

A New Zealand Sociological Imagination: The Massey Story

Paul Spoonley, Graeme Fraser and Steve Maharey

Abstract

Sociology at Massey University was established in the 1970s and grew rapidly so that by the 1980s, it was the largest department in New Zealand. With the appointment of a number of New Zealand sociologists, the development of a New Zealand-focused sociology and the influence of social and economic changes of the period, the 1980s proved to be a period of growth and change for the discipline at Massey. A number of books appeared, the Sociological Association of Aotearoa was formed, there were new graduate students and research projects and teaching was given a much deliberate local content. The discipline has changed in recent decades as the sociology staff have been absorbed into a larger unit and reduced in number.

Keywords: Massey University; Sociological Association of Aotearoa; FoNZSSO

Sociology was established at Massey University as part of the expansion of the universities in the 1970s. In these early years, the Department of Sociology relied on appointments from the northern hemisphere, initially from the USA. The foundation professor, Graeme Fraser, was a New Zealander returning from the United States. However, a second wave of expansion in the late 1970s and early 1980s saw New Zealanders appointed and a much more conscious focus on developing conceptual and empirical material with something to say about Aotearoa. This was prompted by both the need to address New Zealand sensitivities and experiences – and the need to develop material that spoke to New Zealand students. It was also a result of the turbulent politics of New Zealand society during the late 1970s and 1980s. At this point, the Massey department was the largest in New Zealand and had a significant influence on the evolution of sociology, especially as Massey authors were prominent in the production of texts, there were graduates who

made a significant contribution to the availability of empirical material and conceptual understanding and the development of a local sociological association was initiated and led by Massey. Two decades later (2005), the department was still equal in size to that of Auckland (Crothers, 2014) but was about to change in the wake of an amalgamation of sociology into a larger organisational unit, dispersal (teaching at the Albany and Wellington campuses, although the latter was to subsequently lose its sociology staff) and rationalisation as student enrolments dropped. This brief history of sociology at Massey University has been written by three of those involved in its establishment, expansion in the 1980s and management (both directly and in more indirect ways in recent years). Their task was aided by the input of others – notably Ann Dupuis, Brennon Wood, Allanah Ryan, Paul Perry and Christine Cheyne.

But the obvious needs to be stated: it is a partial rendering of a particular history and one that reflects the experiences and views of those who have written these words. Others are welcome to add their experiences and views of what transpired.

Beginnings

In March 1967, Graeme Fraser, who had completed a PhD at the University of Missouri, was appointed to teach the sociology of education in the Department of Education at Massey University, then located in Caccia Birch House. After negotiation with the Vice Chancellor, Dr Alan Stewart, Graeme was granted leave of absence to take up an appointment in the USA on preparing sociological resources for secondary schools. He returned to New Zealand in November 1970 to be interviewed successfully for the position of Foundation Professor of Sociology by a panel chaired by the Vice Chancellor. It also included the Dean of Social Sciences, Professor Keith Thomson, Professor Clem Hill, the Dean of Education and a Professor of Psychology from the University of Canterbury.

Given the high level of student interest in sociology, both internally and extramurally at Massey University, Graeme decided, perhaps too ambitiously, to begin teaching sociology in 1971 to a class of 149 students – two lectures and ten tutorials per week with a view to introducing it extramurally as soon as practicable.

At the end of 1971, Graeme decided to foster a community of interest amongst the emerging departments of sociology in New Zealand and so convened a workshop

for those keen to explore matters of mutual concern. This mini-conference included staff from Victoria, Auckland, and Canterbury universities and met in a lecture room in the Science Tower at Massey to discuss plans for developing sociology as a distinctive and valued discipline in its own right. There was an encouraging attendance at this event and it must surely have been one of the earliest gatherings of academic sociologists in New Zealand.

Initially, Graeme was appointed to the Department of Psychology which was already quite well established, although he had an office in the Interim Biology Building located in a distant part of campus. The Department of Sociology was eventually established as an independent entity in the Faculty of Social Sciences in 1973 and was located on Level 5 in the newly completed Social Sciences tower. Given the rapidly increasing student numbers – internally and extramurally – there were both opportunities and challenges.

In this start-up phase, he appointed a number of US-trained sociologists – Jye Jang, Paul Perry, Paul Green, Paul Kaplan – and a local geographer, Andrew Trlin. Andrew joined the Department of Geography at Massey in 1967, and completed a staff PhD in 1974 (on the human ecology of immigrants in Auckland). By 1970, he had moved to sociology, which became a standalone Department of Sociology in 1973. Paul Perry, with a new PhD from the University of Hawaii, joined in December 1976 to teach research methods. Initially, there was just one paper at 300 level, later to be supplemented by a 200 level paper (as the sociology programme got established, a key requirement was to take theory and methods papers at the 200 and 300 level for a major). Paul joined forces with Andrew Trlin to teach population studies/demography. Other lecturers at the time included Robyn Leeming, Leslie Benson and Owen Coup. But even as sociology established itself as a department separate from psychology, it also began to expand its reach to include social work.

