

<p>Institution: University of Aberdeen</p> <hr/> <p>Unit of Assessment: UoA 23 Sociology</p> <hr/> <p>a. Overview</p> <p>Sociology at Aberdeen is located in the School of Social Sciences with two other units of assessment (Anthropology and Politics/International Relations). Comprised of 14 members of staff, the department has built on strong performances in the 2001 and the 2008 RAE to make significant gains in our research programme during the REF2014 period. Since 2008, the unit has invested in maximising our profile in three main fields of specialisation: <u>Religion and Secularisation</u>, <u>Conflict and Resolution</u>, and <u>Social Divisions</u>. These areas represent broad research themes around which most of our work coheres, as well as major strengths for which the department is nationally and internationally recognised.</p> <p>Working both individually and collaboratively within these fields, staff have published extensively in leading sociology and interdisciplinary journals (as reflected in citation/impact rankings), as well as in research monographs and edited collections. Compared to the RAE2008, our numbers of research and taught postgraduates, PhD completions and international students have risen significantly, as have our numbers of post-doctoral fellows. Sociology has also markedly increased our research income relative to that in the RAE2008 period. These results have been achieved via our recruitment strategy (Flesher Fominaya, Millar and Nagle were all appointed at Lecturer level during the REF period) and professional development among our existing unit members. Finally, the department has maintained its strong interdisciplinary and international orientation, as evinced by our cross-disciplinary publishing and our professional activities and ties in Europe, North America, Asia and Australia.</p> <hr/> <p>b. Research strategy</p> <p>During the REF2014 period, Sociology at Aberdeen has both capitalised on existing intellectual strengths and invested in new areas of scholarly focus. As a self-contained department in which all staff teach on the same degrees, the unit has developed a strong sense of collegial cohesion which is reflected in the large number of cross-linking writing partnerships that have developed.</p> <p><u>Religion and Secularisation</u></p> <p>Aberdeen has the UK's largest concentration of sociologists of religion, with expertise in this field dating to the early 1990s. Deliberate recruitment of staff with cognate interests has produced a supportive environment for scholars of religion working collaboratively within the department, with partners in other University units, and with academics outside Aberdeen. Our current research in this area focuses primarily on issues of: (1) religious change in the UK; (2) religion as a source of communal division in Northern Ireland; (3) gender differences in religious practice and belief; (4) conflict and controversy within the Anglican Church; and (5) religion and politics.</p> <p><u>Activities and achievements</u></p> <p>Within each of the sub-themes identified above, unit outputs in the sociology of religion reflect the collegial spirit of staff members and demonstrate the breadth of our methodological and theoretical expertise. Funded by Leverhulme, Carnegie and the ESRC, Bruce has conducted extensive archival research on secularisation in the UK; his work has appeared in various outlets, including <i>Secularization</i> (OUP, 2011) and articles in high-profile journals such as <i>The British Journal of Sociology</i> (in 2010 and 2012) and <i>The Journal of Contemporary Religion</i> (with D. Voas, Essex, 2010). Bruce and Glendinning have published quantitative analyses of religious transformation in the UK, most notably in <i>The British Journal of Sociology</i> (2010). Other collaborative projects among unit staff have culminated in outputs such as McKinnon and Trzebiatowska's interview-based study of conflict within the Anglican Communion, published in <i>The Journal of Contemporary Religion</i> (with C. Brittain, Divinity/Religious Studies, Aberdeen, 2011) and Trzebiatowska and Bruce's <i>Why are Women more Religious than Men</i> (OUP, 2012).</p> <p>Much of the unit's scholarship on religion deals explicitly with the UK, as reflected in Hayes' work on religious identity, community relations and tolerance in Northern Ireland, including pieces in the <i>Journal of Youth Studies</i> (with I. McAllister, Australian National University, 2009) and <i>The Journal of Contemporary Religion</i> (with I. McAllister and L. Dowds, Ulster, 2013), and Bruce and</p>
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Glendinning's study of Britons' attitudes towards the public presence of religion, in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (2011). Yet our work is also increasingly international in scope. For example, **Trzebiatowska's** research has addressed religious practice in Poland and among Polish Catholic immigrants (represented by articles in *Sociology*, 2011, the *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 2013 and *The Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 2010). The recent recruitment of **Millar**, with his work on religious belief in Sierra Leone, and **Nagle**, who writes on consociationalism in Lebanon, further broadens the unit's international focus.

