## Institution: SOAS University of London

### Unit of Assessment: Anthropology

#### 1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

#### 1.1 Context/Overview

The SOAS Anthropology Department (matching the UoA) is at the heart of national and international knowledge networks, both anthropological and regional. We produce cutting-edge research, actively building partnerships across disciplines and with other stakeholders (including international development organisations, health practitioners, parliamentarians, artists, curators, filmmakers). Our research has long-lasting impact, particularly addressing inequality, injustice and human vulnerability.

Feedback from the REF2014 subpanel indicated need for clearer linkage between the Department's overall research strategy and institutional support. During the assessed period, we prioritised documenting and strengthening this link. Here we outline how the Department's research is structured and supported, before reviewing research objectives from REF2014 and future plans, and our approach to achieving impact, interdisciplinarity, open access and the highest research integrity and ethics.

#### 1.2 Structure

On 31 July 2020, the Unit of Assessment (UoA) comprised 18.1 FTE staff (16 full-time permanent, one fixed-term, two part-time research). The department is small enough to work as a single cohesive research unit with overlapping thematic clusters: the anthropology of state processes (Allen, Axelby, Crewe, Simpson); forms of peaceable sociality, religion and arts (Fardon, Janson, Retsikas, vom Bruck); mobility/migration (Basu, Leite, Osella, Salih); food (Dolan, Hull, Klein); and (recently) mental health (Behrouzan, Gygi, Mosse) (see §1.2.2). Intersecting inequalities created by gender, race, caste and class weave through all these themes.

The UoA is tightly integrated with other departments within SOAS as a small arts, humanities and social sciences university specialising in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. We are firmly aligned to SOAS's mission, strategy, value commitments (justice, diversity, equality, inclusion, decolonising knowledge) and key research themes (see IES§1). We benefit from close-to-hand institution-level support set out in SOAS's IES, and our innovation is supported by a research environment uniquely conducive to bridging the social sciences and creative arts.

Our linguistic and regional expertise is strongly supported by SOAS's specialist research environment, particularly cross-membership with its Regional Centres and Institutes (e.g., South Asia Institute, China Institute, and Centre of African Studies, IES§1). These fund and offer platforms to amplify anthropological research, including that of our PhD researchers and PGT students. Our research, public engagement and impact are also supported by cross-disciplinary Research Centres to which anthropologists contribute as active members (e.g., Centres for Water and Development; World Christianity; Japanese Religions; Creative Industries, Media and Screen Studies; Global Media and Communications), especially the **Centre for Migration & Diaspora Studies** (chair, Salih) and **Food Studies Centre** (co-chairs, Klein and Hull), run from the Department. Each Centre runs its own outward-facing research seminars and events with UoA anthropologists taking leading roles.

Our research also involves collaboration through external networks such as the London International Development Centre and through work with the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI), including co-hosting such key events as the SOAS/RAI/British Museum/British Academy conference 'Anthropology and Geography: Dialogues Past, Present and Future' (online, September 2020).



Since 2015, we have enhanced the function of the Department Research Committee whose membership includes Research Director, HoD, Director of Doctoral Studies and PGR representatives. It is tasked with developing a research and impact strategy, reviewed annually at a departmental away day. The Research Committee holds an overview of ongoing and planned research activity; holds seminars/workshops for project development; peer reviews grant applications and research outputs; reviews plans and outcomes of (now-enhanced) research leave; and oversees recruitment and support of research students and postdocs. It implements SOAS's research mentoring scheme for ECRs and established staff (IES§3.3), alongside annual Staff Development Reviews (§2).

The Research Committee coordinates with SOAS-level research policies and support structures, significantly upgraded since REF2014. Integrated through the Worktribe platform, these monitor the funding landscape and provide tailored guidance for grant proposals with clear pathways to impact, ensuring high-standard data management, protection and ethical scrutiny (IES§2, IES§4.1). With this support and internal 'Seedcorn' and 'Engagement and Impact' funding, we have increased our capacity to produce high-quality, high-impact, grant-funded research which has grown in volume and value in the assessment period (§3.1).

## 1.3 Research strategy

## 1.3.1 Goals

Overall goals set out in REF2014 were:

- to produce leading-edge anthropological research based on outstanding regional expertise and language skills that also advances cross-disciplinary and impactgenerating knowledge in our specialist regions of Asia, Africa and the Middle East promoting both individual creativity and thematic integration;
- to build, sustain and support a vibrant, cohesive team of research staff and students with clear identity and purpose;
- to generate research income to foster both research and extra-academic partnerships worldwide.

We have strong evidence of achievement for each goal.

**Our research output increased significantly in the assessment period.** It included 16 monographs (twice that of REF2014, several prize-winning), 20 edited volumes and journal special issues (including landmark publications on material culture, food, tourism, corporate social responsibility and prosperity), articles in leading journals (some highlighted 'most-downloaded'), and much-visited websites and exhibitions.

Our research combined regional and thematic strength, advancing the study of South Asia through its villages and road building (Simpson), Iran through post-trauma mental health (Behrouzan), East Africa through entrepreneurship (Dolan), West Africa through religious pluralism (Janson), China through its food systems (Klein). Additionally, we undertook cross-continental ethnographic research on Islam and Judaism as globally networked religions (Osella, Retsikas, vom Bruck, Leite, Janson), and multi-institution projects linking regions and diasporas: Janson's on religious reform, faith-based development and the public sphere in sub-Saharan Africa; Mosse's on caste in India and UK; Latham's on China and Chinese migrants in Europe; Osella's on Kerala and Gulf migrants; and Crewe and Axelby's new Global Research Network on Parliaments and People.

Second, during the assessment period **a cohesive research department took shape** through interlocking thematic interests, mutual support and structured mentoring. Five new permanent full-time appointments brought exceptional talent and vitality (§2.1). They brought thematic strengths in medical/psychological anthropology (Behrouzan), museums and material culture (Basu), migration and refugees (Salih), tourism, sociality and belonging (Leite), and political institutions (Crewe). This expanded the department's existing recognised leadership in sub-fields of anthropology of development, food, migration/diaspora and medicine, and augmented regional expertise in the Middle East (Allen, Behrouzan, Salih).



Third, in the 2014-20 period the department secured £7.65m in grants (up from £2.75m in REF2014) underpinning an expanded portfolio of research, including large-scale funding from ERC, AHRC and ESRC for ambitious interdisciplinary collaborative projects on the ethnography of parliaments (Crewe), museology (Basu), road-building (Simpson) and mental healthcare (Mosse) (§3).

