Thoughts from the Head

Is sociology relevant? Here in academia we sometimes dismiss this as a worn, hackneyed worry – an old fashioned concern from the 1960s. My father used to tease me that all academics ever do is cite one another so that the entire network feels good, but nothing more happens. I’d tell him that was an interesting sociological observation, but where was his evidence.

In a world where hand baskets and hell often seem close at hand, the relevance question is pressing. Just what does sociology contribute? As Head of the Department I read my colleagues annual reports. Here is a quick summary of my summer reading, highlighting in my own words some of the stuff my colleagues are up to. In the context of world problems, this is pretty relevant stuff. These are my thumbnail sketches, 25 words or less, of their research (they all squirm at such compression and its distortion!). And in no particular order, here is a little slice of what twelve colleagues are doing:

Roth, Wendy - DNA testing and racial identities (what does knowing our genetic lineage tell us?)
Wilkes, Rima - representing Indigenous people’s resistance in media images (how are First Nations protests pictured?)
Creese, Gillian - the African diaspora in Vancouver (what colour is your accent?)
Carpiano, Rich - the effects of neighbourhoods on life chances (where I live matter for my health and wellbeing?)
Johnson, Phyllis - family life among astronauts (how do families cope with long stretches of physical separation?)
Blackburn, Carole - unraveling Residential Schooling (how is First Nations’ culture made visible and invisible under Canada’s legal systems?)
Kemple, Tom - understanding capitalism and bureaucracy via Weber (how we understand science, politics, and art as modern professions or callings?)
Matthews, Ralph - changing climates and community responses (how do communities build the institutional capacity to respond to climate change?)
Fuller, Sylvia - non-standard employment in the Canadian labour force (what happens as more and more jobs become part-time, casual, or temporary?)
Lauster, Nathan - sexual orientation and housing (how much discrimination is there in the Vancouver rental housing market?)
Hirsh, Beth - business responses to affirmative action (how do organizations cope with new rules attempting to promote more fairness in the workplace?)
Zuberi, Dan - infectious diseases and the organization of hospital work (what influence is outsourcing having on disease rates within hospitals?)

In another issue I will profile other colleagues. I am certain you will find their work as equally impressive, and relevant. To learn more about what is behind these simple sketches, visit www.soci.ubc.ca and look under “About Our Faculty.”

The New African Diaspora In Vancouver: Building Community
By Gillian Creese

Migrants from sub-Saharan Africa are a small but growing part of the metro Vancouver population. In the 2006 Census, 27,260 Vancouver residents were born in Africa, constituting just over 1% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2006). A self-identified pan-African community is developing that links migrants from diverse countries across differences of culture, history and language. Processes of community building are also shaped by gender, small numbers, hyper visibility as a racialized Black minority, and marginalization in the labour market and larger society.

In 2004 I worked with two community researchers (Edith Ngene Kambere and Mambbo Masinda) to interview 61 women and men from 21 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. I will draw on this research and other community responses to illustrate the processes of building community. My work is part of a larger body of research examining the experiences of migrant workers in Canada. As the diaspora grows, it will have important implications for other communities in Vancouver and across Canada.

In this Issue

New Faculty settled in 3
Home Care in Canada 4
Taking Green to the Next Level 6
Co-op Education: news & opportunities 7
Institute of Aging: Achievements 7

(continued on page 2)
African. There is no spatial centre to the small African diaspora in metro Vancouver, which is spread out in the municipalities of Surrey, Langley, Coquitlam, Vancouver, New Westminster, and Burnaby. This dispersed residential pattern makes it more difficult to develop connections within the community. Nevertheless, research participants identified a number of informal and formal practices of community building across these spaces.