Conflict and Resolution

This theme represents a key area of investment for the unit during the REF period. Its development emerged from long-existing staff interests in social unrest in the Northern UK; the specific sources of conflict within given national settings; the nature and form of reconciliation after violence; and the relevance of state, educational, religious and other systems to peace processes. Building upon these areas of expertise, our aim is to establish the unit as a principal centre for research on conflict and resolution. As part of that process, we are currently working with University administration and colleagues in Politics/International Relations to establish an *Institute for the Study of Conflict, Transitions and Peace Research*, which will provide the foundation for further development of this aspect of our work. Within this theme, our research focuses specifically on (1) social transformation within post-conflict societies; (2) terrorism and its victims; (3) autonomous social movements; and (4) sectarianism in Scotland.

Activities and achievements

Running from 2009 to 2014, **Hayes'** Leverhulme-funded *Compromise after Conflict* programme (with J. Brewer, Queens, £1.2 million) has provided our unit with the resources necessary for building a team of researchers and postgraduate students interested in post-violence social transformation. The programme employs a mixed-method form of data collection to explore the nature of compromise, its emotional parameters, behavioural expressions and links to other affective-relational stress responses, such as hope, forgiveness and memory. **Hayes'** publications focus primarily on Northern Ireland, with particular attention to the role of education in reconciliation processes (in *Oxford Review of Education*, 2009) and the relationship between peace agreements and gender equality in post-conflict societies (in *International Political Science*, 2013). **Hayes** has also written extensively on the construction and experience of victimhood (with pieces in *Contemporary Social Science*, 2011 and *Political Studies*, 2013, both with J. Brewer); she shares this scholarly interest with **Flesher Fominaya**, who was recruited to the Conflict/Resolution team in 2009. **Flesher Fominaya's** work on victims of the Madrid bombings (in *Contemporary Social Science*, 2011) and the global justice movement (in *Sociological Inquiry*, 2011) has helped to broaden the team's methodological and geographical scope. In September 2013, **Flesher Fominaya** took up a 24-month Marie Curie Intra-European fellowship to conduct a comparative study of anti-austerity protests in Spain and Ireland at The National University of Ireland, Maynooth. The recruitment of **Millar** and **Nagle** adds to the team's expertise in the UK context and extends it to new research sites, including Lebanon, Tunisia, Libya and Sierra Leone.

With ESRC funding, **Bruce** and **Glendinning** mounted a module of questions about sectarianism in the 2001 Scottish Social Attitudes survey. The data produced were important in three key respects – i.e., they tested with appropriate measures claims about political or socio-economic disadvantage and discrimination; they drew attention to salient but over-looked features of Scottish life (such as the lack of residential segregation by religion and the very high rate of religious inter-marriage); and they provided a basis for sociological explanations of Scotland's failure to imitate Northern Ireland. The findings have informed numerous publications over the last decade, including **Bruce's** *Politics and Religion in the UK* (Routledge, 2012).

Social Divisions

While questions of social division and difference have a long tradition within sociology, unit members working within this theme are addressing the topic in ways that forge new ground for the discipline, both substantively and methodologically. As in our other fields of expertise, staff interested in social inequalities conduct research and publish independently as well as in smaller and larger collaborative groups. Our work during the REF period addresses three main areas: (1) cross-national differences in life quality; (2) the relevance of cultural change, including

globalisation, for transformations in existing forms of stratification and/or newly emerging social divisions; and (3) the role of new technologies in reshaping social relations and identities.