## 1.3.2 Delivery

Our REF2014 research plan encouraged pursuit of diverse interests while investing in thematic integration across projects, locating researchers within the Department's collaborative space.

The interdisciplinary vitality of the **Food Studies Centre** supported Klein's key sub-disciplinary collections, including *The Handbook of Food and Anthropology* and *Consumer and Consumed*. The **Centre for Migration & Diaspora Studies**' array of events widened engagement, particularly during Covid-19 lockdown and the Black Lives Matter movement with up to 400 people registering for CMDS online seminars. Our other key themes were: (1) contemporary state processes; (2) social processes of peace; and (3) mobility. Additionally, we planned (4) to diversify our modes of ethnographic representation via film, creative arts and performance.

### (1) Contemporary state processes

The assessment period saw delivery of outstanding research and a high degree of thematic integration. Several studies focused on the functioning and failure of states and legal regimes: Campbell's three monographs on a 'failing' state (in the Horn of Africa), asylum claims and the British state; Allen's study of the history of international investigative commissions in Palestine, culminating in *A History of False Hope* (Stanford 2020); and Salih's ethnography of contested Palestinian nationalism and statelessness.

Crewe's comparative anthropology of parliaments, inaugurated with *The House of Commons* (2015), led to the 'Deepening Democracy' project (AHRC-GCRF, 2017-20), supporting 44 partner research projects in Myanmar and Ethiopia, and, with Axelby, 'Ethnographies of Parliaments and People' (ERC, 2019-24), the interlinked global ethnography of six parliaments—Brazil, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, UK and USA.

Viewing the neoliberal state from its edges, Dolan undertook work in East Africa on corporations, entrepreneurs and 'bottom-of-the-pyramid capitalism,' and comparatively in *The Anthropology of Corporate Social Responsibility* (2016). Simpson investigated the development state, nation-building and international money laundering through a major 5-year project on roads and governance in South Asia ('ROADS', ERC 2015-20).

Widely cited publications from Mosse's ESRC 'Caste Out of Development' project threw light on India's Hindu nationalist and UK conservative governments' policy-ambivalence towards caste as Dalits turn to human rights and law. Vom Bruck documented Arab Spring challenges to more directly authoritarian regimes. Hull's ethnography of a South African government-run hospital viewed post-apartheid citizenship and national identity through the dilemmas of professional identity, audit cultures and care. Anthropologies of the state through food consumption and policy included Klein's work on diet and farming in China, and Hull's on supermarket expansion in southern Africa.

## (2) Social processes of peace

Here we delivered highly acclaimed projects clustering around themes of religious and secular forms of universalizing identity, interruptions in cycles of violence, and discourses of mutuality. Janson analysed emerging forms of non-conflicting interreligion and spirituality, especially 'Chrislam', in her book *Crossing Religious Boundaries* (2021). The REF period also saw the posthumous publication of Peel's major comparative study, *Christianity, Islam, and Orisa-Religion*.

Leite examined ideologies of global religio-ethnic identity and exclusion among 'the Jewish people' in her celebrated *Unorthodox Kin* (2017). Behrouzan completed her highly acclaimed



*Prozak Diaries* (2016), reframing mental-health discourse through the afterlife of war and social rupture in Iran. Dolan investigated a multinational corporation's attempts to embed 'mutuality' as a value, and Islamic economics of charity, obligatory 'gift' zakat and future redemption (in Java) were the focus of Retsikas's British Academy Fellowship and resulting monograph, *A Synthesis of Time* (2020).

# (3) Mobility

Projects brought to conclusion within this theme include Vom Bruck's study of religion on the move with the exporting of Salafism into Yemen and her biography of a woman moving through spaces of exile (*Mirrored Loss,* 2019); Osella's Research and Empirical Analysis of Labour Migration (REALM)-funded project on Gulf migration; and Leite's comparative exploration of tourism research culminating in the prize-winning *Ethnography of Tourism* (2019). Simpson's project on mobility and road building in South Asia linked thematically to his preceding village restudies, examining Indian rural transformation, and to Axelby's work on Indian labour mobility under market capitalism, reported in the pathbreaking co-authored *Ground Down by Growth* (2018). It also connected to Janson's roadway representation of the Nigerian 'Spiritual Highway' (§4.3).

Work on geographical and historical journeys of images and objects included Hughes's postcards and empire project and Basu's 'Museum Affordances: Activating West African ethnographic archives and collections through experimental museology' (AHRC 2018-20) and his web-based '[Re:]Entanglements', focusing on the recirculation of colonial archives and collections (and, adjacently, Fardon's extensive work on colonial collections and context, Mumuye figures, and Tiv encounters). The immobility of people and things was explored in Salih's study of refugees and waiting, and Gygi's ethnography of hoarding.

## (4) Diversifying modes of representation.

As planned, we worked with creative artists and performers, using exhibitions and films in research. Success was greatly enhanced by SOAS's **Brunei Gallery** (IES§4.2; below §3.2, 4.3). Basu's 'Museum Affordances' staged three exhibitions (London; Benin City; National Museum, Lagos), and his *Faces*|*Voices* was named AHRC 2019 Best Research Film of the Year. In addition, we worked with artists (e.g., Fardon with Sènga la Rouge, §4.3), through literary festivals and creative writing, media and performance. Behrouzan's novella commenting on the psychological afterlife of wars, 'Binazeer', was adapted for theatrical performance by director Mehrdad Seyf and staged as part of the EAST15 World Performance (2015). Crewe's 'Deepening Democracy' project involved giving grants worth £800k to Myanmar and Ethiopian scholars for collaboration with artists and creative industries (§4.3). UoA researchers developed effective **online platforms**, including exemplary sites for 'Parliaments and People' (Crewe) and <u>'[Re:]Entanglements</u>' (Basu).

## 1.3.3 Future strategy

The UoA will maintain our distinctive research identity, thematic clusters and support structures, while (1) developing new research Centres/clusters; (2) developing new projects that expand existing research fields; and (3) fostering new decolonising modes of engagement.

#### (1) New research clusters

Two of our existing clusters organised around Research Centres and postgraduate programmes—Anthropology of Food, and Migration and Diaspora—provide a model for two new Centres/clusters.