Places of worship figure centrally as sites where friendship networks are formed, both multi-ethnic connections and those within the African community. As the density of the community increases, churches have become central to community building. Religious faith often figures prominently in migration narratives and helps to shore up the resilience required to navigate losses and dislocation associated with migration. Religious affiliations also provided important social networks or social capital. The importance of religious faith can be seen in the growth of churches serving African congregations. In 2010 we identified 12 churches located in Vancouver, New Westminster, Surrey, Coquitlam, and Langley that can be defined as ‘African churches’. These churches all have African pastors; most have congregations from diverse countries, often with concentrations linked to the pastor’s country of origin. African churches have become a front-line of settlement support, providing informal support to new immigrants and referring them to other services.

Women identified female support networks that also helped them to negotiate settlement and create a local African community. Most support was informal, such as sharing information, tips for job searches, and strategies on how to navigate their younger’s schooling. Some forms of support were material in nature, including gifts of clothing for new babies, babysitting, and preparing food or contributing money for funerals. Less tangible forms of support were equally important for building bonds of community: someone who shares common experiences to confide in, comply to, or celebrate with. Most women talked about sharing the wisdom of their experiences with newer immigrants. As Ngalula put it: “we don’t want other people that are coming from Africa to suffer like we suffered” (Interview F29).

Much of women’s mutual support was informal but a wide variety of more formal women’s groups also exist. Among the 31 women we interviewed, 7 identified more formal women’s groups through which they helped to support other African women. This breadth of women’s community organizing is impressive, and yet women’s community organizing was not mentioned by any of the men interviewed. Men tended to see community organizing more narrowly through formal organizations.

There were 13 nationally-focused African organizations in existence when we conducted interviews in 2004, all nonprofits without paid staff, and all headed by men. With a common mandate to preserve cultural heritage, and in most cases also to raise money for development projects in their countries of origin, these ethno-specific organizations are oriented largely toward the home country. Fewer women than men identified these national organizations as central sites of connection. Women were more likely to focus on the need to address issues within Canada than to address issues within their countries of origin.

A key theme that emerged in our interviews was how to turn disparate ‘communities from Africa’ into a more unified African community. Four main visions emerged in 2004: (1) create a pan-African political organization, (2) build an African cultural centre, (3) develop African-focused settlement services, and (4) support African entrepreneurship. All but one of these has already come to fruition.

There was widespread support for a pan-African political organization linking diverse groups from sub-Saharan Africa. This organization was envisioned as a way to strengthen the African community by representing their needs to government. For some it was also a way to shift existing organizational focus from the past and Africa, to the present and future in Canada. In 2009 the United African Communities of BC was created to fill this gap.

A second line of community development was support for an African cultural centre. Drawing on examples of other groups that have cultural centres in the city, an African cultural centre was expected to enhance African heritage and foster African identity among offspring. The act of naming a space ‘the African Cultural Centre’ would also publicly claim local space, and thereby claim a rightful place alongside other ethnic communities in a multicultural city. Interestingly, although a common desire among men, no woman we interviewed mentioned the need for an African cultural centre. Cultural centres are often spaces in which men congregate and socialize, and this was part of its appeal to men. On the other hand, creating a space for male socialization could undermine post-migration trends many women identified as positive, with husbands’ limited access to male socialization and greater involvement in family life in Canada.

An African cultural centre has not materialized, but other cultural organizations and community-based cultural events have emerged. There are two local African dance companies, a theatre group, a story-telling theatre company, and a radio program, as well as an annual African Peace Festival and Pan-African Film and Arts Festivals, and an African Canadian Soccer Tournament in 2008. These community wide events provide spaces in which to enhance community networks across the diaspora and raise visibility within the larger society.

The third form of formal community development is the creation of African-centred settlement organizations for new immigrants. At the time of the interviews in 2004 only a handful of multicultural settlement agencies had any programs designed specifically for African immigrants. Now there are over 30 African settlement workers throughout the region, as well as two well established African settlement agencies. The Centre of Integration for African Immigrants (CIAI), and Umoja Operation Compassion Society/African Family Services, have both emerged primarily to serve the sub-Saharan African population. The organizations are led by African men and women, and largely staffed by women from the community. The creation of two African-centred settlement organizations re-
New Faculty settled in...