Activities and achievements

With funding from the European Commission Sixth Framework Programme (€1.3 million), **Wallace** coordinated the project *Workcare: Social Quality and the Changing Relationship between Work, Care and Welfare in Europe* (2006 to 2009) with a team of senior scholars (including honorary unit member, P. Abbott), research fellows and postgraduate students in Aberdeen's Social Sciences and ten partners throughout the UK, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Denmark, Poland and Hungary. Combining survey data and qualitative interviews, the research explored life quality across Europe; it has resulted in the production of a novel analytic framework for understanding social quality – one which takes into account the orientation, capabilities and satisfaction of individual actors, as well as the structures of different national work and care systems. The findings provide new insight into the multiple and, at times, competing factors which both add to and detract from social quality within different national settings. **Wallace** has since published the project's results in various outlets, including the *European Sociological Review* (with F. Pilcher, then a Research Fellow at Aberdeen, 2009) and *Social Indicators Research* (2009 and 2013). Following on from the original study, **Wallace** and her team won a dissemination grant from the EU Seventh Framework Programme (*Work-Care Synergies*, 2010-2012, £68K) and funding from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions to analyse the 2007 and 2011 European Quality of Life Surveys; the latter project resulted in a series of published reports on differences in social quality throughout Europe and countries applying to the EU. Analyses have appeared in *Social Indicators Research* (with P. Abbott, 2011), the *Journal of Happiness Studies* (with P. Abbott and R. Sapsford, Teeside, 2010) and *European Societies* (with P. Abbott, 2010).

Kollmeyer's research is similarly cross-national in scope, focusing on the relationship between income inequalities/unemployment rates and processes of deindustrialisation in advanced capitalist countries. His work has been published in numerous international journals, including the *American Journal of Sociology* (2009), *European Sociological Review* (2012), the *Review of International Political Economy* (2009) and *Social Forces* (with F. Pilcher, University of Vienna, 2013). **Kollmeyer's** related project on *Globalisation and Democracy* was funded by a one-year Leverhulme Fellowship (£38K), the findings from which appeared in *Research in Political Sociology* (2010); **Kollmeyer** was awarded the 2010 Richard Brown Prize from the British Sociological Association (BSA) for a *Work, Employment & Society* conference paper based on that research.

Bone's work also addresses global economic and political change. His analysis of the global financial crisis and its implications for the UK housing market appeared in the *British Journal of Sociology* (with K. O'Reilly, Loughborough, 2010). Other pieces by **Bone**, including further works focusing on the credit crisis and the wider socio-economic implications of neoliberalism, have been published in outlets such as *Critical Sociology* (2010) and *Globalizations* (2012). These issues are framed via a theoretical model that synthesizes concepts from social theory, psychology and emerging knowledge from the neurosciences; **Bone's** work was featured in the BSA's *Network*.

Wilkie's research focuses on species-based social divisions, a heretofore under-theorised and little understood area of contemporary life. Her book on changing livestock production practices in Scotland, *Livestock/Deadstock: Working with Farm Animals from Birth to Slaughter*, was published as part of the Temple University Press series, *Animals, Culture, and Society* (2010). It highlights the multifaceted, gendered and ambiguous nature of people's practical relations with livestock, and provides fresh insights into long-standing debates about the production and slaughter of food animals in industrialised societies. The book, which draws on data collected in multiple sites, has received extensive recognition, including the BSA's Philip Abrams Memorial Prize and a distinguished scholarship award from the *Animals and Society* section of the American Sociological Association (ASA), both in 2011. Related articles by **Wilkie** have appeared in *Sociology* (2013) and *Society and Animals* (2013). A collaborative analysis of the applicability of George Herbert Mead's writings to the field of human-animal studies, authored by **Wilkie** and **McKinnon**, has recently been accepted by *Sociological Research Online*.