One of those appointed in the mid-1970s was Merv Hancock. In 1950, he was a foundation diploma student in the School of Social Science at Victoria University College, and then went on to become a social and community worker in various parts of the country. As President of the New Zealand Association of Social Workers (1964-65), he actively supported the move to establish sociology in universities as a discipline critical to social work. In an article in the 1990s (Hancock, 1996), he described how sociology had challenged his pre-existing ideas (and Methodism) and he was particularly intrigued by the sociology of knowledge and the critique of the

moral order. In 1974, he was a member of a working party that recommended that Massey University establish a four year social work programme in the now established Department of Sociology. Merv was then appointed to the Department in 1975 by Graeme Fraser and they worked to get the social work qualification accredited. Merv Hancock was a friend of Graeme from their time working together in the 1950s when Merv was the Director of the Kensington Youth Club in Dunedin. Merv was an important appointment in the new Department of Sociology because of his pre-eminence in the field of social work in New Zealand. This appointment was crucial to the development of the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), an initiative developed in 1973-74 by a small working party comprising Graeme, Merv, Ephra Garrett (then in the Faculty of Education who had experience in social work and a profound knowledge of Maoridom) and Tom Donovan (a member of the Department of Psychology with an overseas qualification in social work). The 4 year BSW degree was approved in the 1975 UGC's quinquennial round for new qualifications and reflected the theory-practice structure of degrees already established in the University's Faculties of Agriculture and Horticulture, as well as Technology. Merv stayed until 1982 and he remained an enthusiastic and committed supporter of sociology – both in its own right and as contributor to social work. Thirty years after he was President of the NZASW, he became President of the Sociological Association of Aotearoa in 1995.

The core elements of the sociology programme were established in the late 1970s as staff came on board. The core programme (two introductory courses, one on sociology and one on New Zealand society, 200 and 300 level courses on methods and theory) were gradually established. There was also the growth of research on local communities and issues. Andrew Trlin and Paul Perry worked on the Manawatu Family Group Study which researched the experiences of women during their childbearing years and was funded by the Medical Council. Befitting a university that had an agricultural focus, a team involving Paul Green and Paul Kaplan conducted research on a rural/farming community, the Mangamahu Valley near Wanganui. But even as sociology was established, there were challenges.

Challenges (#1)

In order to build a department from ground zero, the imperative was to grow both students and staff. There was no departmental strategic plan. Indeed, there was no

explicit requirement for such a document, nor was it part of the academic vocabulary at that time. Nevertheless, increasing student enrolments was vital because that was the key factor in growing the new department's staff establishment. Developing the curriculum for an up-to-date major in sociology that had to be negotiated through the rigours of academic approval – Faculty Board, Academic Committee and Professorial Board, as it was known then – required diligence and allies. Preparing courses was a major focus for staff most of whom had no experience with extramural studies, let alone making operational the teaching and learning requirements of study guides for extramural students, none of whom had any prior knowledge of the scope and analytical optic of sociology. This was also true of internal students.

Furthermore, a significant number of extramural students did not have the required University Entrance qualification. If they had reached the age of twenty years and nine months and satisfied the criterion that they would benefit from a university education, this was sufficient for admission. There were compulsory courses for extramural students at the University in the May and August school vacations, the duration of which varied depending on the level of the paper. Not surprisingly, staff workloads meant that there was little if any time for research - the other defining feature of a university. In fact, there was minimal direct funding available to support social scientific research during the 1970s and 1980s, even with the establishment of a Social Sciences Research fund under the aegis of Committee D (Social Sciences) of the National Research Advisory Council. Graeme Fraser was the inaugural Chair of Committee D and a member of the NRAC from 1976 to 1983. There was also funding available from the Medical Research Council (MRC) via its newly established Social Medicine Assessing Committee (SMAC). Graeme Fraser was a member of the MRC and Chair of the SMAC between 1976 and 1982.

It was workloads and time constraints that bedevilled the research efforts of sociology staff at Massey University. Nevertheless, as will become evident later, the creative energies and commitment of a growing number of staff in the Department were epitomised in the scholarly activities, journal articles and, in particular, books which became the hallmark of the Department. Gaining approval from the Vice Chancellor for additional staffing was a challenging process in itself. The process was highly centralised, linked to the quantum of EFTs in the Department and Dr Stewart took some persuading!

The actual process of recruiting staff was not as haphazard as some might think. Seeking qualified staff to fill the teaching requirements of the developing academic programme of the Department was important. So too were issues of gender balance, teaching experience and research interests – the right person for the position. In that regard, gaining approval to appoint Peter Beatson, who was blind, was particularly challenging in the context of VC and Deans Committee who considered and approved all academic appointments. An unanticipated but positive consequence was the modest number of blind and partially sighted students who subsequently enrolled in the Department. It also proved necessary for Peter's seeing eye dog to become an honorary member of the Department's staff so she could attend lectures and staff meetings if necessary!

Despite misgivings within the University and in the wider academic community, particularly in relation to the development of extramural studies at the University Grants Committee's Curriculum Committee, Dr Stewart's prescient insight into the burgeoning possibilities of extramural studies was the engine of growth in student numbers. Furthermore, the approval of a report on a review of the University's extramural studies programme, which recommended offering 300 level papers, made it possible for extramural students to complete degrees at the university of their preference - Massey University. This was a boon to not only the Department of Sociology but other departments in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Dr Alan Stewart appointed Graeme Fraser as the Convenor of the high level working party (1976-1977), a task that was both challenging and ultimately rewarding. He was subsequently Massey University's representative on the UGC's Curriculum Committee until the demise of the UGC in the tertiary education reforms circa 1989.

