A statement on future research on The Great British Class Survey

The publication of our paper ‘….’ In Sociology in April 2013, allied with a simultaneous press campaign led initially by the BBC has led to unprecedented interest in the nature and significance of social class in Britain. This reception of our work has been remarkably wide ranging, straddling academic disciplines, and a great variety of non-academic groups. We would like to thank the numerous people who have contacted us with their thoughts, written blogs, and more generally commented on our study. Some of the reception has been critical and has posed challenging questions about our purpose, methodology and data. We are pleased to have inspired such an engaged reception, and are aware that we need to respond to the criticisms and comments made. Furthermore, given the extent of public interest in this project, we feel responsible for explaining how we will be developing our research in the coming period. This note briefly spells out our plans.

1. We are working with the UK Data Archive to archive the GBBC and GfK data so that it can be used publically by other researchers. This process is time consuming in part because the original sample of 161,400 has been increased by a further 200,000 cases since we were given our working data set in summer 2011. We are currently downloading the new cases, and will carry out exploratory analyses on these whilst also working to archive the complete data set, hopefully by spring 2014. A public seminar is being organised to co-incide with the release of this data set which anyone who might be interested in using this data is welcome to attend. A further feature of this archiving is that the BBC will be depositing all their Lab UK experiments at UKDA and since significant numbers of respondents conducted more than one experiment, there is the prospect of innovative data linkage which might interest researchers with interests other than social class.

2. We are currently preparing a paper which will respond to the various criticisms which have been made of our paper in Sociology in the context of elaborating our arguments about social class more broadly. We see this as the most effective way of responding to our critics as it will allow us to systematically pull out our claims and rationale in the context of reasoned article. We therefore ask our critics to be patient. We plan to submit this paper to Sociology. If it is not accepted for publication then we will seek alternative means of publication, perhaps in extended blog format.

3. We have developed a new research network, Culture and Stratification network convened by Sam Friedman (City), Laurie Hanquinet (York), Andrew Miles (Manchester) and Mike Savage (LSE). This is specifically designed to link different universities and encourage debate around broad concerns with the intersection between culture and social stratification. This includes a blogsite http://stratificationandculture.wordpress.com/ which interested parties may wish to consult. It includes some discussion on the debate on the GBCS. We are keen to encourage postings on this site from outside the core team.

4. We are in the process of signing a contract with Penguin to write a popular and accessible - though also serious and critical - book on Social Class in Britain today, using the GBCS but also other sources. We are delighted to be able to build on the popular interest in the study through a Penguin publication, and are hoping to complete this book by autumn 2014.

5. Since the value of the GBCS extends well beyond our analysis of the seven classes in our paper in Sociology, we are also working on a series of articles for a special issue of Sociological Review which showcases their research potential especially for exploring power and privilege.
Finally, we are involved in developing research networks where further research from the GBCS is showcased, and anyone interested is encouraged to attend. These notably include the *Culture and Stratification* network and the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC) whose theme on ‘Trajectories of Participation and Inequality’ will hold workshops on linked topics over the coming year. We are also extensively committed to a series of talks and seminars over the coming year, notably an event at Manchester as part of the ESRC Social Science Week on November 8th.

We hope this note will be useful in making it clear how we will be building on our work on the GBCS in the coming period.