A **Psychological Anthropology and Mental Health cluster** will consolidate in tandem with a new MA Medical and Psychological Anthropology, new grant-funded research and widening academic, practitioner and policy-related partnerships (§4.2, §4.4), creating a hub for critical cross-cultural mental health research. Foundational to this cluster is Behrouzan's collaborative, multi-sited project, 'Beyond Trauma', making an anthropological contribution to urgent debate on mental healthcare; and Mosse's new project on NHS psychiatric care in London: 'Transformation in Mental Healthcare: An Anthropological Study of Peer-supported Open Dialogue' (ESRC,



2020-23). This collaboration with NHS mental-health services in super-diverse urban populations supports SOAS's strategic aim of better connecting with London's diasporic communities (IES§2.1) and forges sub-field linkages through the international Open Dialogue and Anthropology Network. Leite has initiated a cross cultural project on community-based sociality and psychological wellbeing in times of isolation, with SOAS seedcorn funding. Gygi will take forward work on Japan's 'hoarding disorder', broadening the 'psychological' to human/non-human relations, disposal, Buddhist recycling, animation and animism.

A **Sustainability and Global Futures cluster** brings together reframed anthropology of development work (Dolan's on corporate sustainability and alternative futures of capitalism), research and consultancy on infrastructure development and the politics of climate knowledge in South Asia (Simpson), and new exploration of the bio-values of marine commodities in Southeast Asia (Retsikas). The cluster will consolidate around a Research Centre with seminar series and research-led MA.

### (2) Expanding existing research fields

Ambitious comparative grant-funded research will be developed on the back of existing projects: Salih will conclude a project on political cultures of Palestinian refugees and turn to comparative study of home-loss and home-making among the dispossessed and displaced, supported by the Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies. Janson is designing new Africa-based projects on sports, religion and 'muscular faith' out of earlier work on Christian-Muslim entanglements in Nigeria. Allen will turn historical-anthropological attention from human rights violations (and Palestine) to comparative study of academic freedom in Israel/Palestine, Turkey, Greece, South Africa, India and the US.

The Department is taking **Covid-19 as an impetus for adventurous new projects**. The Food Studies Centre supported proposals on community responses to the Covid-19 hunger crisis in South Africa (Hull) and Chinese restaurant resilience during the pandemic (Klein). A postdoc proposal on asylum-seeker mobility and Covid-19 risk connects to Mosse's on Covid impacts on mental healthcare, now folded into his ESRC project. Behrouzan has developed an ethnography of Iran's Coronavirus crisis response, sharing ongoing work with global webinar audiences.

#### (3) Decolonising modes of engagement

Our research strategy is aligned with SOAS's Decolonisation Vision and Research Statement in its emphasis on collaboration and commitment to forge equitable research practices and relationships (IES§1, 2.1). Illustrating these commitments, Crewe and Axelby's ethnography of parliaments project supports scholars in Asia, Africa and Latin America to do their own research. Mosse's project on mental health involves practitioner and former service user co-researchers. Basu's project involves critical mapping of colonial journeys and the re-circulation of ethnographic collections (§4.3).

Expanding our ethnographic methodologies, we aim to locate our research in citizenship beyond the university, in extra-academic roles and life in the public realm, e.g., via refugee mentoring as ethnographic 'output' (Behrouzan), grassroots research training (Hull on food systems in Ethiopia and Nepal), and collaboration with networks of scholars in exile (Allen) (§4.4).

#### 1.4 Impact strategy

Details of research impact alongside user and public engagement are provided in §4.3 and §4.4. Here we focus on our REF2014 impact strategy and planned activities, further development of our approach to impact, enabling factors and impact planning, demonstrated in our case studies.

Our REF 2014 impact strategy promoted three types of impact-generating research aimed at policy makers, professionals and the general public:

• **specifically policy-oriented research**: examples include Hull's CGIAR-funded research to identify the importance of women's time-use in the pathway between agriculture and nutrition, and Dolan's to establish the significance of sanitary pad interventions for girls' education in Ghana and Uganda;



- research expertise that indirectly leads to impact, such as through consultancy, business advice, diplomatic briefings or expert witness (§4.3, §4.4): for example, Campbell's long-term research on Eritrean refugees, informing his 200+ expert reports supporting asylum cases, was taken up by immigration lawyers in the UK, Canada and the US. This led the Home Office to revise its 2015 Country Information and Guidance on Eritrea overturning refusals;
- **research aimed at general public exposure to cultural forms and practices**, through arts and creative organisations. This included above-mentioned research-based documentary films, exhibitions and catalogues (§1.2.2(4); §4.3). Alongside Simpson's anticipated village restudies exhibition and two films, Marchand developed his collaborative cross-disciplinary (with neuroscience) research on craft with the documentary film 'The Intelligent Hand' (2015), changing popular perceptions of craft work.

While significant impact arose from this approach (above; §4.3), learning from REF2014 feedback, we developed more focused strategic goals. These are to:

- contribute to concrete, sustained, positive personal, social, institutional and economic change;
- achieve such impact in our priority research areas: increasing the effectiveness and accountability of state and civil society bodies; improving everyday lives of marginalised people; and attaining justice;
- ensure pathways to impact are built into the lifecycle of research of all kinds, including conception, design, implementation, and subsequent elaboration.

Unit staff benefit from significantly upgraded SOAS-wide specialist impact support infrastructure (IES§2), including advice from Impact Officers with dedicated time for Unit staff on setting impact goals, mapping stakeholders and collecting evidence to evaluate impact. All staff receive structured mentoring and peer-to-peer support for their individual 'research impact plans'. These are monitored through the Research Committee and enriched by a Department seminar series on linking research to policy and praxis. Peer review ensures that impact plans are embedded into all research grants.

Departmental research-leave allocations and SOAS internal funding enabled impact-oriented activities (IES§4.1, §1.4.1). Regional Institutes and Research Centres enhanced impact reach through their non-academic, policymaker and industry membership (e.g., food sector participation in Food Studies Centre's 'Food Forum') and affiliated bodies such as the SOAS-hosted Royal African Society—a highly effective channel of influence for Africanist anthropologists *inter alia* through the Africa All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG). SOAS consultancy and Knowledge Exchange Strategy (IES§2) encourages user engagement and allows academics to hold funds for research and impact work.