Growth Spurt

By the late 1970s, growing internal class sizes and distance education (then called extramural) needed new staff, and Graeme Fraser made a number of appointments between 1978 and 1980. Some were New Zealanders who had received their graduate training overseas while others were locals. These new appointments were charged with teaching sociology and they were joined by those teaching into the social work and social policy programme. Many of the latter were trained as sociologists or who drew on sociology in various ways. The intake in the late 1970s included Mike O'Brien and Rajen Prasad to teach into the developing social work

programme. Most did not have their PhD but Graeme was keen to attract New Zealanders and to teach a much more New Zealand-focused sociology. Peter Beatson had two PhDs – one from Aix en Province and the other from Cambridge – while Paul Spoonley had completed an MSc at the University of Bristol under Michael Banton. Prasad and Spoonley went on to complete their PhDs in the 1980s, the first on family-based social work intervention and the latter on extreme right wing politics. One of the few local (Palmerston North) sociologists was Steve Maharey who completed an MA in the mid-1970s on small businesses. He had been involved with the business faculty but in 1978, Graeme Fraser contacted him as he was keen to fill teaching positions. Steve joined a group of staff that included Americans (Paul Kaplan, Paul Green, Randy and Angie Herman, Mary Ann Baskerville, Jye Kang, although Jye was Taiwanese-born) and Leslie Benson from the UK. The 1970s saw the establishment and rapid growth of sociology (and social work) at Massey, and this was to be followed by a further phase of growth in the late 1970s and 1980s.

The 1980s saw two different groups arrive. The first included Chris Wilkes and Shelagh Cox. There was another intake of New Zealanders in the mid and late 1980s, Bev James to be followed by Kay Saville-Smith, Nicola Armstrong and Allanah Ryan. There was a blossoming of locally orientated sociological studies. For example, in 1988, Christine Cheyne was granted \$30,000 by the Commission for Justice, Peace and Development to investigate sexism in the Catholic Church. Christine and Allanah Ryan provided public commentary on the Commission of Inquiry into Pornography. In the same period (late 1980s), the number of students undertaking postgraduate theses increased and students such as Peter Chrisp, Andrew Needs, Hugh Oliver, Peter Mataira, Allanah Ryan, Christine Cheyne and Brennon Wood produced a range of studies that contributed interesting insights on New Zealand.

This period also saw an interest in extending the reach of sociology. One particular activity included the teaching of sociology in secondary schools and an effort was made, with the help of very committed secondary school teachers such as Larry Dixon at Otumoetai College, to develop the interest in sociology. This made particular sense at Massey because of the experience with teaching sociology by distance. There was a very enthusiastic group of teachers who were prepared to work with the Department of Sociology (ranging from the depths of rural Southland to

main centre schools in Auckland and Christchurch), and several meetings were held to explore options. It was not easy because the Ministry of Education was less than enthusiastic and it was to be quite some time before a sociology curriculum (in the form of unit standards which were subsequently developed in 2013 with a number of those originally involved such as Ruth McManus and Spoonley). These challenges – and the Massey commitment – are outlined in an article in *New Zealand Sociology* written by Steve Maharey (1989). He argued in favour of holding courses for secondary school teachers of sociology in the central North Island. However, his move into Parliament in the 1990 election saw this initiative abandoned.

In the 1980s, a development that generated a separate source of income and experience for staff in the Department involved using block mode face-to-face teaching to provide bespoke courses on key features of New Zealand society for the Senior Inspectors Qualifying Course at the Police College in Porirua. It was a credit to the staff that the teaching and learning environment was positive and created mutually beneficial discussions with police officers who were then directly involved in seeking to manage protestors against the 1981 Springbok Tour.

These 1980s developments occurred under the continued leadership of Graeme Fraser who by the late 1980s combined his role as head of sociology with that of Assistant Vice-Chancellor as well Acting Dean of the School of Mathematics and Information Studies. By 1989, the Department of Sociology had 13 academic staff and was teaching 21 undergraduate courses. The two introductory courses – *Introductory Sociology* and *New Zealand Society* – had 800 and 500 students enrolled in them. The graduate student numbers had also grown (12 in 1989) and the Department was significantly involved with (and hosted) both *New Zealand Sociology* and *Sites* (the latter in conjunction with anthropology). The interest in establishing *New Zealand Sociology* and *Sites* reflected several imperatives: to provide a local option for New Zealand material, empirical or conceptual; a sense that there was something that represented a New Zealand sociological project that needed outlets and forums to give it shape; taking an overseas project – Cultural Studies at Birmingham – and giving it a local form as was the case with *Sites*; and providing a degree of leadership in the sociological community in New Zealand. As Chris Wilkes (2014) notes, the original idea for *New Zealand Sociology* came from Dick Harker (Education) in 1985 and with Graeme Fraser's support, the first two issues appeared in 1986. Chris notes that there was opposition: these were relatively

young sociologists and it was argued that the journal should be either run by the Sociological Association or by more senior members of the sociological community. Contributions were sought from other sociology departments. However, there was a strong Massey presence. Dick Harker and Chris Wilkes were the initial editors of *New Zealand Sociology* (Wilkes, 2014) with Nicola Armstrong, Graeme Fraser, Cheleen Mahar, Mike O'Brien, Roy Shuker and Paul Spoonley making up the editorial board. Massey sociologists provided the editors of *New Zealand Sociology* from 1986 through to 2000. Dick Harker and Chris Wilkes were followed by Paul Spoonley and Roy Shuker, then Greg McLennan and finally Mary Murray and Brian Ponter.

