

Institution: Birkbeck, University of London

Unit of Assessment: 23 Sociology

Title of case study: The Cultural and Creative Impacts of Sociological Research on Social Movements

1. Summary of the impact

Professor Sasha Roseneil's sociological research on social movements has become a central reference point for journalists, film makers, writers, artists, curators, archaeologists, and activists interested in the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp and the wider milieu of post 1960s anti-nuclear, women's and LGBT movements. It has impacted upon public and specialist understandings of, and knowledge about, Greenham, the protests of the late Cold War era, and feminist and queer politics more widely. It has influenced artistic production across a range of media and discussions of the preservation of heritage.

2. Underpinning research

The underpinning research was an extensive body of work developed in three overlapping phases and published between 1995 and 2013.

Phase 1 (initially as an ESRC-funded PhD student at LSE, and then at the University of Leeds, 1991-2000) began with an ethnographic study of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp and the wider women's peace/ anti-nuclear movement. This resulted in two monographs: 1) *Disarming Patriarchy* (ref.1) was a sociological study of Greenham as a social movement; 2) *Common Women, Uncommon Practices: the queer feminisms of Greenham* (ref. 2) offered an analysis of the queer feminist politics and participants' narratives and experiences of Greenham through the lens of debates in contemporary feminist and queer theory and practice. Other publications were concerned with understanding the dynamic relationship between the global, the local and the personal in the women's peace movement, with the methodologies employed in the research, with questions of consciousness, identity and experience in relation to involvement with Greenham, and with theorizing Greenham as an instance of postmodern feminist politics. This body of work has been widely cited within social movement studies and scholarship on feminist politics.

Phase 2 focused on the spatial practices, material cultures and cultural legacies of Greenham. It began at the University of Leeds in 2005 and continued at Birkbeck when Roseneil moved there in 2007. Roseneil collaborated with archaeologist Yvonne Marshall, artist Lucy Orta, military heritage specialist John Schofield (English Heritage) and curator Duncan Brown (Southampton City Museum) as *The Common Ground Research Group*, which came together to investigate the material practices and legacies of Greenham, and to feed into policy debate about the conservation of Cold War historical sites, arguing for the historical and cultural importance of Greenham as a gendered Cold War protest site, and intervening to "queer archaeology". Roseneil's research provided the knowledge base for the Group's archaeological and artistic investigations, which involved an intensive excavation and survey of the Turquoise Gate camp site, and topographical mapping and interpretation of the site, its visible cultural features and artefacts, using a range of archaeological, anthropological and GIS methodologies. Roseneil was central to the design and conduct of the investigations, and led the cultural analysis of the recovered artefacts and the legacy of the material culture of the Camp (ref.3). During this phase, she also wrote about the cultural legacies of the feminist peace politics of Greenham (ref.4)

Phase 3 was research carried out as part of the EU FP6 FEMCIT project, *Remaking Citizenship in Multicultural Europe: the impact of contemporary women's movements* (2007-2011), of which Roseneil was Deputy Scientific Director. In this Roseneil broadened her social movement research to encompass the investigation of the impacts of women's movements and LGBT movements across Europe from 1968-2008. She led a four-country comparative study (the UK, Norway, Portugal and Bulgaria) that mapped the movements' claims and demands around issues of intimate citizenship, and then analysed their impacts on law, policy, and everyday intimate life

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experiences. The research found that the movements have had a radically transformative effect on lived experiences of intimate citizenship (ref. 5), and on the legal and social organisation of heteronormativity (ref. 6).

3. References to the research

1. **Roseneil, S.** (1995) *Disarming Patriarchy: Feminism and Political Action at Greenham*, 224pp, Buckingham, Open University Press.
2. **Roseneil, S.** (2000) *Common Women, Uncommon Practices: The Queer Feminisms of Greenham*, 329pp, London, Cassell Academic Press.
3. Marshall, Y., **S. Roseneil** and K. Armstrong (2009) 'Situating the Greenham Archaeology: an auto-ethnography of a feminist project', *Public Archaeology*, Vol. 8, No.2-3: 225-245. Re-printed in *Autoethnography* (ed. Pat Sikes), Routledge, 2013.
4. **Roseneil, S.** (2009) 'Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp', in N. Young (ed) *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Awarded the Royal United Services Association Outstanding Reference Source 2011, Dayton Literary Peace Prize Recipient, 2011; Conflict Research Society Book of the Year, 2010.
5. **Roseneil, S.**, I. Crowhurst, T. Hellesund, A.C. Santos and M. Stoilova (2012). 'Remaking Intimate Citizenship in Multicultural Europe: experiences outside the conventional family' in B. Halsaa, S. Roseneil and S. Sumer (eds) *Remaking Citizenship Multicultural Europe: women's movements, gender and diversity* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan: 41-69.
6. **Roseneil, S.**, I. Crowhurst, T. Hellesund, A.C. Santos and M. Stoilova (2013) 'Changing Landscapes of Heteronormativity in Europe: the regulation and normalisation of same-sex sexualities' *Social Politics* 20(2): 165-199.