Practice-principles underpinning our impact plans include: early investment and inclusion in partnerships; long lead-times; interdisciplinarity and interlinked follow-on projects; commissioned work, advice giving, honorary positions; and close collaboration with wide-ranging networks at all levels (e.g., APPGs, parliamentary select committees, FCDO forums, media appearances).

The Unit's strategic goals and principles shape the pathways to impact of all projects identified in our five-year forward research plan, including those mentioned earlier from Salih, Mosse Janson and Allen (§1.3), and they underpin our impact case studies, chosen to illustrate breadth and depth of impact.

## 1.4.1 Impact case studies.

Mosse's research on caste involved career-long collaboration with Dalit NGOs and activists, coproducing research, and engaging with diverse activist and policy networks. In the reporting period, it led to improvement in the lives of Indian Dalit communities and protection against injustice by enhancing the effectiveness of NGO regional activism on Dalit land rights and influencing the Indian Catholic Church's policy response to discrimination against Dalit



Christians. It created UK-based forums that influenced policy on caste among NGO and official international development organisations, and shaped policy debate and outcomes especially regarding the inclusion of caste as an aspect of race in the UK Equality Act 2010. The pathway to impact was supported by SOAS internal funds, by the SOAS South Asia Institute, through commissioned work (for the Equality and Human Rights Commission-EHRC) and interdisciplinarity, especially with legal scholars.

Crewe's ethnographic research on the social life and diversity of the UK House of Commons (leading to the comparative Global Research Network on Parliaments and People-GRNPP) involved partnerships built over two decades. Its findings changed working practices of the UK Parliament and enhanced its capacity to scrutinize and improve its own management. The research enhanced the way MPs and constituency offices are supported, improved relationships between officials and MPs, diversified witnesses and increased transparency in Select Committees, including that on International Development, to which (as part of Crewe's GRNPP) scholars from the Global South were enabled to give oral and written evidence. The improvement in standards of conduct for politicians had implications across the UK and internationally. As with Mosse, Crewe's impact was enhanced by interdisciplinary work (on emotionality, with psychologist N. Sarra) and by work commissioned by the Parliament Committee Office. Co-research with a senior Commons official on the MPs' expenses scandal at the instigation of the Clerk of the House produced *An Extraordinary Scandal* (2019).

### 1.5 Interdisciplinarity

In the REF period, much of the Unit's research and impact work involved collaboration across disciplines, some of it explicitly interdisciplinary. Hull's work on gender in African agriculture and health (§1.4) engaged epidemiology, economics, nutrition, veterinary sciences, agriculture, food and public health sectors in the fully interdisciplinary Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health. Fardon's on West African artforms and language, undertaken with linguists, curators and artists illustrates interdisciplinarity through SOAS's Centres and Regional Institutes (§1.1; IES§2.3). SOAS Anthropology and Art History co-organised the 'Ethnographies of Art, Materiality and Representation' panel at the 2018 SOAS-co-hosted RAI conference.

The Unit's interdisciplinarity and external networking was facilitated by bodies such as the RAI, British Museum and British Academy (our co-hosts for the 2020 Anthropology and Geography conference, §1.1), and across the Bloomsbury Colleges—London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), Royal Veterinary College, Birkbeck—through the London International Development Centre, and by our successful applications to the inter-collegiate Bloomsbury interdisciplinary PhD scholarship scheme. The latter funded UoA members' projects with Education (UCL) on children's food habits in a multi-ethnic London region, with History (Birkbeck) on migration and climate change in Bangladesh, on Islamic education in Sudan (Birkbeck), with Medical Anthropology (LSHTM) on public health messaging during the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone, and with Psychosocial Studies (Birkbeck) on innovation in mental healthcare in inner London.

Alongside joint PhD supervision, interdisciplinarity was fostered by our research-led MA programmes, lecture exchanges, and honorary positions at other institutions (e.g., Mosse's Honorary Associate Professorship with UCL Psychiatry and project on discrimination and mental health in Indian HEIs).

In the coming years, SOAS anthropologists will continue to build interdisciplinary links to generate new anthropological fields of research and theory, and to underpin impact: with, e.g., political science (Crewe), law (Allen), religious studies (Janson), mental health disciplines (Behrouzan, Gygi, Mosse) and marine biology (Retsikas).

## 1.6 Open research

The Unit moved decisively towards an open access research environment, supported by the School's OA policy and funding (IES§2). We are 100% REF-compliant in uploading full-text versions of journal articles to SOAS Research Online repository. Anthropologists published a



total of 12 Gold Access outputs, mostly through our UKRI OA Block Grant. Crewe's forthcoming OA eBook, *An Anthropology of Parliaments* (Routledge) is ERC-funded.

We also prepared unpublished research data for open-access archiving with UK Data Services. Simpson deposited a comprehensive dataset relating to the village restudies project in the UK Data Archive, as well as the 1950s F.G. Bailey Papers and meticulous Adrian Mayer fieldnote archive in the SOAS Library/digital collections. The project also involved translating David Pocock's classic 1960s ethnography, *Kanbi and Patidar*, into Gujarati. Mosse has archived extensive material from his 'Caste Out of Development Project' (ESRC). Award holders have also uploaded comprehensive sets of material through the UKRI research outcomes system (ROS) and now Researchfish. Using support from SOAS's Scholarly Communications Manager, we have built awareness of expectations of OA data archiving and preparation of datasets into research proposal development and review, PGR pre-fieldwork training and MPhil 'upgrade' conditions.

## 1.7 Research integrity

SOAS research-ethics policies and procedures, and UoA practices within these, underwent a complete overhaul, aligned to the Concordat on Research Integrity (IES§4.1). Linked to the mandatory referral process for institutional ethical approval, the Department has put internal review procedures in place, ensuring research at all levels and all stages complies with the highest standards of research ethics, consistent with disciplinary (Association of Social Anthropologists) guidelines. Unit anthropologists receive online and bespoke ethics and data management training from institution-level specialists, alongside Department-organised ethics seminars.

Drop-in support in line with data protection legislation is available at project design stage from the Information Compliance Manager, ensuring effective data management plans. Mosse's preparation of ethnographic research for approval by the NHS and Health Research Authority has, in turn, developed new institutional capacity to navigate the rigorous NHS Integrated Research Application System.

UoA members contributed to a 2017 SOAS-organised workshop, 'Data Management in Asian Humanities and Social Sciences', addressing requirements across funders (RCUK, ERC). The Department also led a national workshop, 'Is Anthropology Legal? Conversations between Anthropologists and Professional Data Managers', on the implications of the General Data Protection Regulation for anthropological research practice (2018). Simpson convened cross-institutional discussion workshops and published a 2016 article ('Is Anthropology Legal?') on open research.