On emergent technologies and social divisions, **Gimlin's** research addresses the growing cosmetic surgery industry, its development from techniques originated by British physicians during the World Wars, and how the practice's meanings for US and UK consumers are both shaped by

Environment template (REF5)

these two nations' very different healthcare systems and informed by global discourses which treat cosmetic surgery as a 'lifestyle choice'. Her book on the subject was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2012; related pieces have appeared in *Body and Society* (2009) and *Gender & Society* (2013). With collaborators across several university units, **Wallace** is co-investigator of the *Rural Digital Economy Hub* which employs 60 people working with external partners, including 29 academic institutions (ten international), 32 government/public sector bodies, 11 community-based groups, 17 industry agents and eight NGOs. The RCUK-funded project focuses on the role that digital technology can play in addressing the geographic, financial and demographic challenges faced by many rural communities and helping them to become more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. With partners in Leeds, Sussex and Kent, **Wallace** recently obtained a further grant from the EPSRC *Culture and Communities Network+* (£121K) to provide scoping projects for future research in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

While our unit has experienced usual rates of departure due to retirement and relocation, our numbers have remained relatively steady due to the recruitment of **Flesher Fominaya** in 2009, and **Millar** and **Nagle** in 2012-2013. **Gimlin** was promoted to Professor, while **Bone**, **Kollmeyer**, **McKinnon** and **Flesher Fominaya** were promoted from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer during the REF period; **Trzebiatowska** and **Wilkie** were confirmed in post. All aspects of employment within the unit, including recruitment, promotion, development opportunities and disciplinary procedures, strictly comply with the University's strategy for Equality and Diversity. All staff who sit on hiring or promotion panels, or are involved in the REF selection process, are required to attend training in the legislative framework for Equality and Diversity and its practical implementation.

The unit's research is supported in the first place by the collegial relationships of staff who work together and secondly by all the mechanisms one would expect in a research-oriented university. Specific measures have included peer review of grant applications; research 'away days' designed to explore existing synergies and develop new areas of strength; regular departmental seminars and more informal presentations of work in progress. In addition to a formal mentoring system for probationers, the School encourages peer mentoring on an informal basis for post-probationary staff. Publication plans and progress are discussed in detail during Research Development Reviews (RDRs), which are conducted annually for each member of staff. RDRs provide guidance for identifying appropriate funding schemes, writing grant proposals and performing other professional development tasks. The unit has also devised a teaching schedule to optimise the amount of time available for research. Wherever possible, the course programme is arranged to release staff from major teaching duties for one semester per year. Instruction at advanced levels is tied to staff interests, so that ideas generated in course preparation can directly inform research and writing. Finally, the School allocates an annual staff allowance for travel and conference presentations.

Beyond the School, the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) funds researchers in developing new projects and supports conference attendance, publication costs and the preparation of grant applications. Staff and research students are also supported centrally from the Principal's Excellence Fund and Interdisciplinary Fund, which have been particularly useful in providing junior researchers with pump-priming awards; **Flesher Fominaya**, **Kollmeyer** and **Gimlin** have all received these grants since coming to Aberdeen. The professional development of Early Career Researchers and other staff is supported by the activities of the University's Researcher Development Unit (RDU), which encourages researcher-led and co-development of initiatives through its Enabling Fund.

The University has been awarded a bronze Athena Swan Award for its supportive environment for female researchers; in 2010, CASS gained accreditation to the Investors in People standard. Building on the latter achievement, Aberdeen was one of only two Scottish institutions chosen to lead the Universities UK Wellbeing Project, which aimed at promoting practices that support a healthy working atmosphere for all staff members. Human Resources at Aberdeen has been awarded the European Commission's HR Excellence in Research badge, which acknowledges adherence to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for Recruitment. Relevant policies incorporate both the QAA Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

ii. Research students

Postgraduate (PG) studies in Sociology have grown markedly in the REF period. This development is reflected in numbers of students in both taught and research streams. Comparing the period of 2000-01 to 2006-07 with 2007-08 to 2012-13, mean figures for enrolled PGRs have risen from 20.9/year (11.4 FTE) to 35.5/year (24.0 FTE). Average numbers of overseas and taught PGs have grown even more dramatically, from <1.0/year to 6.0/year and <1.0/year to 7.6/year, respectively. During the same period, funding for PGRs has increased from £8K to nearly £80K annually.