The foundation of the department in the 1970s reflected the dominance of a sociology that derived from the USA and the UK, and the way in which the discipline was taught reflected this northern hemisphere orientation. Few New Zealand issues were directly explored, there was little New Zealand-focused material to teach with and the country was understood through the lens that were shaped by an Anglo-American approach. The turning point came with the arrival of more New Zealanders but it was also a reflection of an increase in graduate students, a larger department and external events. Critical to these developments was a long weekend retreat at Apiti Lodge near Palmerston North which was convened for the purpose of planning future developments for the Department. All staff, a number of colleagues from other departments and senior students were involved. There was a growing awareness of the importance of sociology of a small society – Aotearoa – and this became a more explicit focus from that point. New Zealand was changing rapidly. W.H. (Bill) Oliver from History acted as a facilitator and guest speaker. History and sociology shared a floor in the Social Sciences Tower in the 1980s and Bill was interested in the way in which New Zealand had – and was – changing especially in terms of the recalibration of relations between Maori and Pakeha or Maori and the state. In his gentle and reflective style, he wondered why sociology and sociologists were also not more interested in such matters. This was underscored by the emergence of books that began to explore New Zealand social dynamics and institutions in more direct ways. Andrew Trlin was an early and important contributor. But it was as much external political events that prompted a shift. As with many other dimensions of New Zealand society, the dissention surrounding the 1981 Springbok rugby tour, or the growing assertiveness of Maori politics,

demanded a response from local sociologists. The politics of a Muldoon government and then the equally perplexing politics of the subsequent Lange government in the mid and late 1980s were transformative for New Zealand society and the orientation of New Zealand sociology in equal measure. If nothing, it prompted Massey sociologists, along with colleagues in anthropology and education, to establish the Cultural Studies Working Group and *Sites* to provide a more nuanced and critical sociology of Aotearoa.

This was evidenced by a steady flow of material. Chris Wilkes adopted a neo-Marxist approach in the analysis of class and the contemporary welfare state; Victoria Grace was publishing from her PhD and had introduced a course on the sociology of health; Allanah Ryan completed research on Aids and sex and was undertaking work for the New Zealand Aids Foundation; Paul Spoonley was publishing a series of books on ethnic politics with David Pearson and Cluny Macpherson and he received one of the first Foundation for Research, Science and Technology grants (to work with Taiwhenua o Heretanga on Maori social and economic development). In the 1990s, a new generation of graduate students were undertaking research on femocrats, gender and class, and land reforestation in the Solomon Islands.

There were also departures. Kay Saville-Smith left in 1988 to become part of Fran Wilde's staff and following that, to establish CRESA in 1994. Bev James left at the end of Term II in the same year. Steve Maharey contested the Palmerston North seat for Labour in the 1990 General Election and then left to enter Parliament as an MP. (It was a little confusing as his name remained in the Massey University calendar for another 6 years.) Chris Wilkes left for the USA in 1992. There were new arrivals as well. Allanah Ryan, Nicola Armstrong and Victoria Grace all arrived in 1989-1990 although Victoria left in 1993 to take up a position at the University of Canterbury. In 1991, Graeme Fraser became full-time Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and left the Department of Sociology.

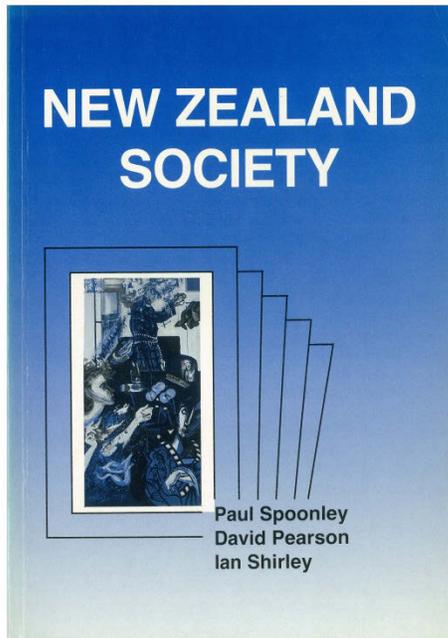
A New Zealand Sociology

The arrival of a number of New Zealanders and the ambition to provide a New Zealand focus and content to the teaching of sociology led to a rewrite of courses and new papers through the 1980s. The core 100 level papers – *Introduction to Sociology* and *New Zealand Society* underwent a major re-orientation, the first led

by Steve Maharey and the latter by Paul Spoonley. The writing of extramural study guides helped develop material that was to be provided to internal students and which scoured publications for relevant New Zealand research and writing.

The 1980s saw a re-orientation of many of the sociology papers towards New Zealand material and examples. The core theory and research papers were still focused on European and North American theorists and heavily reliant on overseas research commentaries and methodologies but the first year papers and many of the electives now had a New Zealand focus. And the gaps in relation to research were being plugged. This was underscored by the emergence of texts.

The first of many sociology texts appeared in 1981, edited by Paul Spoonley, David Pearson and Ian Shirley. It was designed for the first year course, *New Zealand Society*, and reflected the institutional approach of the time (Population, Family, Education, Religion, etc.). The book was published by Dunmore Press. (John Dunmore was Dean of the Humanities Faculty and with his daughter Pat Chapman, established what was effectively a Massey University press in an old house on Napier Road in Palmerston North). The contributors were drawn from other New Zealand departments (the publishers, Dunmore Press, were keen to get sales). There were instructions not only to provide relevant conceptual frameworks but to provide empirical material on New Zealand and to say something about policy implications. Of the sixteen contributors, three continue to remain as practising academics. The book received about a dozen reviews in newspapers, and they ranged from the critical (*Dunedin Weekender*, 7 March 1982, titled “Marxist Sociology” with a dismissive assessment: “the book is a poor advertisement for sociology and is not to be recommended for the general reader”) to the positive (“Pertinent scrutiny of NZ society”, *NZ Herald*, 8 May 1982). The book went through three editions and sold more than 12,000 copies.