#### 2. People

## 2.1 Staffing strategy

We aim to build research strength and sustainability through recruiting to our regional expertise and strategically extending thematic specialisms. Our 'Category A' FTE staff remained broadly stable over the REF period. A measure of **sustainability** is that 7 staff departures were almost exactly matched by recruitment to 5 permanent posts and 2 fixed-term early-career appointments.

Recruitment against retirements rejuvenated the department, retained regional breadth and appointed outstanding scholars in areas of thematic growth. Behrouzan brought physiciananthropologist expertise in psychiatry/mental health to our medical anthropology and published her acclaimed monograph *Prozak Diaries*. Leite added focus on identity and belonging studied through the medium of tourism in her *Unorthodox Kin* (winner of the 2018 Stirling Prize for Best Book in Psychological Anthropology). Basu brought expertise in cultural memory, landscape heritage and a new perspective on material culture with *The Inbetweenness of Things* (2017), advanced through Leverhulme and AHRC projects. Our strengths in anthropology of the Middle



East were enhanced by Salih on migration, refugees, Islamic feminism and women's movements, and by Allen, whose historical anthropology of Palestine was mentioned above. Research Professor Crewe brought focus to work on politics through comparative research on parliaments.

By July 2020, the department's Category A staff comprised 5 Professors (one 0.2 FTE), 11 Readers/Senior Lecturers, 2 Lecturers. Additionally, major awards created new Research Fellow and **Postdoctoral Researcher** posts. Among others, Simpson's ERC grant opened posts for Chokkakula and Chauhan; Axelby and Kaur joined Crewe's ERC project; Mosse's ESRC project appointed Chase (now Co-I from Durham). We also hosted several award-holding postdoctoral fellows (British Academy, Leverhulme, ESRC, AXA Research Fund).

### 2.2 Research career development

Career progression is the objective of the School-wide mandatory Research Mentoring Policy, Staff Development Review and Personal Research Plan process (IES§3.3). The process matches available support to individual researcher needs (including School-arranged researchrelated linguistic and other skills training), mentors grant development and impact planning, and advises individual career development. Our consistent mentoring is reflected in significant promotions, recognising excellence in research outputs, knowledge exchange and impact: in the REF period, 2 to Professor, 7 to Reader, 5 to Senior Lecturer.

Time is the critical resource for anthropological research. SOAS **research leave policy**—one term in nine (from 2015)—was generous (IES§3.3), and Department-wide curriculum reform has protected research time. Staff receive a generous annual conference **travel allowance**, and an 80% share of SOAS consultancy fees earned can contribute to personal research funds.

SOAS implements the Concordat to Support the Career Development of **Early-Career Researchers**. Newly appointed ECRs are entitled to two consecutive teaching terms' leave following a 3-year probation. All new staff are allocated mentors for the period of their probation and offered reduced teaching loads. Burdensome administrative tasks or leadership roles are reserved for those more advanced in their careers. This allows completion of teaching and research (including ethics) training, and enables junior colleagues to complete major outputs, remain connected to their core field sites, enhance language skills and initiate new projects. Among **successes of our more junior staff** are Hull's well-reviewed *Contingent Citizens* (2017) and Leite's *Unorthodox Kin*.

**Postdoctoral Researchers'** career development needs are also met through named mentors and institutional support, for example, in the organisation of conferences and research grant applications. Above-mentioned PDRs (§2.1) demonstrate career-development success. Additionally, Trapido (mentor, Fardon) published his outstanding *Breaking Rocks* (2016); Tilche (Simpson) is now Lecturer at Leicester, filmmaker and GCRF project PI. The Department has also been enriched by **visiting researchers**, notably 2016 SOAS Centenary Fellow Professor Michael Gilsenan.

Working within SOAS's response to Covid-19, the Department has provided guidance to ensure personal well-being and adaptation of research to make it safe amidst the pandemic (IES, Covid-19 Annex).

#### 2.3 Research students

We have a vibrant PGR body with 230 students registered over the assessment period (27-42 each year), with 63.4% non-UK domiciled. 77 PhDs were awarded 2014-20, compared with 51 in the (shorter) REF2014, averaging 12-15 annually, although 2019/20 figures are lower than usual because SOAS took a decision early in the Covid crisis to grant extensions to all students. We introduced one- and then two-year MRes degrees to create 1+3 and 2+3 PhD pathways, and initiated SOAS's first 4-year pathway allowing for language learning and pilot research.



46% of Unit PGRs received grant support, 67% of these grants amounting to full scholarships. External doctoral research funding secured included 14 ESRC studentships (including our first +4 pathway student), scholarships from the AHRC CHASE consortium, ERC, Felix Foundation, V.P. Kanitkar Memorial endowment and four interdisciplinary Bloomsbury Colleges Studentships. Two PGRs were funded through Government of India scholarships for students with protected characteristics and ten from competitively awarded SOAS scholarships.

**High-quality, individually-tailored discipline-based PGR training** is supported at three levels:

- **Two ESRC Bloomsbury Doctoral Training Partnerships**: the ESRC Bloomsbury Doctoral Training Centre and (from 2017) its successor the ESRC-funded (UBEL) Doctoral Training Partnerships (UCL, Bloomsbury and East London), together set the standard of training provision for our PGRs. The AHRC CHASE Doctoral Training Partnership opens training to all doctoral researchers irrespective of discipline. In addition, the Bloomsbury Postgraduate Skills Training Network allows postgraduate researchers access to training at our neighbouring institutions;
- SOAS Doctoral School coordinates cross-disciplinary 'Common Core' PGR and supervisor training (IES§3.2). The electronic 'PhD Manager' (from 2018) allows detailed tracking of supervision, upgrading, ethical clearance, and fieldwork preparation through to submission and examination. Further training is monitored against needs which are agreed at the start of each session. Support includes face-to-face and online courses (accommodating different work patterns) on *inter alia* Research Integrity, Impact, Statistical Methods, and Media Production Research Skills. SOAS has recognised (Queen's Anniversary Prize) capacity to support anthropology PGRs with language teaching;
- **Departmental supervision and support**: PGRs have primary and secondary supervisors (matched to theme and region) on their committees, with additional oversight, guidance and problem-solving from the Director of Doctoral Studies. The first year involves the compulsory cohort-building Anthropological Research Methods module. PGRs receive detailed, regional expertise-led guidance on implementing safe, ethical practices for fieldwork and data management, guided by strict formal review procedures on safety and ethical research (including compliance with data protection legislation) (IES§3.2). Promoting mental health and wellbeing of PGRs is prioritised and supported via targeted workshops (e.g., through CHASE) and take-up of mental health first-aid training.

