SOCIOLOGY ON THE ROCK

Sociology Department Newsletter

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This issue

"I am shocked that cultural sociologists in Canada pay no attention to religion and deem it unimportant, despite its central importance to the lives of millions of Canadians (even many who are non-religious)."

An academic sociologist quoted by Kim de Laat and Allyson Stokes in their article
"Cultural Sociology and the Politics of Canonization: An Anglo-Canadian Perspective."

Memorial University Arts and Administration Building, home of the Department of Sociology. Photograph by Chris Hammond.

China's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

By **Marcella Siqueira Cassiano**

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"Are you green today?" quickly became a regular greeting in China during the COVID-19 pandemic. This question refers to the colour of the "quick response" health code (or QR code) that people have on their smartphones to demonstrate their health status and allows them to pass through checkpoints that grant access to transit systems, stores, and most public places. As apps update people's health status based on their network engagement and mobility patterns, the colour of people's QR codes can change from green to yellow or red, depending on a user's risk level. The colours indicate whether people should quarantine or self-isolate, or if they are free to carry on with their lives. Having such a code is not mandatory, but without it, living in the pandemic is severely restricted.

Municipalities manage the QR health code, and users who want to obtain a health code must link their digital wallet (e.g., Alipay) or social media app (e.g., WeChat) to submit their personal information to the local authorities. Users do so by entering their personal details onto their apps, including a facial recognition scan. The apps—WeChat being the most popular, with over 1.2 billion users—update people's codes automatically by tracking users' social networks (e.g., contact list) and mobility patterns, identifying whether they have engaged with high-risk individuals or visited affected areas.

The health code system was launched in China in February 2020 as a grassroots initiative that needed only a few months to receive full support from the State Council (China's executive branch) due to its "epidemiological power." The health code system enabled local governments to create publicly available epidemiology maps classifying urban spaces according to contagion risks, which allowed for more efficient governing of the pandemic. Regulating contagion and risk on a comprehensive but detailed way, health codes became China's most popular and practical strategy to control the coronavirus pandemic.

Pandemics bring the specter of death and disruption, but historically they have also been engines for social transformations, according to Barbara Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century*. The disruption and transformation that pandemics cause in people's lives provide social analysts a unique opportunity to reflect on "normal life," viewing the familiar as strange. The COVID-19 pandemic offers an excellent opportunity for social analysts to view the increasing expansion of surveillance and monitoring as "strange," and reflect on how different forms of monitoring have altered people's lives, and what these developments might suggest about population governance more generally.

In China, health codes, with their capacity to monitor people's geographical mobility and social networks, gave President Xi Jinping's administration (and the Communist Party) an unimaginable capacity to produce detailed knowledge about the Chinese population, which can be used to enhanced state control of both groups and individuals. Many analysts tend to rely on the image of George Orwell's brutal, oppressive, mind-controlling totalitarian Big Brother in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-four* when describing the expansion of population surveillance and monitoring practices in China. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, however, serves as a more accurate analogy for the reality created by China's pandemic response.

Like the "happy" population depicted in Huxley's book, the Chinese people, in general, support the health code system and approve the government's pandemic response. Although I do view the expansion and totalizing nature of surveillance practices (i.e., the quantity of surveillance) in China and beyond, including Canada, as problematic, I am even more concerned about how surveillance can condition and influence individual autonomy, especially people's everyday decisions, and perceived sense of freedom. I am also concerned about individuals getting accustomed to surveillance practices and starting to believe that detailed monitoring is an inherent part of social life, a topic that I discuss elsewhere (Siqueira Cassiano et al., 2021).

From the perspective of conditioning, the Chinese health code system is a practice within China's surveillance ecosystem that reinforces a form of circumscribed individual autonomy among Chinese

citizens. Such a circumscribed individual autonomy reconciles ideas that seem fundamentally opposite or difficult to reconcile in the eyes of those in the West: individual freedom and state planning, as well as personal interests and collective interests.

On the one hand, individuals can make their own choices about whether to submit their personal information to the local authorities and get a QR code. Those who opt to get a health code can decide on whether they should draw on health code-supported epidemiological information to avoid "high-risk" areas and choose, for example, where to go grocery shopping in a low-risk or high-risk contagion neighbourhood.