**Amin Ghaziani** recently completed a three-year postdoctoral fellowship with the Princeton Society of Fellows. His areas of expertise include the sociology of culture, social movements, sexualities/LGBT studies, and cities. Amin is teaching one new course this semester (Social Movements) and two next semester (Sexualities and Research Methods). He has become affiliated with the Metropolis Project and the Critical Studies in Sexuality program. He is currently finishing his second book entitled, *There Goes the Gayborhood?* The project examines the relationship between sexuality and urban forms.

**Beth Hirsh** joined us last fall as a Canadian Research Chair (CRC) after having taught at Cornell University for four years. Dr. Hirsh’s research focuses on gender and race inequality, law, and organizations. Most recently, she is conducting interviews with victims of employment discrimination and analyzing the effectiveness of various diversity-oriented policies. Since arriving at UBC, she has taught courses in law and society and quantitative data analysis.

responds to community needs while becoming part of the infrastructure of a more visible pan-African community in metro Vancouver.

The final strand of community development was support for African entrepreneurship. The development of more African-owned businesses is considered a pillar of community development, improving opportunities for investment and enhancing employment options within the community. At the time of our interviews (in 2004) we were able to identify only 3 storefront businesses (2 restaurants and a store) run by migrants from sub-Saharan Africa; and only 3 out of 61 participants were self-employed. Since then the landscape of African entrepreneurialism has changed significantly. In 2010 we identified 11 African restaurants, 6 African hair salons, and 3 other stores that provide hair braiding and sell African beauty products, clothing and food. Though still modest compared to much larger immigrant/ethnic communities in Greater Vancouver, this marked growth of entrepreneurialism can be expected to continue.

Our research with members of Vancouver’s African community shows that a pan-African diasporic community identity is developing alongside every day, often gender-specific, practices that help to build this community on the ground, from women’s support groups to the creation of African-centred settlement organizations and cultural events. The creation of formal and informal bonds of community underscores the growing strength and resilience of the new African diaspora in Vancouver. These activities are all part of claiming spaces, physical spaces in specific neighbourhoods and sites, and psychic spaces in individual subjectivities and in the 'imagined community' that is Canada. In the long run, claiming such spaces is central to enacting demands to be recognized, accepted and belong as Canadians.

Gillian Creese’s new book has just been published, by University of Toronto Press.
Home Care in Canada

By Anne Martin-Matthews and Catherine Craven

Home care – the delivery of health and social services to individuals living in the community – stands at the forefront of current debates on health care in Canada. Although still representing only 3.3 percent of total public health spending in Canada, home care costs have doubled over the past decade and, with the aging of the population, are projected to grow by a further 80% by 2026. While considered an essential pillar of the Canadian health care system, home care is not part of the Canada Health Act. Few national standards and policies guide its delivery. Programs vary by provincial jurisdiction, with the result that where one lives in Canada, rather than what one needs, determines the nature, type and frequency of the service received.

Home care is unique in its straddling of the medical care and social services sectors. It has a professional or medical component (including nursing and rehabilitation services), and a non-medical (sometimes called non-professional or ‘unregulated’) component, which includes home and personal support for both post-acute and long-term care. Home support includes cleaning, laundry, and meal preparation; personal support includes help with bathing, dressing, grooming and transferring. Elderly people, particularly those aged 85 years and older, are the highest users of these services.

The CIHR-funded project, “Home Care in Canada: Working at the Nexus of the Public and the Private Spheres” (the ‘Nexus Home Care Project’) was launched in 2005, and is now in its final stages of data collection and analysis. Our project is guided by a conceptual model that locates the home support worker, elderly client, and family member (caregiver) at the intersection of the public and private spheres, framed by social, spatial, temporal and organizational features. The model was developed based on earlier research on home care (Martin-Matthews, 2007), and in collaboration with a SFU colleague trained in architecture and environment-behaviour interactions (Mahmood and Martin-Matthews, 2008).

