Europe' (international interdisciplinary symposium - **Demir**, 2012), exploring how austerity impacts upon the idea of Europe; 'Happiness and Wellbeing: Enhancing the Contribution of Sociology' (conference - **Bartram**, **Pilcher**, 2011).

During the period members of the Unit have participated in the scientific committees of large international conferences organised by professional associations. These include membership of the board of RC31 (International Migration) of the International Sociological Association (ISA) in Tel Aviv January 2013, and coordinating the RC31 program for the forthcoming ISA conference in 2014 (**Bartram**); network organiser for the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics section on race, ethnicity and migration, 2008-13 (**Bartram**); membership of the scientific committee of the 10th International Conference on Conversation Analysis in Düsseldorf, September 2010 (**Hutchby**); election in 2012 as Vice-Chair of the European Sociological Association's Research Network on Sociology of Migration (**Demir**); establishment in 2012 of a new BSA study group on Diaspora, Migration, Transnationalism (**Demir** in collaboration with Dr Lucy Maybin, Sheffield University); Member of the External Affairs Group of the BSA, working with the BSA's President, Director, Chair, Vice Chair, Honorary Vice President, responding to consultations from government, HEFCE, the ESRC, and other bodies, 2013 – (**Hughes**).

For a unit of this size and career spectrum these examples of engagement with the disciplinary (and interdisciplinary) infrastructure are particularly impressive. We have invested significant time and resource in supporting the wider aspirations of the more junior staff mentioned above, as well as encouraging Professorial colleagues to take leadership roles within the discipline. During this REF period, we have laid the foundations for continuing large scale engagement with the wider community during the next five years.