On the other hand, not complying with the health code supported-knowledge (e.g., a "suggestion" to avoid high-risk neighbourhoods) and the health code colour-guidelines (e.g., an "order" to isolate) can jeopardize not only the users' own health and well-being but also their entire social network, including family members. By enmeshing kinship with monitoring and data collection, the Chinese government makes surveillance meaningful and even legitimate to Chinese populations.

By virtue of being automatically plugged to people's contact list, the health code system benefits from the value of social connections ("guanxi" in Chinese), which is a cultural formation from time immemorial that implies duties, obligations, expectations, and trust. Practically, the Chinese comply with the health code to avoid compromising their "guanxi," potentially exposing those with whom they have obligations to a red code and thus forcing the person to self-isolate. One could think that the Chinese, to protect their social network, would be better off without a health code; however, people in China also use the green colour of their codes as a currency that signifies well-being and can add value to their connections, and thus they usually prefer to enter the health code system. Drawing on cultural norms, the health code system also forces citizens to think constantly of solutions to balance their personal needs with the needs of others, reconciling personal and collective interests; the latter includes the government's interests.

As a governmentality that advances "guided" individual autonomy, the health code system is just one more surveillance practice. The surveillance practices that encourage the Chinese to consider collective needs in their decision-making include the Household Registration System, which is the backbone of Chinese state-monitoring (Siqueira Cassiano, 2019), the Great Fire Wall, and the Social Credit System. Overall, this reconciliatory type of governance forges a feasible governance pathway for authoritarian political regimes, which can govern the lives of their citizens with comprehensive information and remarkable accuracy, while making those individuals feel "free" and even "happy" under control.

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Knowing Every Face: My Research on my Church Community

By **Jacob Riche**

I've always been called the "church kid" and I've always hated this phrase my entire life. Throughout most of my public schooling in the 2000s and 2010s, I always knew that I was somehow different than most of my classmates. In elementary school, I was shocked to hear that most of my classmates were able to sleep in on both days of the weekend. I always knew Sunday morning as the time my family went to church.

In junior high, I was exposed to my first religious education course where I was shocked that my classmates did not know the same scriptural stories I was taught even before I entered public schools. In high school, I learned more about the ethical and moral differences between religions, confronting what I had previously learned through my upbringing in a religious institution. In most aspects of my life, I have always been split between two worlds – the world of my church and everything else beyond it. My experience with this deeply personal boundary that I have wrestled with for most of my life has become the center of my future as an academic.

Virtual Church and Virtual Research

The single most influential experience in managing my research was coping with the Covid-19 Pandemic. Covid-19 impacted my life in numerous unexpected ways. The pandemic was my first experience of losing access to my faith community. This major shift in my personal life was also accompanied by a loss of access to people I hold very dear, from family members to close friends. While my province was able to experience some level of normalcy compared to other places, I still experienced quarantine and isolation. This isolation separated me from my church community – which was my work focus – but I also could not escape my work as I was researching primarily from my home. I was stuck in my home and subsequently stuck with my work. I did not have access to my faith community, which not only marks my privilege, it also marks the profound impact the pandemic has wrought.

Unfortunately, throughout the pandemic some religious denominations have made waves, from creating "super-spreader" events to popular televangelist preachers speaking against public health guidelines. Once again, witnessing the harm of evangelical Christianity could not be ignored in my research. There were countless cultural events, from the Capitol Insurrection in Washington, DC, on January 6 to the anti-mask protests across North America, all of them having an impact on my research and my relationship with my faith. Seeing people who would claim my religion as a reason to recklessly endanger and harm those around them bewildered me.

My research was a gift in this time, however difficult it was, as I was able to listen to members of my community and learn how these outside events impacted their relationship to their faith and their deeper sense of belonging and meaning. Although there was a screen separating me from my participants, I was still able to draw closer to them as a community member, something I will never take for granted again.