Much of this change in PG numbers is due to the reputational appeal of senior members of staff and the department's strong reputation internationally, both of which draw high-calibre students from the UK and a wide range of overseas countries. The increase in financial support for PGRs, which is striking even relative to the doubling of research student numbers, reflects a commitment within CASS to funding PGRs through domestic and international tuition waivers/scholarships and the Research Project Awards Scheme (RPAS), which supports PhD research within several thematic priority areas. Rising PGR numbers also result from the department's success in obtaining yearly quota awards through the ESRC Scottish Doctoral Training Centre in Sociology; the unit's recognition as a recipient of Postgraduate Student Academic Support (PSAS) bursaries for the MRes programme; and studentships included in the Leverhulme grant awarded to **Hayes**. PGT numbers have grown in large part with the consolidation of successful MSc programmes (e.g., Globalisation and European Politics) and the launch of a new programme on Peace Processes.

All PGRs are provided with shared offices and their own fully networked PC. After the first year they are normally offered undergraduate teaching, which we see as an important way of integrating them into the intellectual life of the unit as well as a source of valuable professional experience. The CASS Graduate School offers a robust training programme for all PGs in the College. PhD students attend an induction course covering research methodology, literature reviews and academic writing, and this initial training is complemented by a series of University-wide workshops and courses based on RCUK guidelines and the QAA Code of Practice. The Graduate School supports corresponding training of new and experienced supervisors, and expects that refresher training is undertaken every five years. All PGs attend annual monitoring meetings with a panel of senior academics, who provide a report on their research progress to the School's PG Committee. A Postgraduate Monitoring Framework explains what is expected at each stage of the PhD, and a written Code of Practice details the reciprocal responsibilities of students and supervisors.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The department has been successful in gaining both major and medium-sized grants from research councils, charitable bodies and the European Union, despite a funding environment which is increasingly competitive. Earnings from the Leverhulme Trust since January 2008 have been more than £1.3 million; **Hayes' *Compromise after Conflict*** programme received £1.2 million (held jointly with J. Brewer), while **Bruce** and **Kollmeyer** were funded by the Trust's Fellowship scheme. **Wallace's** team-based projects have earned large sums from the EU, including its Sixth Framework Programme (€1.3 million) and Seventh Framework Programme (£68K); the Rural Digital Economy Hub project was funded (£12 million) by the EPSRC. Research by **Hayes** has been supported by the ESRC (£48K). **Kollmeyer**, **Gimlin** and **Flesher Fominaya** have all received British Academy support, while **Gimlin** and **Millar** won small Carnegie grants; these have normally provided the basis for subsequent successful applications.

The funding mentioned above and other awards have been achieved due largely to the unit's supportive and collegial research culture and a strong research-oriented infrastructure within the University. The University's Research and Innovation (R&I) unit regularly advises staff on available funding options and application guidelines; organises workshops on the preparation of applications; sponsors frequent visits by funding bodies; oversees the application process; and ensures that proposals are accurately costed. In 2012 the Directorate of Information Technology (DIT) introduced a new research support infrastructure to advise on IT elements in external funding bids.