Our study focuses on three intersecting sets of issues (hence our use of the word ‘nexus’):

• public and private spheres: the mechanisms by which home support workers negotiate the private sphere of clients’ homes and families in the context of the public world of health services, and health authority/employer agency policies and regulations
• professional and non-professional interactions: home support worker’s perceptions of professional and non-professional roles and relationships with employers and co-workers, and with elderly clients and their unpaid caregivers
• paid and unpaid labour: the strategies used by workers and clients in balancing the emotional versus contractual nature of the ‘care’ relationship; also the prevalence -- and implications of -- unpaid time to meet client need.

Methodology - Snapshot:

The Nexus project has four distinct data collection phases:


Phase II (2007-2008): interviews with three groups of participants in BC: 88 home support workers; 82 elderly clients; and 55 family members of elderly home care clients.

Phase III (2008-09): provincially comparative pilot study of home support workers in Ontario (N=28) and Nova Scotia (N=40)

Phase IV (2011): interviews (N=7) with key informants re changing contexts of Home Care policy and practice in one BC health authority.

Because our Research Ethics Board approval did not permit us to directly contact potential study participants, the Phase II data collection amongst workers, elderly clients and family members was particularly challenging, and took a full two years: three home care agencies were purposively selected (two private and one not-for-profit) serving both urban and rural clients. A second method of recruitment of workers identified participants represented by the BC Government Employees Union (BCGEU local 403).

All four data sets include rich, in-depth qualitative data, and quantitative measures and standardized indices such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory, Kaye’s Affectivity Index and the Brayfield-Roth measure of job satisfaction. For the qualitative analyses, topic and analytical coding, analysis meetings, and memo writing facilitated the development of themes and patterns in the data.

Training Environment:

Managing and analyzing this substantial amount of data requires a team! Our project has provided a rich training environment and research opportunities for two post-doctoral fellows (Joanie Sims-Gould and Kerry Byrne) and 19 research assistants. Catherine Cra-
Findings and Next Steps:

Our findings highlight links between agency policy and practice ("turning a blind eye"); implications of worker adherence to authorized 'care plans'; immigrant worker deskillimg; and recruitment and retention challenges; clients' perspectives on the relationship between 'care plans' and client need, and on person-centered care; and the integration of the formal/paid and informal/unpaid care systems through mechanisms of 'sharing the care' by families and workers. We are currently completing manuscripts in four areas. These, and the development of a book manuscript integrating the perspectives of the workers, clients and family members, will be the focus of the team's writing during Dr. Martin-Matthews' study leave over the next year.

• **Home Support Workers Perspectives of Family Caregivers:** We examine 'relational continuity' to reflect the unique nature of home support (e.g., multiple providers, care in private homes, personal nature of care). We examine strategies to enhance relational continuity at individual, agency and policy levels, framed by a relationship-centered approach to service delivery.

• **Safety in Home Support:** Clients' homes as home support workers' workplaces provide unique contexts for understanding and negotiating safety. We have developed a conceptual model to address the interplay between policies and practices that intensify or mitigate safety concerns for both workers and clients.

• **Ethno-cultural dynamics in the provision and receipt of home support:** Building on earlier work on migrant home care work, we examine complexities of ethno-cultural diversity in relationships between workers, clients and families. While migrant care work in international context denotes a workforce often both illegal and unregulated, Canadian immigration policies and the 'Live-in caregiver program' provide a unique context for framing analyses of ethno-cultural diversity in home care.

• **Time Matters in Home Care:** Focusing on the compression of time in home care, with implications for tempo and pacing of care; worker and client experiences of 'clock time' in service delivery; and strategies ('time tactics') by workers and clients re time constraints, priorities and scheduling. Analyses are framed by Adam's concepts of time as rhythm, framing, synchronization, duration, sequence, tempo and intensity.