Breathing life into my Data

I have a clear memory of finishing my transcripts – and then sitting down the next day wondering how I would take all of the raw, emotional, and powerful stories my participants shared, and write a sociological analysis. This task was daunting at times. However, in the end it was the most rewarding education in my life. Throughout all of my analysis, three common ideas emerged. First and foremost, nearly every participant I spoke with discussed their relationship to "their" communities in depth. Their involvement was diverse, imbuing the idea of fellowship with different characteristics. Some common experiences across my participants were related to the idea of community as a defining feature for their own sense of self. My interviews highlighted the importance of a feeling of belonging, having that place, that group of people that you can call your own. This process also showed some interesting patterns. Community became an entity that was based on both solidarity and exclusion. Insiders were willing to broaden the boundaries of fellowship to include new members only under certain conditions.

From my discussions with my participants on their understanding of their place in the community as a whole, I uncovered another world within the same church I had attended all my life. I was beginning to see a world infused with barriers and separation between people and belonging. In one conversation, I would have my participant tell me that in our society we need to be accepting but in our faith we need to be able to make choices that are "in line with what we believe." Next I would hear about the experience of a participant watching his family members be pushed away and how it would "build a wall of hate" between themselves and the rest of the church.

So many of my interviewees spoke about the ways they have seen my church and other churches separate people from a sense of belonging to a group of people because they could not, would not, or somehow did not pass the symbolic standards of Christianity. In my journey through this project, I found that amongst the conversations of community and connection, there were also elements of exclusion and distinction. In one breath the conversation could change from valuing the time and space that church offers to connect and build relationships, and the next cutting away those that could belong or be dignified in the community.

As I sat looking at the conversations that seemed at odds with each other in my data, I started to trace the connections between the two disparate ideas. From discussions that supported the interconnectedness of all community members to the dialogue of discrimination, I saw the sociological phenomena of dramaturgy (Erving Goffman, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*). Supported by the primary material of my literature review (Gary Alan Fine, *The Hinge: Civil Society, Group Culture, and the Interaction Order*; Thomas Gieryn, "Boundary-work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists;" Thomas Gieryn, *Truth-spots: How Places Make People Believe*), I was able to weave together connections between the

desire for community and belonging and the act of demarcation.

All of my participants were acting according to their place in the community, each of them bringing their own unique nuance to their expression of belonging within the community. This is where the plurality of community membership was born. Some of my participants viewed membership as a privilege that has been earned by behavior, merit, ideology, or another deeply symbolic vessel. Others viewed membership as a gift that should not be prevented or denied based on symbolic markers that were ascribed negative connotations or associations. The symbolic dance between these two examples formed the last and most surprising aspect of my research. Through these three ideas I was able to view a group of people that have shaped me on a deeply personal level in a new and insightful way.

Where two or more are Gathered

From these three themes, I've come to one overarching conclusion: involvement in any community comes at a price. My research has shown that time and time again. The question I am left with, however, is what price is appropriate or acceptable. This question remains outside my current research, but is constantly on my mind – as a researcher as well as a member of my own community. Belonging obviously exists beyond the walls of an established church, but these activities do not always get recognized or legitimized. Symbolic power sustains the marginalization of those who wish to minimize their price in belonging, to compromise who they are in exchange for a conditional belonging. My research shows that people are challenging these systems, which place conditional arrangements on them, when membership ought to remain unbounded and free to all.

This project is just the first step on a journey to explore how a faith so deeply connected to an ideology of compassion has become a major force in the marginalization, discrimination, and suppression of so many. My hope rests in a future when all may enter my church and not have to pay a price to belong like so many others before them. I hope for the day when all may know they can belong.

My Experience Teaching Introductory Crimininology

By **Chris William Martin**

Teaching at a large publicly funded college in Canada's capital city has unique challenges and opportunities. One challenge comes from the fact that I am likely to be relegated to teaching Introductory This And That throughout my career. Somewhat surprisingly, although colleges are ramping up four-year Bachelor degrees, their bread and butter for the foreseeable future will remain two-year diplomas and one-year certificates.

Certain burdens come with teaching introductory courses. Beyond the pressure of making certain to do the disciplines justice by covering the classical literature – while also striking a critical stance towards the literature – there is real pressure to manage the first impressions of the hundreds of students who take the course so that they leave excited about the disciplines. I usually feel competent about my ability to teach introductory sociology courses, having regularly done this for the past five years, and relatively confident and excited each week to carry the disciplinary torch in my own little way.