The College organises bi-annual Principal Investigator (PI) training for early, mid-career and senior academics. Programmes assist staff in developing and maintaining a strategic research focus, support research leadership and provide training in team development. Research governance is

Environment template (REF5)

integrated across institutional and School levels. The University operates a Framework for Research Governance that implements all institutional policies and guidelines and ensures that research conforms to the highest standards. There is a College Ethics Review Board which oversees all ethical aspects of research. Operation of this Board includes monitoring and (required) training workshops for all staff engaged in research. In 2011, the University opened a new £57 million library, which features state-of-the art IT and research facilities, plus a variety of meeting rooms for meetings, seminars and visiting speaker events. Aberdeen has also invested heavily in subscriptions to online e-journals and bibliographical databases. Library budgets are devolved to individual disciplines and, in addition to the basic allocation, extra funds are routinely made available for new research projects and to support the interests of recently appointed staff. In 2013, the University invested £300K to upgrade its high performance computing facility.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

Independent of the particular research theme with which they are identified in section B, Sociology's published outputs consistently exemplify three features that characterise our research culture and through which the unit contributes to the discipline: methodological pluralism, integration of theory and research, and attention to diverse sociological spaces and fields.

First, staff share a commitment to research that will add to methodological debate and both support and enhance the methodological pluralism that marks British social science. The department has quantitative and qualitative expertise; several staff have produced texts or articles that are explicitly methodological and all staff have extensive experience of using a range of different techniques, from multi-level modelling to archival research and ethnography. **Hayes, Kollmeyer, Wallace** and **Glendinning** are all specialists in quantitative research, which in combination with our proficiency in ethnography (**Bruce, Gimlin**) and other qualitative approaches (**Trzebiatowska, Flesher Fominaya, Wilkie**) provides for a broad methodological base.

The unit also emphasises the integration of theory and research. For example, **Wallace's** cross-national studies of quality of life in Europe have contributed to efforts by herself and scholars around the world to reconceptualise and, ultimately, better operationalise life quality. In turn, writings on narratives of self and other (**Flesher Fominaya**) and of gendered bodies (**Gimlin, Trzebiatowska**) feed respectively into engagement with the history of sociology and into qualitative studies of gendered embodiment.

Finally, the department pays particular attention to diverse sociological spaces and fields, from the local (as in the analysis of local farming practices), the national (in nation-wide social attitude surveys), regional blocs (East Asia, Europe and Russia, in particular), to the global. The unit gives consideration to Scotland in recognition of its location while also being aware of the diverse spatial boundaries that sociology transcends. Thus, while **Wilkie** examines food production in rural Scotland, **Glendinning** works with colleagues in Siberia and China, **Flesher Fominaya** in Norway, Latvia, Palestine, Canada and Germany, **Hayes** in Australia, **Wallace** in Rwanda, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Denmark and Hungary, **Trzebiatowska** in Poland and **Gimlin** in the US and Australia.

Sociology staff members have also contributed to the discipline and society generally through a variety of academic and non-academic collaborations and networks; professional service roles and developmental disciplinary initiatives; conference presentations, keynote lectures and invited talks; media consultations and appearances; and public engagement and dissemination.

Most staff participate regularly in collaborations with both scholarly and practitioner colleagues and networks in Britain and around the world. Particularly notable are the activities of the *New Europe Centre* (**Wallace**), which has partners in 12 European countries, both within and outside the EU. **Gimlin** was on the advisory board of *Community Food and Health Scotland*, a network of community food activists, until 2010, and helped to organise the group's yearly conferences between 2008 and 2010. New international clusters have also been established since 2008, such as the *Council for European Studies Research Network on European Social Movements* (**Flesher Fominaya**), which has members in over 23 countries.