Other books followed. Steve Maharey and Paul Spoonley convinced Anne French at Oxford University Press to publish a series of short books on various aspects of New Zealand society. They edited the series and books included: *Racism and Ethnicity* by Spoonley in 1988; *Gender, Culture and Power* by Bev James and Kay Saville-Smith in 1989; *Social Policy* by Pat Shannon in 1991, *Crime and Deviance* by Greg Newbold in 1992 and *Green Politics* by Stephen Rainbow in 1993. A key audience for these books were distance or extramural students. The Department of Sociology continued to attract significant numbers of students through the early 1990s, especially what were then called extramural students. Ann Dupuis, who was involved with these students, remembers “bags of 100 plus assignments regularly arriving for marking”.

While there were many outstanding graduate students over the years, the 1980s produced a particularly interesting cohort who contributed to the New Zealand activities and focus of the Department. Allanah Ryan was one of those that arrived from Taranaki in the 1980s. (Other Massey staff from the same region and who studied in the same decade include Christine Cheyne and Richard Shaw). She completed a BA in Education and was influenced by lecturers such as Roy Nash, Roy Shuker and Richard Archer. But most of her electives were in sociology and she was part of a cohesive and active cohort who were interested in a critical sociology and were politically active. Allanah then did her Masters and along with

others provided some innovative and insightful studies to the Massey and New Zealand canon. Richard Shaw was enrolled in the BSW but his “ahah” moment came from the sociology courses that were then a central part of the BSW programme. As he notes: “... the atmosphere was absolutely charged [Springbok Rugby Tour, Maori renaissance] and the sociology courses were the most intellectually satisfying ones I did”. They gave him a language to “make sense of things” with theory as a set of intellectual tools “to unravel [a] surface reality”. In 2011, many of these graduates had a reunion on the Palmerston North campus. Apart from those who went on to become Massey staff (Allanah Ryan, Brennon Wood, Christine Cheyne, Jackie Sanders), other graduates included senior public servants (Hugh Oliver, Arron Baker) while Peter Chrisp now heads the Ministry of Trade and Enterprise and Andrew Needs has had MFAT postings, including as High Commissioner to Canada.



A reunion of staff and graduate students, Wharerata, Massey University, December 2011
Back row, from left: Hugh Oliver, Craig Johnston, Peter Chrisp, Jackie Sanders, Christine Cheyne, Lynley Cvitanovich, Judy Owen, Piet de Jong, Arron Baker, Andrew Needs and Andrew Boyle.
Front row: Paul Spoonley, Allanah Ryan, Graeme Fraser, Steve Maharey, Liz Ponter and Brian Ponter.

The topics researched varied. They included Peter Chrisp (on the use of Erik Olin Wright in studying New Zealand’s class system), Hugh Oliver (the Labour Party and the rise of Rogernomics), Christine Cheyne (the politics of art making),

Piet de Jong (rugby and rugby culture in Taranaki), Lynley Cvitanovich (protest in feminist fiction), Andrew Needs (New Zealand aid and Tonga) and Aaron Baker who all completed research for their masters.

These ex-students, many of whom provided details for this article, talked about the energy and excitement of the Department of Sociology in the 1980s, especially given the events that dominated New Zealand in the period – the Springbok Rugby Tour, the Maori renaissance, Rogernomics. As Brennon Wood commented, “I recalled a vibrant and growing department, highly responsive to the sea changes going on around it”. Christine Cheyne noted that she “intended to major in French but I loved the dynamism and connectedness of sociology as a discipline... [the staff] were passionate about their discipline and students and connected me to the French founding fathers, Italian and German theorists and, importantly, to New Zealand society and politics”. Christine, like many of the other students from this period, was attracted by the enthusiasm and approachability of staff, the theoretical and analytical tools for understanding New Zealand, and compelling material provided on ethnic and race relations (Paul Spoonley), family, marriage and gender (Bev James), state and cultural studies (Steve Maharey, Chris Wilkes), and the sociology of art and literature (Shelagh Cox and Peter Beatson). And then there was the interest in social policy debates and the involvement in policy development. It demonstrated the real world contribution of sociology to these students.

Sociological Association of Aotearoa (NZ)

By the late 1980s, a group of Massey sociologists decided to push for a New Zealand organisation for sociologists. At the time, the organisation was part of a combined Australian and New Zealand organisation, the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand (SAANZ). One of the Vice-Presidents was a New Zealander but the Massey group felt that it was time for there to be a separate organisation. When Paul Spoonley was voted Vice-President of SAANZ in 1986, he was joined by Merv Hancock, Shelagh Cox and Christine Cheyne to help organise a campaign to establish a new organisation. This group travelled to both Australia and around New Zealand to argue the case.

In Australia, Spoonley found that many were indifferent or they suddenly discovered a new interest in keeping a combined organisation (why did New Zealanders want to break away?). At one executive meeting (Macquarie University,

1987), things got quite heated with many voicing either concern or anger at the temerity of those New Zealanders who wanted their own organisation. The meeting was saved by Robert Connell, who was then President of SAANZ and who voiced support for a separate organisation. As he commented, decolonisation was a perfectly understandable process that sociologists, or anyone, should understand.

In New Zealand, there were very mixed reactions to the suggestion. The most obvious opposition to the establishment of a local organisation was voiced in meetings in Auckland and Christchurch – although there was also support. Even though there was a much more obvious local voice in sociological teaching and research, there was opposition on the grounds that there was insufficient critical mass in New Zealand; that sociology would always be derivative to a greater or lesser degree; and that New Zealanders gained more than they would lose from an ongoing association with their Australian colleagues.