When I began teaching introduction to criminology in the winter 2020 semester for the first time I found myself more ambivalent than I had anticipated. Armed with some of the typical textbooks chosen for introductory courses in criminology, I launched forth to prepare the class. Personally, to protest the outrageous prices publishers demand from students I would not assign most introductory textbooks in any academic discipline.

I have found that students generally do not have a wealth of expectations for an introductory sociology course. This works to my advantage. Many arrive having few preconceptions about the discipline of sociology. With the element of surprise, it can be exciting in the first few weeks of class to see eyes begin to widen at the prospect of learning about topics like culture, identity and meaning, deviance, gender, sexuality, youth, ethnicity, and so much more!

On the other hand, with criminology I found another set of expectations to manage. Societal obsessions with crime, punishment, and recreational deviance have left criminology with an almost unhealthy image. The first task is really to dispel common myths and pop the fantasy of young people thinking crime is exciting and that the course will teach them the reasons for this and how to fight it.

Herein lies an uncomfortable discovery. It is not just new students who are confused about the identity of

criminology. This confusion flows through the discipline itself. Introductory textbooks do offer critical perspectives, but they first offer a wealth of information about the 19th century Italian, Cesare Lombroso, credited with popularizing the word criminology. Lombroso also "pioneered" brain and head measurements as a way of explaining so-called criminal atavism. It's total quackery. His discussion of "savages" and our relation to the apes is one step away from endlessly idiotic academic theories of "race science." I felt compelled to give Lombroso the ax from the course. Time can better be spent on new and critical perspectives than in rehashing old versions of racism just for the sake of history.

Adam Rutherford's *A Brief History of Everyone who ever Lived: The Human Story retold through our Genes* is one of the best books I have read recently. With a title as ambitious as this – and a review by *The New York Times* that claimed he actually lived up to the title – I had to give it a chance. What makes the book brilliant is Rutherford's ability to condense genetics and biology down to a level where readers can truly extract a broad-stroke understanding of the history of all of us, not to mention how he expertly demonstrates that you and I are closely related. Only about a thousand years or so separates us. For my purposes here, it is important to consider how Rutherford contends with the troublesome history of his own field of genetics, which draws its origins from Francis Galton, the first cousin of Charles Darwin. Galton pioneered the field of genetics while also strongly pushing eugenics in the early 20th century, which of course would tragically become the story of that century. (Other scholars like Yuval Noah Harari even worry that eugenics could be a deeply troubling theme of this century in his book *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*.) Rutherford, who is an Honourary Senior Research Associate at University College London, was educated at and taught at the very institution and laboratories that were, up until 2020, named after Francis Galton and his field of eugenics. In his critical stance toward the history of genetics, Rutherford uniquely applies sociological thinking to describe how cultural mores of the past have had as much say in theories and scientific reasoning as the scientific method ever did. This troubling past means that ideas often need to be decoupled from the people behind them and scrutinized for their value beyond their troubled origins.

In an interview for the British television program Channel 4 News about the genetics of skin colour, Rutherford who identifies as of mixed-race, candidly claimed when asked a question about what he wished he could do to change history, said that he wished genetics had advanced before anthropology. Genetics is the great equalizer of peoples while early anthropology made its fame by categorizing us and imagining differences on the basis of race. These differences informed fields like genetics (and eugenics), biology, and importantly criminology. Before criminologists had the industry to imagine a prison industrial complex, we were tainted by academic fields built on racist ideologies. Other institutions and modern nation states have done the same thing.

It might seem that I have meandered from my topic of introductory criminology courses, but the divide between a historical approach to criminology and a more critical one appears to be alive and well. Disciplinary boundaries are superficial creations that steer students into fields that seem to be unconnected in meaningful ways. One of the principle claims of criminology departments is that in their pursuits they break the traditional boundaries separating academic disciplines and combine biological, psychological, and sociological perspectives.