Knowledge Translation Highlights:

The research outputs of the Nexus Home Care project are relevant to the development of social policy and for application in health authorities and agencies. In August, we were invited to present our findings at the Queen's University International Institute on Social Policy, focused this year on the topic of "Social Policy in an Aging Society". This presentation is the basis of a manuscript submission in September for a special issue of the Canadian Journal of Social Policy.

In addition to numerous national and international conference presentations, and academic publications, our team seeks to share our findings with key stakeholders. Our knowledge translation activities have included community presentations at:

- Fraser Health's Annual Research Week
- Fraser Health's Home Care Council Meetings
- Center for Research on Personhood in Dementia (UBC)
- School of Speech Sciences and Audiology (UBC)
- Centre for Health Services and Policy Research UBC

We have also participated in three pan-Canadian consultations, sponsored by Health Canada, on the recruitment and retention of home support workers. We have produced 'lay summaries' of research findings for all agency, worker, elderly client and family caregiver study participants.

![Image](image-url)

Dr. Anne Martin Matthews, Patrick Burnett, Renae Dorsey, Catherine Craven, Dr. Kerry Byrne, Krista Frazee and Dr. Joanie Sims-Gould

Selected Publications: (continues bottom of next page...)


Taking Green to the Next Level
By Mary Leong

This Community Service Learning (CSL) course connects students with Be The Change Earth Alliance to gain hands-on learning experience.

Ever dreamt of a class that integrates academic theory with hands on action in a community? For Dr. Robin Sydneysmith and his third-year Sociology and Natural Resources class, Community Service Learning (CSL) was the perfect opportunity for taking a new perspective to classroom learning.

Sydneysmith’s Sociology 360B class studies natural resource issues and investigates how political and economic structures contribute to environmental problems. Adopting a Community Service Learning component to the course, students had the opportunity to take their academic learning out into the community by working with Be The Change Earth Alliance.

Be The Change is a non-profit charitable organization that encourages people to make sustainable and just lifestyle choices through programming in schools, communities, and the workplace.

SOCI 360B students became mentors for weekly action circles with a group of grade 10 students from John Oliver High School. Promoting conversation around environmental awareness, the action circle groups discussed different steps they could take to raise awareness of ecology in school and at home. These steps included everything from turning off the lights at lunch hour to locating recycling bins beside garbage cans to encouraging parents to buy low flush toilets.

“Learning different theories on consumption can be fairly abstract and it’s really easy to lose sight of the relevance it holds in everyday life,” said Maya Reisz, a SOCI 360B student.

“I think that the juxtaposition of the CSL and standard learning practices was nice because it enabled me to be critical of the readings. Readings became information to feed into my experiences, not just stagnant facts to be regurgitated in an exam.”

“It seemed natural to work with university students that were closer in age to the high school students so they could relate more easily to each other,” said Maureen Jack-LaCroix from Be The Change. “The university students are not just mentors – through these activities, they are also helping themselves understand what this whole process of making change is.”

Sydneysmith’s class was surprised by how challenging it was to implement academic theory into real world situations. The CSL program allowed students to gain a greater perspective on these real world issues and concerns.

“Through working with high school students and trying to implement these ‘obvious’ lessons, it became clear that the world does not work or function within these specific narratives or grand theories of the sociological readings,” said Maya.

Overall, the CSL program was very well received by both the UBC students and the grade 10 students.

“I think Community Service Learning is a very beneficial opportunity, especially from the reaction of my students,” said Sydneysmith. “There were some interesting insights that came out of this program, something I don’t think I could have come up with in a lecture or that students would get out of reading a text book.”

“I wish CSL had been available when I was at UBC!” said Jack-LaCroix, who is an Arts alumna herself. “I loved the learning and was very interested in exploring all humanity had to offer, but there was often a big gap between what I was learning and what was happening in the real world.”

This article was originally published June 17th on the UBC Faculty of Arts ‘Arts Wire’ website.