The Massey group continued to lobby and they received sufficient support to establish the Sociological Association of Aotearoa (NZ). The 1986 New Zealand AGM gave the nascent executive group a mandate to establish a fully constituted local sociological association. At the 1987 AGM, a vote was taken to confirm this decision (Ed Kick, University of Utah, was asked to be the scrutineer – it was taken seriously). The Sociological Association of Aotearoa/New Zealand was established. At the second meeting of SAA in August 1988, there were 89 signed up members. They had written a constitution and provided an initial draft a code of ethics (the latter was led by Pat Day and was passed at the 1989 SAA AGM). When Spoonley announced the formation of the organisation at the AGM of SAANZ in 1987, most Australians had accepted the inevitable although there were some consternation that SAA could not be used as an acronym on the other side of the Tasman.

Once established, Massey played a key role in the early years of SAA(NZ) with Paul Spoonley as President (1989-1993), aided by Christine Cheyne as Deputy, while Greg McLennan took over the President's role in 1994 for a year, to be followed by Merv Hancock in 1995. They were busy years as a code of ethics was prepared and then implemented, discussions were held about the nature of the relationship between SAA(NZ) and *New Zealand Sociology* and conferences organised as a key meeting point for the new organisation. There was also another organisation in the wind.

There had been ongoing frustration with the Royal Society of New Zealand and its failure to engage with social scientists. (Some social science disciplines such as psychology or archaeology were involved and recognised). In the early 1990s, and as one of the new initiatives of SAA(NZ), a meeting was held in Wellington to consider how best to lobby the Royal Society. The outcome was the establishment of the Federation of New Zealand Social Science organisations – or FoNZSSO. Paul Spoonley became its first President while Judith Davey and Jenny Neale were the Vice-Presidents. Most social science disciplinary organisations became committed to FoNZSSO, including the psychologists. (The Royal Society had some rather unusual ways of defining what was acceptable – or not – in terms of science and for a discipline that included a significant number of clinicians, this was problematic for the psychologists). FoNZSSO met regularly with the Royal Society, most often its administrator, and sought to make the case for recognition and more extensive involvement of the social scientists. For many of those involved with FoNZSSO, the Royal Society appeared (and was) arcane and conservative in terms of how science was to be defined and represented to the public and government. However, some key administrative changes to the Royal Society plus a reforming Minister (Simon Upton) saw the social sciences included. Almost two decades on, the social sciences are now extensively involved in the Royal Society with a President (Richard Bedford) from the social sciences, a Deputy Chair representing social sciences (most recently Richard Le Heron), a number social scientists – including those from sociology – appointed as Fellows, projects that involve the social scientists more obviously (see Te Pae Tawhiti, 2014) and considerably more acceptance that disciplines like sociology should be considered as part of the science community. More remains to be done but FoNZSSO helped ensure that a sociological voice was heard in the inevitable discussions that occur between governments and the Royal Society.

Albany and Wellington

In 1993, Massey University opened a campus in Albany on Auckland's North Shore. Initially, teaching was carried out by an appointee from the University of Auckland but issues emerged and Spoonley took over mid-semester on a fly-in, fly-out basis. Ann Dupuis who had been first appointed as a Christchurch-based Regional Tutor and Sessional Assistant for the Department of Sociology in 1991 (she took over from

Bob Calkin) was appointed as a Lecturer in July 1993 to teach sociology and she was joined in January 1994 by Spoonley. The sociology programme initially provided support for the social work programme but gradually expanded to offer a major in sociology as part of the BA. Ann and Paul were joined by Carl Davidson to teach methods papers. By the end of the decade, 2.5 staff were teaching a reasonably full range of papers with some notable students (National MP and Minister Paula Bennett being one of them). Carl left to form a private research consultancy, most recently *Research First* and was by now based in Christchurch. Warwick Tie joined in 1997 and brought a strong theoretical focus and an interest in utopianism. In 2004, Cluny Macpherson was appointed to a Professorial position and retired in 2014. The most recent appointment (2014) to the sociology staff at Albany has been Fiva Fa'alau.

Massey University took over the Wellington Polytechnic in 1999. The staffing included sociologists, notably Lesley Patterson, and for the first decade, sociology was taught as both part of the BA programme and nursing. But the decision was taken to discontinue the BA and other programmes (midwifery). Sociology was no longer part of what was offered at Wellington – and there are no longer any sociology staff located on the campus.

Consolidation and Expansion

When the inaugural Head of Department, Graeme Fraser, left the Department of Sociology in 1991, he was replaced by Gregor McLellan. Prior to his departure, Fraser appointed Brennon Wood. Brennon had been an undergraduate and then a graduate student in sociology at Massey University and won both a prestigious Knox Fellowship and a Fulbright Study Award which enabled him to study overseas. He was to spend time in both London and Boston, eventually receiving a PhD from Harvard in 1991. He was appointed to the department in 1991. He was a major contributor to the popular media studies programme and to the teaching of sociological theory. Nicola Armstrong was on a short-term contract at the University of Waikato and was approached to see if she was interested in a position at Massey. She was – and joined the department as an active contributor to feminist theory, women's paid and unpaid work as a Lecturer and the co-ordinator of the Women's Studies Diploma in 1990. She was then appointed to a position at the University of Canterbury in 1998. Allannah Ryan joined the department in 1989 after

having come through the ranks as a student and as a tutor. She completed her PhD in 1997 and contributed to the department's focus on sexuality and health. As with others, there was an interest in producing texts that ensured that applied disciplines (in one case nursing) were exposed to sociological concepts and insights. She co-wrote, with another Massey sociologist, Lesley Patterson, and Jenny Carryer a book on sociology for nursing and midwifery students (Ryan, Carryer and Patterson, 2003). After his arrival, Greg was to change the emphasis of the department. He brought a critical and theoretical approach and contributed a very different feel to Massey sociology. He was well established and recognised for his theoretical contributions to British – and global – debates about a contemporary relevant sociology. He was – and is – a compelling writer and lecturer who encouraged Massey staff and students to engage with the traditions and possibilities of sociology while remaining sensitive to New Zealand considerations and politics (see McLennan, 1999). He continued to contribute widely read articles and books on international debates as well as local publications. He is one of the most influential and internationally recognised sociologists to have plied his trade in New Zealand. He had challenges. He was keen to see Massey contributing to a New Zealand sociology as collective enterprise but there was less enthusiasm for working with others amongst some staff, and despite his leadership and encouragement, Massey sociology became rather more fragmented.