For one of my classes a colleague arranged a guest speaker who lectured about their own criminological research into a condition called "excited delirium." Armed with peer-reviewed publications, this speaker claimed that "excited delirium" was a condition that combines psychology, biology, and criminology because it depicts suspects being taken into police custody experiencing an episode of heightened biological response causing almost superhuman strength, panic, and fight or flight.

During the presentation, though I was the host, I was critical of how the topic was presented. Some cursory research shows that this troublesome condition does not hold up to critical muster. A 2020 article in *The Washington Post* ("Police Keep Using 'Excited Delirium' To Justify Brutality. It's Junk Science") shows this highly contentious term was even used by Derek Chauvin in the defence of his murder of George Floyd. The term reeks of the same history of "Othering" non-white peoples because of so-called different biological, psychological, or social baselines between them. Today, fiction and myth still exist on the fringes of academia or, sadly, they are disguised more subtly as "race science." Rutherford claims his goal, in his latest book *How to Argue with a Racist: What our Genes Do (and Don't) Say About Human Difference*, is to undermine arguments like these that disguise themselves as science.

Introductory criminology need not waste time on racist skeletons of the past when so much new and critical research is published all the time. However, this can be an unpopular opinion and, in the case of criminology, can be exceptionally complicated to argue because the field itself claims such an interdisciplinary basis that sociologists who transition to criminology may find themselves pushing critical perspectives while colleagues teaching around them are not. It is an interesting time to be alive and to be shepherding knowledge to younger generations.

Factionalism and the Vocational Concerns of Sociology Majors

By **Stephen Harold Riggins and Rose Ricciardelli**

Tensions between Criminologists and Sociologists

Among the eighteen professors of sociology now teaching in tenure-stream positions at MUNL, six describe their specialties on the department's website as some combination of criminology, deviance, victimology, policing, or community and institutional corrections. For convenience, we will refer to this simply as the criminology/policing faction. This is a new development, which began in the 2000s with the introduction of the Police Studies Program at Memorial University. The earlier factions were known informally as "theory" and "fish," the latter focusing on socio-economic development (Riggins 2021: 473-477). The specialty now outnumbering criminology/policing is culture. Seven professors in tenure-stream positions list culture as their specialty.

In a few months, a review of academic planning in the Department of Sociology will have to be completed. Thus, the autumn of 2021 is a good time for reflecting on the future of the informal organizational structure within the department. Factions are common in academic departments everywhere, but not everyone in an academic unit can be identified with a faction. Some professors might be classified as independents or crossovers, who change their mind as they age. In our department, conflicts may arise primarily because of professors' research specialties and the vocational preferences of sociology majors. We are not arguing that factionalism is a problem today. In addition, it may take a different form than the one we imagine. If the term "faction" sounds too strong, try substituting the overlapping concepts of alliances, cliques, or communities as you read this article. Such divisions are often associated with unflattering narratives, misunderstandings of colleagues' positionality and experience, and the loss of tenure-stream professors. The dilemma Jacob Riche posses in his article in this issue is that identity with any community comes at a price. What is an acceptable price? What is a professor missing by belonging to a particular faction or clique?

According to the Canadian Sociological Association, there are 64 departments of sociology in Canada, 28 offering PhDs in sociology. Only a few are joint departments. The most frequent pairings are sociology with anthropology or criminology. At other universities, antagonism between sociologists and their criminology/policing colleagues does occur. The antagonism is typically due to (1) the comparative availability of outside funding, (2) the degree of student influence on course offerings, (3) students augmenting their resumes with courses that are career-oriented, (4) administrators' preference for courses that offer greater revenue-generation opportunities, and (5) perceived inequality among faculty members (ASA 2010).

At present, the first four appear to work to the advantage of teachers in the criminology/police studies stream. The influence of the last is not evident yet. A question, which needs to be asked, is whether over time these factors will drive a wedge between faculty members. Indeed, faculty with experience teaching sociology/criminology in other institutions recall the fractured culture in their departments. Many have witnessed the divergence of the two specializations into separate departments with, at times, crossover between faculty members, but often with the relocation of resources to the new criminology department.

