

# Preface

Sociology has long had the potential to have a transformative impact on the way we learn about the world around us. As a Lecturer in Sociology, I have had the pleasure in seeing many social science students 'grow' intellectually as they become more actively engaged with studying, understanding and motivated to change the society in which they live.

Undergraduate students here at Leeds Metropolitan University have the potential to be more than simply the 'consumers' of a higher educational product. Indeed, what the academic staff in the Social Science group are committed to, is providing genuine, exciting opportunities for students to be the 'producers' of new knowledge. We want the students we work with to be active, motivated individuals who are able to employ their own 'sociological' imagination in examining the social problems and challenges that surround them.

This series of papers was produced by students here at Leeds Metropolitan University. My reading of them reveals a sophisticated and intellectual curiosity where students are asking, and then answering, important questions about contemporary human society. These papers observe the world around them in a critical and analytical way and apply theoretical frameworks that help us all understand different sets of social problems and issues. The papers demonstrated a level of insight that was so impressive to the academic staff that teach these students, they wanted to find a way of sharing this writing more widely.

I hope that this will be the first in a series of such publications where we showcase what our students have created.

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**For more information on the BA (Hons) Sociology at Leeds Beckett University please see:**

**<http://courses.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/sociology>**

**Pictures on front cover:**

Circuit board: <http://www.sxc.hu/photo/219501>

Shipbreaking: <http://bookiemonster.co.nz/2010/09/ship-breaker-paulo-bacigalupi/ship-breaking-yard/>

**Workers: *Manufactured Landscapes*** is a 2006 feature length documentary film about the work of photographer Ed Burtynsky. It was directed by Jennifer Baichwal and is distributed by Zeitgeist Films