Grants:

Phase 1 was partially funded by an ESRC PhD studentship at the London School of Economics and a University of Leeds University Research Fellowship (1996-1999).

Phase 2 was funded by grants to the *Common Ground Research Group*: a Council for British Archaeology Challenge Fund Award (PI: Schofield), and an Arts Council of England Grant (PI: Orta) (2006-2008).

Phase 3 was funded by an EU FP6 Integrated Project grant (2007-2011, 4 million euros): Scientific Director: Beatrice Halsaa, Oslo & Deputy Scientific Directors: Sasha Roseneil and Solveig Bergman. This research received the highest end of award evaluation ("good to excellent").

4. Details of the impact

The phase 1 research established Roseneil's reputation as the leading sociological expert on the women's peace movement of the late Cold War era, and more widely on feminist, lesbian and anti-nuclear politics. The research involved numerous public knowledge transfer activities prior to 2008, many of which have bequeathed lasting cultural products that continue to be accessed by journalists and interested publics. Most notably Roseneil acted as academic advisor and was interviewed for the first online Guardian Film, *Your Greenham*, directed by Beeban Kidron (2007). Since 2008, published research and her "in person" advice and consultancy, which draw on all three phases of research, have been used by documentary film-makers, curators, artists, and writers in the production of a range of cultural artefacts, and have served to inspire the creative process. In addition she has contributed directly to public understanding of social movements through numerous media interviews and public speaking engagements that have reached a wide variety of audiences including activists, the general public and specialists beyond the academy.

Impacts on cultural and creative production

Roseneil's research has impacted upon processes of cultural and creative production that have resulted in television documentaries, major international and UK exhibitions, art works by a leading artist, a film-script, a novel, and significant new archaeological investigations of heritage.

- *Greenham Common Changed My Life*: a BBC Timeshift documentary (2010), for which Roseneil was the academic consultant and a key interviewee, and which has been aired a number of times on BBC4 and BBC2.

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- *The Secret Life of the National Grid* (2011): Roseneil acted as an adviser to director/ producer Jennifer Forde on the feminist anti-nuclear politics of the late 1970s and 80s for this BBC4 documentary.
- *Signs of Change: Social Movements Cultures 1960s to Now* (2008-2010): a major art exhibition curated by Dara Greenwald and Josh MacPhee, in association with Exit Art, New York City and funded by the Andy Warhol Foundation. Roseneil was consulted by the curators about the material cultures of UK social movements and loaned materials from her personal Greenham research archive for the exhibition. She was invited to speak about Greenham and the preservation of the material cultures of social movements (phase 2 research) at a symposium at Exit Art in September 2008. The exhibition toured the US for two years: Exit Art, New York (20 September 2008-6 December 2008); Miller Gallery, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh (23 January 2009-8 March 2009); The Arts Center of the Capital Region, Rensselaer, Troy, New York (5 April-5 June 2009); The Philip Feldman Gallery, Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland (4 February-19 March 2010) (**source 6**).
- *Totipotent Architecture – Greenham Art Works* (2008): art works by Lucy Orta were produced as part of the Common Ground Research Group, in dialogue with Roseneil about the physical spaces and cultural meanings of Greenham, in person and through her writings about Greenham. The importance of Roseneil's research (phase 1 and 2) to Orta's art work is demonstrated in Lucy+Jorge Orta's invitation to Roseneil to contribute a chapter to a book about this project: *Potential Architecture* (2013) (**source 7**).
- *The Presentation of Heritage Research Awards* (2010): *The Common Ground Research Group's* "queer archaeology" of the material culture and legacy of Greenham ("Benders and Bunkers: presenting dissonant heritage") was shortlisted for the *Royal Archaeological Institute/ English Heritage Presentation of Heritage Research Award 2010*. Roseneil and archaeologist Marshall presented the project's findings about the significance and gender politics of Greenham as a Cold War "heritage site" at a conference at the British Museum (26 February 2010) before an audience of 250 members of the public, heritage experts, curators, conservators and archaeologists. Archaeologist and journalist Chris Catling said in an email: 'As a judge at the Presentation of Heritage Research Awards last Friday I was really rooting for the Greenham Common presentation, which was the only one from which I learned anything new or that challenged my preconceptions' (**source 8** on the Common Ground Project).
- *Singing the Changes: Oral History and Exhibition* (2013): the Pink Singers LGBT Choir invited Roseneil to act as consultant in the production of their 30th anniversary oral history project and exhibition (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund). Drawing on both her phase 1 and phase 3 research about the social movements and sexuality since the late 1960s, she gave a talk and engaged in discussion with choir members at a "scholars workshop" on LGBT history and the social changes of the past 30 years, organised by the Project Committee (17 March 2013). Her input at the workshop fed into the conceptualisation and production of the exhibition, and she later commented on drafts of the exhibition texts. Project Committee member Susan Rudy wrote 'to thank you for the very significant contribution your research and knowledge made to the Exhibition itself, and to our members' knowledge of, and pride in, lesbian and gay history. [...] We were especially grateful that your presentation identified key differences between lesbian and gay history. Your comments on the significance of the events at Greenham Common for lesbian feminists in the early 1980s led us to add several events to the timeline and to the exhibition structure itself. Just as importantly, your contribution was significant for the choir members themselves. Following your presentation, I heard several young women chatting excitedly about how they had no idea what the lives of lesbians in the 1980s had been like and that they could now see their experience in the context of broader trends [...] All of us who spoke with or listened to you and all of those who turn up at the Exhibition will have been influenced by your work'. The Exhibition ran for 10 weeks in 2013 at Audit House and in the exhibition space at Kings Place in London (**sources 1 & 9**).
- *Down at Greenham*, a BBC Film by Great Meadow Productions: Roseneil's research was "an invaluable resource" for the researcher and scriptwriter of this film which is currently in the process of securing backing from Hollywood. She was an adviser and consultant concerning the culture and physical organisation of the Camp (phase 2 research), and its relations with the local community, the British and US militaries (phase 1 research): 'We had a very illuminating discussion which contributed to the background and context of my script -- in particular Sasha's