Upgrade to PhD student status and preparedness for fieldwork are assessed by the second supervisor and an internal examiner not otherwise involved in supervision against stringent criteria. Close contact (electronically or in person) allows for advisory support throughout fieldwork. Small grants are available from the Department and from School funds for fieldwork, language acquisition, conference presentations and writing-up (IES§3.2).

Post-fieldwork, our PGR writing-up seminars draw on the expertise of staff readers while fostering peer exchange, and our 'professionalisation' seminar series addresses careerdevelopment needs such as publishing and applying anthropological research. PGRs audit relevant specialist modules throughout SOAS and gain insight from Departmental and Centre research seminars. They also benefit from annual PhD research conferences at the SOAS South Asia Institute and the intercollegiate London Anthropology Day. The SOAS Research Student Association includes among its activities a student-led journal. We encourage PGRs to co-organise research events (e.g., Anthropology PGR-led SOAS conference on '70 Years of the Indian Republic', 2020).

PGRs are a vital part of our research community. They are represented on the Research Committee and Away Days, join grant applications, and edited collections (e.g., 5 of Gygi's supervisees contributed to his *The Work of Gender*) while enjoying the protected study space of the Doctoral School. 47% post-fieldwork PGRs eligible to do so, took up graduate teaching assistantships for core undergraduate modules, on full fractional (vs. zero hours) contracts. They



receive HEA-accredited training, providing the opportunity to gain a Learning Teaching and Development Higher Education Certificate, and co-teach with experienced mentors. To develop their publishing profiles PGRs submit publications to SOAS Research Online and SOAS Journal of Postgraduate Research (IES§3.2).

The careers built on the basis of Unit PhDs, accelerated by prestigious competitive postdoctoral fellowships (Leverhulme, Sainsbury, ERC) and even recruitment directly into permanent Lectureships (e.g., to Durham, Mainz), signal the high research standards maintained.

## 2.4 Equality and diversity

The Department works firmly within SOAS's enhanced EDI strategy, its race and gender equality charters (e.g., Athena Swan), the training programme, implementation networks and impact monitoring (IES§3.3). The Department monitors its EDI performance, tracking feedback from School-wide surveys to adjust mentoring and support for career development. All members of the Department undergo mandatory unconscious bias training, fostering skills applied in Department recruitment, mentoring and promotions. Janson is on the Aurora Women's Leadership Development Programme (2020-21), aiming to model good practice for female colleagues with leadership and management aspirations.

We remain a gender-balanced unit, currently 50:50 male/female (40:60 at Professorial level), represent 8 nationalities and, in recent appointments and promotions, demonstrate our ambition to better represent BAME diversity (currently 15.6% identify as ethic minority). Averaged across the years (2014-20), 74% of our enrolled PGRs were female, 38% (of those who declared) were BAME, and 10% declared a disability. In 2020, SOAS Research Studentships were ring-fenced for under-represented BAME groups from the UK and the Global South, and we encourage PhD applications under schemes for students with protected characteristics such as Government of India's National Overseas Scholarships for 'Scheduled Castes/Tribes' (matching our research strategy focus on caste and Dalit issues).

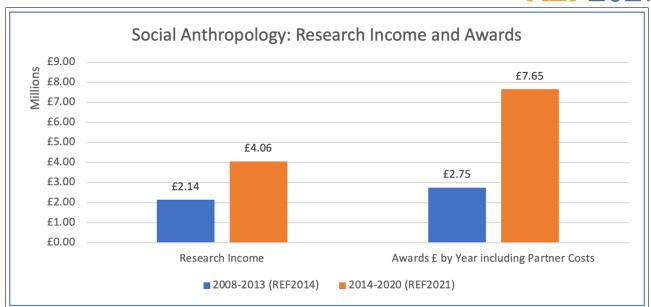
The Department meets the needs of the 52% of the Unit's researchers with protected characteristics, long-term conditions and/or caring responsibilities, including adaptive schedules, flexible and remote working, equipment and support on return from parental or sick/compassionate leave. We also actively encourage projects and postgraduate researchers, able to bring lived experience in key EDI fields to which staff are also committed through experience and identity (e.g., Mosse on mental health, Salih on refugees, Janson on religious minorities).

#### 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

#### 3.1 Research income

**External research funding** is prioritised by the unit. It secures research investment, underpins dedicated time for research, validates research through peer review, builds-in ECR posts and capacity, and establishes international research partnerships (especially in Africa and Asia) for knowledge exchange and impact.

The Unit received £4.06 million in research income (2014-20), almost twice that of the REF2014 period (£2.14m) (excluding doctoral research grants) and secured an unprecedented £7.65m from competitive grants (compared to £2.75m in REF2014). This growth was an outcome of strategic decisions on grant applications: to increase the level and quality of grant applications across funder types and size-range (but maintaining levels of FEC funding); to increase applications for larger collaborative projects (£1-2million), including under GCRF and ERC/Horizon 2020 programmes; and to adopt a stepped build-up to complex collaborations from smaller or focused projects.



We saw a significant increase in the volume of applications (totalling £30.3m) over the REF period. Working with enhanced SOAS-level grant support, the 35% success rate (27 of 77) was maintained and the number of large grants (£800k+) increased to five. Major grants included Simpson's 'Roads' ERC Consolidator Grant, almost €2 million; Crewe's 'Global Comparative Ethnography of Parliaments' ERC Advanced Grant, €2.5 million (2019-24), and Crewe and Axelby's 'Deepening Democracy Programme' AHRC/GCRF, £1.85million (2017-20). Basu's 'Museum Affordances' AHRC project (£805k) continues to 2021. Mosse's 'Transformation in Mental Healthcare', ESRC Research Grant (2020-23, £820k) adds to income going forward from 2020. The other 22 competitive awards maintained diversity of opportunity: one ESRC, four EU or UK government body grants (e.g., DFID, German DFG), four British Academy Fellowships (three mid-career, one PDRF), and smaller grants from charitable foundations and industry.