Greg McLennan returned to the University of Bristol in 1998 and this was to coincide with a period of rationalisation and retrenchment. Organisationally, sociology became part of a large School (People, Environment and Planning) in mid-2007 and is now part of the GASP disciplines (geography, anthropology, sociology, politics). Allanah Ryan took over from Henry Barnard (anthropologist) as the Head of School. But there were also job losses as the numbers enrolled in sociology tracked downwards. Staff numbers decreased on the Wellington campus so that it is no longer taught there (although others such as Robin Peace certainly keep sociology alive in some form) and positions were lost on the Palmerston North campus. There were new appointments at Albany, notably Cluny Macpherson and then Fiva Fa'alau in 2014. At Palmerston North, the last decade has seen a few appointments. Corrina Tucker was appointed in 2011 and since then Peter Howland, and Vicky Walters have joined her. The discipline at Massey continues as a key part of the teaching programme but it is much smaller than its heyday in the 1980s and 1990s. It was still

the same size as the other large sociology department at the University of Auckland in 2005 (see Crothers, 2014) but has since declined in staff numbers and now is much the same size as Canterbury and VUW as part of a second tier behind Auckland. This enumeration, of course, omits to include those who have a role at Massey despite being semi-retired (Fraser) or who are in senior administrative positions (Ryan, Maharey, Spoonley). Others continue to contribute to Massey sociology but from other administrative centres (such as Brennon Wood who is now in the College of Sciences) or as part of research projects. CaDDANZ, the MBIE-funded programme on diversity (2014-2020, \$5.5 million) employs Jessica Terruhn and Ben Soltani, both of whom are active contributors to sociology in Aotearoa.

Massey University sociology now operates as a more dispersed set of activities with key participants continuing their sociology in orthodox teaching/research roles alongside those who have leadership and managerial roles plus those who are part of soft-funded research activities. Sociology no longer manages or houses key publications such as *New Zealand Sociology* but Massey sociologists continue to be active players in major research projects and organisations such as the Royal Society of New Zealand. Steve Maharey is Deputy Chair of the Asia New Zealand Foundation Board, Paul Spoonley is the Chair of the Social Science and Other Cultural Studies Panel for the TEC's PBRF 2018 round and Graeme Fraser has been New Zealand's representative on the Board of the Human Frontier of Science Programme in Strasbourg since 2008.

Location

In 1973, the Social Sciences Tower was opened and the new Department of Sociology was one of the first occupants. The tower is reminiscent of the 1970s Ministry of Works design with rather awkward spaces and a lot of exposed concrete. The upside was that the nascent social sciences were co-located so that connections with anthropologists or geographers could continue. One of the most significant connections was made with Education who were also in the same building and through the 1980s and into the 1990s, various projects were carried out with Dick Harker, Roy Nash, Roy Shuker and John Codd. For example, Chris Wilkes and Dick Harker not only began *New Zealand Sociology* but they carried out (together with Cheleen Mahar) a major project on and with Pierre Bourdieu.

In the late 1970s, room was proving to be scarce and so new appointments such as Beatson, Spoonley, O'Brien and Prasad were initially located in another building (Bernard Chambers). Space rationalisation in 1980 allowed all members of the department to be located together and until the late 1990s, Level 5 of the Social Sciences Tower became the location of sociology at Massey University. While organisational changes mean that there is no longer a separate department, sociology as part of the School of People, Environment and Planning remains a tenant of the Social Science Tower.

Challenges (#2)

Enhancing the profile of sociology within the university and beyond in the wider society was – and still is – the challenge. This was the case at Massey University where the seemingly inexorable process of restructuring, especially post-2000, resulted in large interdisciplinary academic entities such as the School of People, Environment and Planning. Clearly, the focus and theoretical framework and methodology to be used for research continue to be a matter of choice - inductive, deductive, quantitative, qualitative.

The particular requirements of PBRF arguably foster research outcomes that are intradisciplinary and benefit the individual researcher. But in a complex and changing global environment, interdisciplinarity and team-based research would appear to be a more fruitful model for generating foresight and insight. It would be encouraging to see the pursuit of research outputs which make a discernible difference to the well-being of, say, – at-risk collectivities in New Zealand or to the country as a whole.

While there was no equivalent to PBRF in the last three decades of the 20th century, research was an important expectation and a key requirement for significant promotion to positions such as Senior Lecturer or Reader/Associate Professor. While teaching and research were said to be of equal importance in gaining promotion, the more easily assessed outputs of research were prioritised. Such an environment, coupled with the significant task of preparing study guides and teaching extramural (distance) courses in the May and August school holidays, was not conducive to engaging in scholarship, let alone undertaking research, particularly in the social sciences and the humanities. Regrettably, and despite the subsequent

implementation of a portfolio approach to applications for promotion which presumed the parity of teaching and research, the latter still seems to prevail.