Regarding professional service roles and disciplinary initiatives, staff are active both nationally and internationally. **Hayes** serves on the ESRC's Peer Review Council (2008-present) and holds a visiting appointment on the selection panel for the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (EUROLAB) in Cologne; she has also been a member of the ESRC's British Election

Commissioning Panel (2012) and the BSA's Trustee Council (2008-2012). **Wallace** was the President of the European Sociological Association until 2009 and is currently the group's Treasurer; she is on the ESRC Research Committee, the European Science Foundation and the European Research Council, as well as the Research Committees for the Academy of Finland, the Research Councils of Norway and Iceland, and the Leverhulme Trust. **Wilkie** founded and convenes the BSA's Animal/Human Studies Group, while **Gimlin** co-convened the BSA's Food Study Group/Scottish Colloquium on Food and Feeding until 2010. **Flesher Fominaya** has served as an expert advisor for the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation and the Social Research Council in Europe. **Glendinning** is Co-director of the EU-China Masters programme at Nankai University. **McKinnon** and **Trzebiatowska** organised the BSA's Sociology of Religion conference in 2011. With funding from the Open Society Institute, **Wallace** directed a series of workshops for early career scholars in the Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia and Armenia between 2008 and 2011; she organised and ran summer schools for European PhD students in 2010 and 2011.

Sociology also makes significant contributions to the production of both disciplinary and interdisciplinary journals. **Flesher Fominaya** is co-founder and co-editor of *Interface*, an academic/practitioner journal on social movements with a current global readership of over 30,000. **McKinnon** is a member of the editorial boards for the BSA's *Sociology* and Sage's new *Critical Research on Religion*; he is also the Associate Editor of *Sociology of Religion* and *The Canadian Journal of Sociology*. Other members of staff are on editorial boards for *Work, Employment and Society* (**Kollmeyer**), *Society and Animals* (**Wilkie**), *Sociological Research Online* (**Flesher Fominaya**), *Anthropologica Miscellanea* and *Sociology Compass* (**Gimlin**).

During the REF2014 period, staff have given numerous conference presentations, keynote lectures and invited talks in Britain and throughout the world. Most of us have given one or more BSA presentations and been asked to speak at, for example, the National University of Costa Rica, Flinders University (Australia), the University of Krakow, Vanderbilt University (USA), the University of Tunis (Tunisia), the German Association for the Study of British Culture, CUNY Graduate Center (USA), the State University of New York, the International Association for the History of Religion (Canada), the University of Lausanne, Georgetown University (USA), and many other locales.

Staff also routinely make contributions to media reports on topics ranging from spirituality to public policy, employment to housing. **Hayes** is a frequent media commentator on Northern Ireland in the areas of religion, reconciliation and political behaviour, and her recent research on education and political identity in Northern Ireland has been widely cited in both the British and the Irish press. Media discussions of **Bone's** work on the housing market, **Bruce's** on secularisation and sectarianism, **Trzebiatowska's** on gender and religion, **Flesher Fominaya's** on autonomous social movements and **Gimlin's** on aesthetic surgery have appeared in venues such as BBC Radio 4, BBC Television Scotland, BBC 4's Women's Hour, Scottish Television, Mexican Televisa, *The Sunday Times*, *The Scotsman*, *The Irish Times*, *The Herald*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Sun*. Staff engagement with the media has been supported by Aberdeen's Communications Unit, which produces and distributes press releases, advises staff on appropriate media outlets for disseminating their research and schedules press conferences, appearances and interviews.

Staff members are regularly involved in public engagement and dissemination of their research in civic forums and with public institutions. **Wallace's** lecture at Aberdeen's annual 'TechFest' (2011) drew a large public audience, as have her dissemination events with stakeholders in work and care and those associated with the Rural Digital Economy Hub (in London, Edinburgh and Glasgow). **Gimlin** has discussed her work on cosmetic surgery at Leeds' Opera North, Deveron Arts in Huntly, Scotland, the British Science Festival (2011) and TechFest (2013). **Hayes'** research on integrated education has been used by the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education to argue the case for educating children from different communities together. **Hayes** (with J. Brewer) also engages with opinion leaders, peace-builders, and the public through online media, building a following of nearly 4,500 for their Twitter handle, @compromisestudy, which focuses on the role of compromise after conflict. Such activities are assisted by the EPSRC-funded Public Engagement with Research Unit at the University of Aberdeen.