The History of Courses on Deviance, Criminology, and Police Studies at Memorial

Sociology at Memorial was first taught in 1956 in a Department of Social Studies because none of the relevant disciplines had enough teachers to grant a degree. As more teachers were appointed, the department was split by discipline with sociology and anthropology being combined into one department. In 1972-73, there was a brief period of sociology and anthropology "caucuses," where people discussed the future as the joint department prepared to divide – the mitosis, they called it. In 1973, the two disciplines became stand-alone departments. However, opposition to this decision was so strong that for

many years there was a Sociology/Anthropology Interdepartmental Studies Program. A contributing factor to the split was that the anthropologist heading the joint department favoured his own discipline at the expense of sociology (Riggins 2017). This bias is expected; joint departments are inherently difficult to manage, particularly in times of austerity.

For nearly fifty years, the study of crime and deviance received little emphasis at Memorial. One course on deviance appears in the MUNL *Calendar* in the early 1960s. Criminology is absent, reflecting the training of sociologists in that era. Criminology became more prominent in sociology departments across North America during years of exceptional social unrest in the 1960s. Politicians began to direct more research funding to that area. At Memorial, we now see the influence of this external funding.

Listed in the 1971-72 MUNL *Calendar*, when sociology and anthropology were in one department, is a second-level course called Social Problems that explicitly included crime and delinquency as well as a third-level course titled Deviance. In the 1984-85 *Calendar*, the same Deviance course appears but Social Problems was then called Changing World, a vague term broader than social problems.

Throughout most of the 1980s and 90s, one tenure-stream sociologist taught criminology, Ian Gomme (informally known as Professor Eraser, among francophones, because of his last name). Gomme also contributed to the sociology of education but the Faculty of Education thought that this was their specialty and so it was not possible to offer courses on that subject. Aware of the level of student interest in deviance and criminology, Gomme tried to get the department to expand these courses, but his colleagues paid little attention. They may have thought that excessive undergraduate interest in deviance was a sign of intellectual immaturity and that student interests should not determine course offerings.

An Interdisciplinary Minor Program in Law and Society was established by history professor Christopher English. It was naturally housed in the Department of History, although it would have made just as much sense for the program to be housed in the Department of Sociology since the pioneers of sociology contributed to the study of law. In the 2006-07 *Calendar*, Sociology appears as a "participating department" in the Law and Society Program. However, the contribution of sociologists was minimal. In 2006-07, students in that program could receive credit for six courses listed as sociology. We could not identify one of them perhaps because it was rarely offered. University *Calendars* are not always up-to-date. The remaining five were actually cross-listed as sociology-anthropology courses. Contemporary Native Peoples of Canada was always taught by anthropologists. It is questionable, when taught by anthropologists, if Communication and Culture, War and Aggression, Dominance and Power, as well as Terrorism and Society could actually be considered sociology courses. When Professor English retired, sociologists unfortunately showed no interest in acquiring the Law and Society Program. Currently, the program is headed by the Chair of the Department of Gender Studies.

Anthony Micucci joined the department in the 1990s. Policing was one of his specialties. However, in the early 2000s Police Studies was imposed on the Department of Sociology, as Riggins remembers, by the university's upper-level administration. We did not go out and look for it. Some sociologists were so opposed that he had the impression they were still living in the 1960s Counterculture. The majority of sociologists, however, were supportive of Police Studies, but thought that the department did not have the faculty resources to teach the predicted number of incoming students. Memorial sociologists eventually agreed to accept the program but with little enthusiasm.

Student Vocational Concerns

Many sociology majors may struggle to see the vocational value of their courses outside the criminology/policing stream. Although its popularity is a sign of the success of our courses and teachers in those areas, it may also indicate weakness in other areas of study. For instance, the fourth-year Internship is offered only once a year to less than two dozen students, while criminology/police studies is perceived to have a direct lead to occupational ventures after degree completion (e.g., in policing, correctional services, and law). The use of the Internship is arguably insufficient to meet legitimate student demands, which may impinge on its perceived value for occupational opportunities stemming from a sociology degree.

We note that there is a wide range of core areas in sociology that could meet the vocational concerns of students in areas other than criminology/policing, but they are absent or under-represented in the Memorial department. This list is not exhaustive: demography, aging, urban sociology, disabilities, families, migration, globalization, war and peace, and the sociology of consumption.