Sociology at Massey University: An Assessment

If there was a golden period in the discipline's history at Massey University, it was probably from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s when it was either the largest or equal largest department in New Zealand and the activities of departmental members had a major influence on New Zealand sociology – publications, public profile, organisational structure and disciplinary representation. Massey's teaching and research strengths were most obvious in areas such as gender and sexuality, class and the critique of neo-liberalism, racism and ethnicity, and public policy. Kevin Dew's (2014) review of the sociology of health indicates that there have been some Massey contributors (Fraser, Ryan, Grace), but this area of sociology has not been a particularly consistent or prominent part of Massey's teaching and research. Andrew Trlin provided a contribution to the teaching of demography but – like other departments – it was essentially confined to an individual. Sociological methods have gone through various periods, from part of the requirements for a major in the 1980s with more or less equal emphasis on quantitative and qualitative approaches through to being more embedded in other courses (and therefore diluted) by the 2000s – and much less exposure to quantitative approaches and methods.

Massey, both through its graduates and as a result of staff movements, has contributed significantly to other universities. The list includes (although is not confined to): Chamsy el Ojeili (Victoria University of Wellington), Louise Humpage, Avril Bell, and Allen Bartley (Auckland); Martin Tolich (Otago); Ruth McManus, Nicola Armstrong and Victoria Grace (Canterbury).

The department has contributed to the upskilling of sociologists in both the tertiary sector and elsewhere, and was the initiator and then host for the BRCSS (Building Research Capability in the Social Sciences). This initiative, which was a project of the then Minister of Tertiary Education, Steve Maharey, received \$8 million in funding and was designed to help promote the skills and contribution of social scientists across the tertiary sector. Particular foci were Maori, Pasifika and New Migrants research development, ensuring that graduates had both quantitative and qualitative research skills and encouraging early and mid-career researchers. BRCSS received further funding from TEC and this continues organisationally as

eSocSci, still hosted by Massey's College of Humanities and Social Sciences and run by Robin Peace.

Despite the history of sociology at Massey, and the numbers of staff, there are some anomalies. For example, there have been relatively few Professors: Graeme Fraser, Greg McLennan, Paul Spoonley and Cluny Macpherson. Indeed, the position of a professorial head of department lapsed with the departure of Gregor McLennan.

In discussing the role of sociology at Massey – and New Zealand – Steve Maharey posed some questions that might well provide an agenda for contemporary sociology:

- If sociology is to have an impact on both understanding society and societal change, then what constitutes public sociology in a much more globalised world?
- Drawing on the sociological imagination, how should we understand – and imagine – who we are as individuals and communities?

Speaking as those who remain committed to a public sociology that has something to say to a range of audiences about contemporary Aotearoa, we (the authors) are frustrated that sociology broadly and to some extent at Massey sociology often lacks a public voice in many of the “wicked problems” of our society. The discipline fragmented in the 1980s and 1990s as a range of sub-fields were born out of sociology – media studies, social policy, women's studies, police studies – but as these have either downsized (or disappeared) – or migrated to other disciplinary homes – there has not yet been a return to a collective enterprise that provides helpful and/or critical interventions in public debate, certainly not to the degree that such an enterprise operated at Massey in the 1980s.

Conclusion

Massey University sociology has gone through distinct phases, from the initial set-up phase in the 1970s through to a much more deliberate and critical focus on New Zealand society in the 1980s, and then a period of consolidation from the 1990s. In the last two decades, the discipline at Massey has lost some of its focus and public voice. This is partly because there have been no unifying research programmes or public projects such as running *New Zealand Sociology*. The sociology staff are now

part of a large school (People, Environment and Planning) which is spread over the Auckland and Manawatu sites. And as Brennon Wood notes, the 1970s and 1980s saw sociology engaged with humanities disciplines to explore hybrid-terrains like cultural studies. The challenge is now to develop an applied orientation that reaches out to the natural sciences but which needs to have “a more robust sense of the distinctiveness of its own intellectual contribution”. Christine Cheyne adds that there remains the ongoing challenge of providing a meaningful understanding of fundamental change in New Zealand and globally that questions common-sense understandings and develops critical approaches from an explicit set of values.

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Distinguished Professor Paul Spoonley has been at Massey University since 1979 and is currently the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. In 2009, he was awarded the Royal Society's Science and Technology Medal for academic scholarship, leadership and public contribution to cultural understanding and subsequently, he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society. In 2010, he was awarded a Fulbright Senior Scholar Award to the University of California Berkeley and in 2011, he was awarded the SAA(NZ) scholarship for exceptional service to New Zealand sociology. In 2013, he was made a Senior Visiting Scholar at the Max Planck Institute for Religious and Ethnic Diversity. He is the author or editor of 28 books.

Professor Emeritus Graeme Fraser was appointed as the Foundation Chair of Sociology at Massey University in November 1970 where he subsequently served as Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic); Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Acting Vice-Chancellor until 2003. He has held a number of government appointments including the Medical Research Council, the Board of Health and the National Research Advisory Council. He has chaired the Health Research Council, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and was a Tertiary Education Commissioner. He is currently New Zealand's representative on the Human Frontier Science Programme in Strasbourg and continues to supervise research at masters and doctoral level. He is a life member of SAA(NZ) and was awarded a CNZM in 2006.

Hon Steve Maharey is Massey University's Vice Chancellor. Hon Steve Maharey has been the Vice-Chancellor of Massey University since 2008. Prior to that he was the Member of Parliament for Palmerston North from 1990-2008 and a Senior Cabinet Minister from 1999-2008. Earlier in his career he was a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and a Junior Lecturer in Business Administration. He has been an elected Palmerston North City Councillor. He serves on a wide range of boards. He is a Director of Massey Global Ltd. He is a Patron of Australasian Tertiary Education Managers Association, Central Football and the Manawatu Squash Association. He was appointed a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM) in 2008. He has contributed to eleven books and is a very frequent contributor to all forms of media.