Grant proposals of scale and complexity require long-term planning, concept testing, pilots and partnership-building. Simpson's and Crewe's flagship projects built on earlier related projects: DFID-funded (2016-17, £49,530) 'Climate Change Impact of Transport' (Simpson) and ESRC/DFID (2014-17, £353,957) 'Parliamentary Effectiveness' (Crewe). Seven anthropologists used School Seedcorn funds to develop research partnerships and proposals (e.g., Simpson, 'Roads'; Basu, '[Re:]Entanglements'; Mosse, mental healthcare).

We have also funded research as Co-Investigators, such as Fardon, on SOAS-led, DFIDfunded, £6m 5-year Anti-Corruption Evidence Centre covering Nigeria, Tanzania and Bangladesh. Research partnerships (detailed in §4.1) have been key to grant success and to responding to important topical opportunities, such as the EHRC research on caste in Britain (Mosse with Manchester Metropolitan and Wolverhampton) and Dolan with Birmingham on Menstruation and the Cycle of Poverty (DFID, £109,176).

## 3.2 Infrastructure and facilities

Unit anthropologists benefit from SOAS's enhanced and dedicated research systems, software and skilled pre-/post-award, data management and digital services staff (§1.1; IES§2, IES§4.1). Amidst London's wealth of research libraries, we especially rely on **SOAS's National Library for Asia and Africa**, its unparalleled access to physical and online specialist material, regional literatures, languages, film and other media, and specialist librarian support (IES§4.2). Our historical anthropologists (Basu, Fardon, Hughes, Mosse) have benefited from the extensive colonial, missionary, NGO and business archives. The trove on anthropological history represented by the digitised Fürer-Haimendorf collection is enlarged by Simpson's Bailey and Mayer archives (§1.6).



**SOAS's Brunei Gallery** (IES§4.2) allowed unit staff to bring their research to life and to wider publics, and to effect change. Research exhibitions included: 'Behind the Indian Boom' (LSE-SOAS) contributing to Axelby's co-authored *Ground Down by Growth* (§1.2.2); the 'Spiritual Highway' photo exhibition (Janson 2014); 'The Future of the Rural World 1950-2015' (Simpson 2015); 'From Madras to Bangalore: Picture Postcards as Urban History of Colonial India' (Hughes, 2019); 'A Passage through Passages - On Roads in South Asia' (Simpson 2020) (details §4.3).

#### 4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

The Unit prioritises outward-facing collaboration in alignment with SOAS's research strategy (IES§2). We have four key principles: commitment to longer-term decolonised and decentred partnerships; recognising the political, emotional and ethical complexity of collaboration; taking a critical perspective towards power hierarchies at all levels; and emphasising perspectives from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and their diasporas.

#### 4.1 Academic collaboration

SOAS is a global research hub connected to Asian, African and Middle Eastern scholarship. Here we illustrate the collaborations this specialisation facilitates with institutions in the Unit's research regions. This, in turn, makes our anthropologists desirable academic partners and network-builders internationally.

**Research project partnerships**: One highly successful international collaboration brought the Anthropological Survey of India into Simpson's ESRC village restudies project. His later ERC 'Roads' grant involved Edinburgh and the Mumbai-based artist collective, CAMP. Basu's AHRC 'Museums' project formed an 8-organisation partnership including SOAS, Cambridge, Humboldt, British Library, National Archives, Pitt Rivers Museum and the National Museum of World Cultures.

Crewe's ERC 'Parliaments' project partners with Leeds, the Legislative School of Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, and Mekelle University (Ethiopia). Her previous AHRC-GCRF project partnered Hansard Society (UK), Jawaharlal Nehru University (India), Enlightened Research Foundation (Myanmar) and Forum for Social Studies (Ethiopia).

Successful academic collaborations led to career-building opportunities for doctoral, postdoctoral and activist collaborators. Axelby ran a British Academy-funded writing workshop in Mekelle, Ethiopia for 30 collaborators in 2019, with scholars and senior SOAS research office managers on hand to impart publishing and grant-applications skills, while PDR Kaur coordinated the £100k follow-on AHRC-GCRF 'Reducing Inequalities in Public Engagement' with partners in Myanmar.

Academic network builders: Salih was an elected Trustee of the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (2014-19) and Allen worked with the same organisation to draw research into the MOOC 'Teaching Revolution'. SOAS Food Studies Centre fostered networking with equivalent clusters (in Brussels, Utrecht, CEU, Lisbon, Harvard, Tokyo) for research on food and heritage. Dolan contributes distinctive anthropological perspectives to the 'Interdisciplinary Network on 'Pressure in African Cities' reaching across the UK (LSE, Sussex), South Africa and Denmark. Crewe chairs the new Warwick Interdisciplinary Research Centre for International Development.

#### 4.2 User engagement

We illustrate our user engagement with examples from public-sector bodies and business and enterprise (also §1.4 and §1.4.1).

**Collaboration with public bodies facing key challenges**. Mosse's ESRC-funded partnership with an NHS Mental HealthTrust (and large UCL-led trial) involves professional and 'peer' corresearchers in addressing intractable problems in UK mental healthcare (§1.3). Retsikas took



collaboration with Islamic philanthropic foundations in Java to the National Zakat Board and Indonesian Ministry of Research & Technology to examine the legal framework for provision of Islamic welfare. Simpson's work on infrastructure engaged policy research centres in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives as well as DFID in climate change 'policy reset'. From July 2020, Mosse joined the Government Department for Science's Covid19-related 'Rebuilding a Resilient Britain' programme headed by Sir Patrick Vallance.

In the field of business and enterprise, Dolan collaborated with a global food corporation and its Kenyan subsidiary to investigate organising values in business. Her work with the CSR departments of Mars, Shell and Walmart drew their attention to the social impact of their activities. Latham worked with Casa Asia, a Spanish/EU government-backed organisation advising on the development of Chinese outbound tourism in Europe. Leite advised a global hotel conglomerate clarifying its social purpose, a religious organisation interconnecting a far-flung faith community, and a social media start-up, Trippin, engaging 'millennials' in sustainable tourism. Mosse undertook collaborative anthropological research with Network Rail on suicide on the railways.

### 4.3 Public engagement through cultural and creative sector collaborations

The Unit's work with creative artists, filmmakers and writers has been intellectually groundbreaking and culturally and politically influential. Ambitious projects have connected anthropology to the arts.