The course Voluntary Associations appears in the *Calendar* in the 1980s. This was Jack Ross's specialty, which after his retirement, was dropped from the curriculum despite the fact that sociology graduates are likely to be employed in the non-profit sector of the economy and thus completing the course was potentially a career asset for sociology majors. As far as we know, the non-profit sector of the economy and bureaucracy (more interesting than it sounds) can be studied at Memorial only in the Faculty of Business Administration. In theory, it should be possible to meet student vocational concerns through programs shared with other departments and faculties, such as the Faculty of Business Administration, Community Health and Humanities in the Faculty of Medicine, and the Communication Studies Program in the Department of English.

Research by Guppy et al. shows that the number of sociology majors graduating from Canadian universities since the year 2000 has declined. The perception of some well-known journalists is that a degree in sociology is not a career asset. The perception is an exaggeration, according to their statistics, but quite a few sociology majors do think that their university credentials were not as useful in finding employment as they had hoped. Guppy et al. (2017: 251) concluded: "More work needs to be done to highlight the careers that can be pursued, as well as the community contributions that can be made, by individuals who have graduated with a sociology degree."

The Future

Where do we find ourselves now? As far as we know, there has never been a daylong or weekend retreat since 1972-73 in which Memorial sociologists have tried to develop long-range plans for the department. Academic Program Reviews are not organized at the department level and are not a substitute for the department making its own plans. Reviews reflect the preoccupations of Deans, Vice-Presidents, and Presidents, especially those related to student satisfaction and finances. Academic Program Reviews are to some extent public-relations events. This was especially true when Memorial placed department self-studies on the Internet for the world to see (to find these self-studies search for Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Academic Unit Planning Reports). We note that the review underway fails to bring in a criminology expert to review the Criminology/Police Studies Program despite the expressed interest and need for such an explicit review by department members and despite promises from prior administrators to support such endeavours. Police Studies, since its inception, has never been reviewed by an external committee. Sociology's first review (Riggins was then Head) was a bad time for developing genuine long-range plans from the department's perspective. Faculty did what administrators asked of them, with some delay and reluctance. The evaluation by outside examiners, however, was positive, arguably more positive than the department deserved from the perspective of some prominent faculty members at the time.

If real factions are to emerge between areas of study in sociology at Memorial, it remains to be seen if the perception that resources are in competition dissipates as everyone feels the impact of the Newfoundland economy and the austerity budget shaping the university climate. Our department is riddled with tensions. It is laced with a history of professors leaving either for other jobs at Memorial or for other institutions. Retention remains a concern for many, a concern that arguably may drive hiring practices but this is not unique to Memorial.

The need in the department remains that of unity, understanding, and compassion. The department has experienced turmoil and tensions, the way forward is to find ways to put differences aside for the betterment of everyone and to provide needed support for students, faculty, contract instructors, and administrators. We need to find ways to increase faculty retention, and to create more collective and engaged spaces for scholarly impact. As sociologists (and/or criminologists), we are public servants directed to benefit the public good, making policy change, and shaping the future. That can be done most optimally only with understanding and compassion that begins in our own department.

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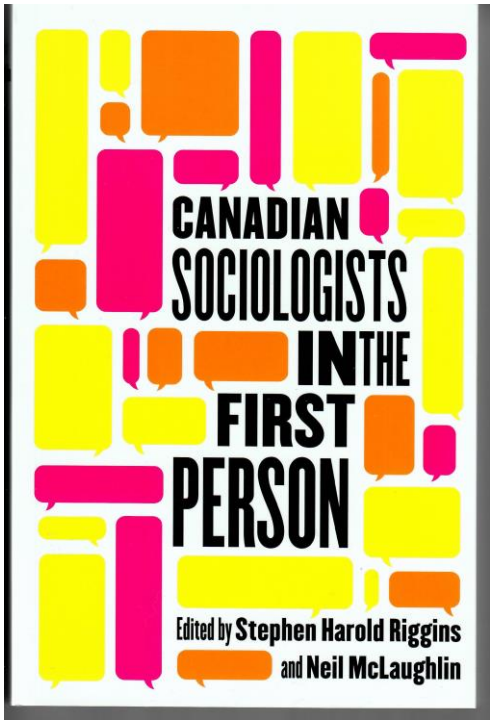
The Clipboard