(continued from page 5)
Co-op Education News

**Sociology Co-op Student Named Top in British Columbia!**

The Association for Co-operative Education (ACE) announced that its University Co-op Student of the Year Award winner is UBC Arts Co-op Student, **Meghan Magee**.

Meghan, a Sociology Major and English minor, received the award for her work as a Public Affairs Assistant with BC Transmission Corporation as it went through a merger with BC Hydro in Summer 2010. Meghan's exceptional talent and contributions made her one of the very best co-op students her employer has worked with. The award also recognizes Meghan's outstanding contributions as a volunteer within the UBC Arts Co-op Student Community.

Meghan was also recently awarded the **UBC Arts Co-op Undergraduate Student of the Year**.

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If you are in a position to offer co-op opportunities to UBC sociology students... please contact www.artscoop.ubc.ca.

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**Anne Martin-Matthews and the Institute of Aging - Achievements**

As of July 31, 2011, Professor Anne Martin-Matthews completed the second of two terms (2004-2011) as Scientific Director of the Institute of Aging (IA), one of 13 Institutes that comprise the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The Institute of Aging is a national ‘virtual’ Institute that funds strategic initiatives in aging, in all fields of biomedical, clinical, health services and population health research. The IA now relocates to the home institution of her successor, Dr. Yves Joanette, a neuroscientist at the University of Montreal.

A recent 10 Year review of CIHR and its Institutes commended the achievements of the Institute of Aging under Anne's leadership, specifically noting the growth of aging research in Canada from 6% of CIHR's 2004 annual budget of $256M to 14% of CIHR’s 2011 annual budget of almost $1 Billion. Her leadership in securing the launch of the ambitious Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging and in developing the Institute’s signature Summer Programme in Aging were particularly noted.

Two articles in the June 2011 [Vol. 30(2)] issue of the *Canadian Journal on Aging* also highlight these achievements. Professor Martin-Matthews herself authored an article on changes in the landscape of Canadian research on aging. However, she also noted the challenges for research on aging, especially in the face of increasing rhetoric about the ‘apocalyptic demography’ of population aging. A tribute to Anne’s leadership was also written by the three Chairs of the Institute of Aging’s Advisory Board during that time.

The Department of Sociology sends its congratulations to Anne, and to her UBC-based staff (Susan Crawford, Marian Chong-Kit, Lynda Callard, Bonnie McCoy and Rowena Tate) on the outstanding achievements of their work on behalf of Canada's Institute of Aging.
UBC Sociology and World Rankings

QS (Quacquarelli Symonds Ltd) recently ranked the top sociology departments in the world. UBC was ranked 16th. Among Canadian universities we ranked just behind the University of Toronto and McGill. This is another indicator of the growing reputation of the Department. Our success as a strong teaching unit, in attracting competitive research dollars, and in continuing to recruit strong colleagues are other indicators of high quality.

Support Students!

Donations from Sociology alumni have had a positive impact for many deserving undergraduate and graduate students. Financial support enables students to excel within the Department and ensure they have access to the resources that give them the best education possible. We invite alumni and friends to support students by making a gift to one of the following funds:

**Sociology Excellence Fund** - This fund was established to support the advancement of excellence in the Department. Donations provide for visiting professors, support for publications, graduate and undergraduate student support, seed money for research collaboration and other initiatives.

**Kaspar Naegele Memorial Prize in Sociology** - This $1,300 prize has been endowed by Robert (BA ’60) and Judith Doll (MA ’94) and former students, friends, and colleagues in memory of Dr. Kaspar Naegele, a caring and inspirational teacher and renowned scholar who served as Professor of Sociology from 1954 to 1965 and the Dean of Arts (1964 - 1965). The award is offered to an undergraduate student in the honours or majors program in Sociology.

If you are interested in making a gift, please visit [www.startanevolution.ca](http://www.startanevolution.ca) and click on “Donate.” Search for the Department of Sociology’s funds in the Faculty of Arts at the UBC Vancouver campus. Thank you.