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extensive knowledge of the topography of Greenham -- she showed me photographs which were extremely helpful -- and what she could tell me about the day-to-day texture of life among the groups of women at the camp have contributed invaluable to the writing process' (**source 2**)

- *Love and Fall Out*, a novel by Kathryn Simmonds (in press, Seren): Roseneil was interviewed by writer Simmonds about Greenham during research for her forthcoming novel set partly at Greenham Common in the 1980s, drawing on phase 1 and 2 research (**source 3**).

Impacts on activist, general and student publics

- *Greenham Remembered* - 30th Anniversary of Greenham Conference, Feminist Library 2011: Roseneil drew on phase 2 research to talk about the archaeology and material/ cultural legacies of Greenham, and to reflect on Greenham in the context of the wider women's movement (phase 3 research), as the key academic speaker at an open public conference organised by the Feminist Library, attended by over 100 feminist activists.
- *BBC Radio Wales Interview* 5 September 2011: Roseneil was interviewed about the cultural and political legacies of Greenham on its 30th anniversary.
- *Protest Camp Workshop*, Leicester, 26 June 2012: Roseneil spoke about the politics of spatial occupation at Greenham (phase 1 and 2 research), and the politics of memorialization (phase 2 research), in the light of her subsequent theoretical work on the impacts of social movements (phase 3 research), and reflecting on the *Occupy* movement. She was the keynote speaker at this large gathering of activists and activist-researchers.
- *Greenham Granny*, "Feminism on Film" Series, at the Star and Shadow Cinema, Newcastle – 1 November 2012: Roseneil gave a very well received public talk about the cultural and material legacies of Greenham (phase 2 research) to an audience of over 200 (**source 4**).
- *Open University 20th Century History* module: Roseneil was interviewed in May 2013 about anti-nuclear politics (phase 1 research) and the legacies of Greenham's conceptualisation of peace (phase 2 research) for a podcast for this new OU module, which will have a 10 year lifespan and is expected to reach at least 8000 history students (**source 5**).
- *The Queer Domesticities and Relationalities of Greenham*, at *Queer Homes, Queer Families: a history and policy debate*, British Library, 17 December 2012: Roseneil gave a talk which drew on phases 1, 2 and 3 of her research at a large public event at the British Library, attended by 255 (mostly non-academics), and available online as a podcast and in text form (**source 10**).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Testimonials

1. Oral History and Exhibition Committee Chair, The Pink Singers
2. Scriptwriter, *Down at Greenham*, BBC/Great Meadow Productions
3. Novelist, author of *Love and Fall Out*
4. Programmer, *Feminism on Film*, Star and Shadow Cinema, Newcastle
5. Historian and module leader of new module on 20th century history, Open University

Other sources

6. The catalogue of the Signs of Change exhibition: *Signs of Change: Social Movement Cultures 1960s to Now*, Dara Greenwald and Josh MacPhee in association with Exit Art (2010, AK Press/Exit Art, Oakland, California).
7. **Roseneil, S.** 'Architectures of resistance and transformation: re-encountering the queer spaces and relationality of Greenham Common', in *Potential Architecture: Lucy+Jorge Orta*, Bologna: Damiani, 2013: 117-130. See also chapter by John Schofield.
8. Roseneil's involvement in the Common Ground Research Group's research into the material legacies of Greenham is documented in 'Peace Site: an archaeology of protest at Greenham Common Airbase', *British Archaeology*, Jan-Feb 2009: 344-50, and [online](#). *British Archaeology* is distributed to 10,000 individual members and 600 organisational members of the Council for British Archaeology, and is read by up to 20,000 people.
9. The Pink Singers Workshop [Three Decades of Social and Political Change](#), 17 March 2013 and [Singing the Changes Exhibition](#)
10. Podcast of the [Queer Homes, Queer Families public event](#) and text of [Roseneil's talk](#), British Library, 17 December 2012.