By **Stephen Harold Riggins**

This is the pioneer volume of autobiographies by Canadian sociologists. Twenty chapters cover Canada from Coast to Coast, St. John's to Victoria. The contributors, who range in age from their mid-40s to late-80s, teach in different types of institutions, are prominent in the discipline and in their specializations, and represent significant and diverse intellectual currents, political perspectives, and life and career experiences. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021, 517 pages.

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Juan E. Corradi. (2021). *Innocents Abroad: A Novel of Florence*. Meadville, PA: Fulton Books. Corradi was a Visiting Professor in the MUN Department of Sociology in the 1970s. He is presently a Professor Emeritus at New York University.

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Marilyn Porter. (2021). "In Appreciation of Ann Denis (for the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women)," *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 58(1), 122-124.

Shelley Z. Reuter. (2021). "The Responsible Professor: EAPs and the Neoliberal University," *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 46(1), 1-36. Reuter currently teaches sociology at Concordia University. She was previously an Assistant Professor in the MUN Department of Sociology.

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Newsworthy

Jacob Riche, MA Thesis Presentation, December 1, 2021. "Holy Ground: The Impacts of Place Belonging, Community, and Boundary Work."

Heather Dicks, Dissertation Proposal Defense, November 16, 2021. "Poverty, Progress and Pandemic: Exploring the Impacts of Covid-19 on Remittances."

In 2021, Karen Stanbridge continued interviewing sociologists who published articles in the most recent issues of the *Canadian Review of Sociology*. Interviews from 2020 and 2021 are available as podcasts on the Review's internet site, see CRStal Radio. Stanbridge is the Managing Editor of the *Canadian Review of Sociology*, which is the official journal of the Canadian Sociological Association.

PhD student Keif Godbout-Kinney received the TAUMUN Award for "Outstanding Contribution to Teaching." The Teaching Assistants' Union of Memorial University presents this competitive award annually to two Memorial University students.

CBC News, "LGBTQ Seniors in NL need Social Connections, Boosts to Long-term Care Training," October 13, 2021. News story based in part on interviews with Ailsa Craig and Charlie Murphy, who contributed to the Quadrangle NL report on aging. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/quadrangle-report-lgbtq-seniors-1.6208934?fbclid=IwAR389TCTBOn1q0lvq5ZoJjBGyl1axA-j7prANRU2dhSTs1TU9_Wa1ESzmVw

PhD candidate Kim Phillips was awarded a scholarship to attend the 2021 summer school "Forbidden Knowledge" Fights Back: Unleashing the Transformative Power of Critical Race Theory, sponsored by the African American Policy Forum. The sponsoring organization is a social justice think tank, which concentrates on gender and diversity.

MA student Nel Jayson Santos was the recipient of the inaugural Karl M. Wells Scholarship in LGBTQ2S+ Studies. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/karl-wells-scholarship-1.6070299?fbclid=IwAR1Erilfp5qCRfzmUdduZTmh8vx0K2hzk0MjUuNJwau0dhL52lgb_RxJH8M

Shannon Pearson and Laura Squires were awarded the distinction of "Fellow of the School of Graduate Studies" in recognition of their high standard of excellence in their academic programs.

Dr. Emmanuel Banchani accepted a two-year post-doctoral position in Quantitative Research and Evaluation at York University's Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. In May, he successfully defended his PhD dissertation "Non-communicable Diseases in Ghana: Risk Factors, Prevalence, and Social Support Systems."

Emmanuel Rohn defended his MA thesis "Motivations and Barriers to Help-seeking Behaviours among Female Victims of Intimate Partner Violence in Ghana," June 30.

In April, Richard Bamfo presented his Master's research project, "Doing Time: How Prisoners Negotiate their Time in Prison."

Pouya Morshedi was a recipient of the Noreen Golfman Graduate Fellowship, established to honor our former Provost and Vice-President (Academic).