

This research will be of interest to:

- **Sociologists**
- **Academics working in the social sciences and humanities**
- **Journalists**

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1. sociologists
2. claims and realities of their work

This is a study of the self-understanding of sociologists in the UK. This project engages with the claims sociologists are making about their activities and the aims and task of the discipline in comparison to the realities of their sociological activities. This involves an investigation of questions such as how sociologists relate to the discipline, how they see themselves in their sociological activities, what place sociology takes for them in their wider lives, and how they relate to politics and public(s).

## Research Methods

- **Literature review**
- **Qualitative interviews with 30 sociologists in sociology departments across England, covering various features such as age, gender, ethnicity, position, research interests and type of university.**

My work is informed by social theorists and researchers that stand for critique as a tool of theory and praxis, reflexivity, and intellectual open-mindedness. I thereby employ the writings of e.g. Alvin Gouldner, Karl Mannheim, Liz Stanley.

## Preliminary insights from my fieldwork:

- **Tension between the claims sociologists are making about their work and the realities they are producing and living in.**
- **Sociology as a way of intellectualising personal background, experience and political and historical events.**
- **Motivation to become a sociologist nurtured by the will to contribute to “change”, “critique” and “the analysis of social problems”.**
- **Moments of frustration – some experience sociological theory and the discipline as well as the university as reflections and perpetuations of inequalities in the outside world (e.g. gender, class, ethnicity)**
- **Consequences – Some sociologists distance themselves from mainstream sociology and feel more affiliated to other bodies of knowledge or try to produce alternative accounts within sociology (rewriting social theory, engendering sociology).**
- **Reassessing one’s claims as a sociologist in the light of restructuring processes in HE, emphasis on research and publishing for a non-existing audience**
- **Many experience students as the first and only public –; teaching as the last realm where sociologists feel to have an impact with their work despite teaching being devalued.**