Crewe and Axelby's Deepening Democracy supports a network of researchers and activists investigating parliaments in Myanmar and Ethiopia, collaborating with creative industries that reimagine democracy through films, blogs, animations, photos and exhibitions. Simpson collaborated with the CAMP artist collective to produce the film *Gulf to Gulf to Gulf*, premiered at Documenta13, screened (with talks) at international film/arts festivals, and purchased by Tate Modern. The multiscreen film was the centrepiece of the 'Roads' project's Brunei Gallery (BG) exhibition, 'A Passage Through Passages' (2020). Simpson's earlier village restudies project achieved wide public reach in the UK and India through an exhibition, 'The future of the rural world? Indian villages, 1950-2015' (BG, 2015), and two films: one directed by Simpson ('The Civility of Indifference') and the other by Alice Tilche ('Sundarana').

Basu collaborated with artists in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the UK through art workshops and large exhibitions (Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; BG, Covid-postponed), 'activating' the decolonial possibilities of colonial archives. Issues raised in partnership with museums in Europe, West Africa and the UK were highlighted by President Macron committing to return African collections to Africa in a 2017 public statement in Benin. Macron subsequently commissioned a report on the restitution of cultural property to Africa in which Basu's 'Museum Affordances' project was one of few exemplary initiatives cited.

Janson's 2016 BG exhibition, 'Spiritual Highway'—a collaboration with award-winning Nigerian photographer Akintunde Akinleye—travelled to venues in Leiden, Berlin and Florida. Fardon's collaboration with artist Sènga la Rouge on *Learning from the Curse* (2017) brought 'creative renewal' to African anthropology.

Extending reach through literary collaborations, Janson's monograph, *Islam, Youth and Modernity in Gambia* (winner of 2014 RAI Amaury Talbot Prize for African Anthropology), directly shaped Zadie Smith's novel *Swing Time* (2016), leading in turn to Janson's media appearances as Gambia country expert (part of a joint 'Enriching Fiction with Facts' ICS submitted to UoA34). Salih's work on Palestinian refugees (publicised in her TedX talk 'Refugees: the danger of benevolence') inspired Palestinian-Jordanian artist Fatima Abbadi and her widely exhibited photography.

## 4.4 Advocacy, consultancy and citizen involvement

Advocacy on behalf of vulnerable groups through critical inquiry and citizen solidarity is part of the Unit's purpose. As examples, Salih was a mentor in the first refugee camp-based HE project



in the Middle East, <u>Campus in Camps</u>, a unique PGT programme run in the Dheisheh refugee camp (West Bank) with Al Quds University. Based on consultancy to legal firms on asylum cases, Campbell gave evidence to an FCO policy review and All-Party Parliamentary Groups on Eritrea and on Refugees (2015) and drew media attention to flawed UK policy (§1.4). Crewe was Chair of Health Poverty Action (until 2019). Mosse embeds ESRC research in wide-ranging citizen engagement in mental health and suicide prevention (e.g., NICE Public Health Advisory Committee member, 2016-18; Chair, Local Authority multi-agency suicide prevention partnership; Mind trustee; NHS Mental Health Trust honorary 'cultural consultant').

### 4.5 Contribution to the discipline

Distinctively, the Unit has refused the distinction between pure and applied anthropology, ensuring we put 'practice into theory' as well as 'theory into practice' (REF2014 Impact template). Engagement with practitioners and publics, and accountability to users, increased our research impact. It also refined our theory and methods, improved data, and productively expanded the Unit as a research community at the discipline's leading edge. The Unit contributed to the discipline's established institutions and fostered new networks internationally, as well as hosted significant events and forums.

As Fellows of the British Academy, Fardon is Chair of Section S3 Anthropology & Geography (2018-21) and Mosse served on the BA's International Engagement Committee (2014-20). Unit members served in the RAI: Basu as Vice-President, Council member and Chair of Education Committee; Crewe as Chair, Committee on Policy and Practice; Behrouzan and Leite on Medical and Tourism Committees, respectively; Hughes on Film Committee and Chair of Judges, RAI Ethnographic Film Festival (2017). In the ASA, Janson served as Conference Liaison to 2017. Fardon is Chair of Trustees of the International African Institute. Janson is Senior Fellows of HE Academy. Leite co-convened the American Anthropological Association's Tourism Interest Group (to 2016), and is Member-at-Large, Executive Board, European Network for Psychological Anthropology. Allen is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Institute for Social Anthropology in Austria, a founding member of the Network of Concerned Academics, and on the Executive Committee of *Insaniyyat*, the first-ever society of Palestinian anthropologists.

The Department was co-host and organisational partner in the 2018 RAI conference. 'Art. Materiality and Representation', with the British Museum. It had a similar role for the RAI/British Academy 2020 'Anthropology and Geography' conference. The yearly complement of conferences, panels, roundtables, summer schools (e.g., Janson's on Christians and Muslims in Africa, ZMO, Berlin) show the department's contribution to the leading edge of our research field(s), as well as fostering links across disciplines, and supporting forums for junior researchers such as the co-hosted London Anthropology Day (§2.3.1). Standout lectures include Fardon's Marett Memorial Lecture (2019) and Frank Davis Memorial Lecture (Courtauld 2015), Mosse's Munro Lecture (Edinburgh, 2018), M.N. Srinivas Memorial Lecture (2016, King's) and OP Jindal Distinguished Lectures (Brown, 2017). He also delivered a public speech marking the 125th birth anniversary of Dalit leader Dr Ambedkar in 2016 at Ambedkar's famed site of conversion to Buddhism (Nagpur, India) to a gathering of 1-2,000 Dalit activists. Crewe gave the keynote at the 12th Annual International Ethnography Symposium (Manchester, 2017), Janson at the European Society for Intercultural Theology and Interreligious Studies Conference (2019, Sarajevo), Simpson at the Order Beyond Borders Conference (2017, Habib University). Salih and Behrouzan have given widely viewed TEDx talks on refugees and war trauma, respectively. We have been in much demand as members of editorial boards of leading journals (American Ethnologist, World Development, JRAI), book series editors (e.g., Janson, Brill's Studies of Religion in Africa), members of research advisory panels, PhD examiners (UK and abroad), book, article and grant application referees (ESRC, AHRC, ERC), members of programme award panels (e.g., British Academy) and professorial promotions referees.