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This issue of Sociologic utions by authors who have considered ju has had/is having on the world around us. In our Rapid Response potential contributors were asked, variously, to reflect with sociological analyses, on how we might understand the broader causes of the crisis; the consequences of the downturn ? both short and long term; how the present situation, if indeed it does at all, compares to the financial crises of the 1930s and early 1980s. We also suggested that there could be theoretical debate about the place of money and alternative currencies in society; the language of the crisis itself (‘sub-prime’ loans, ‘credit-crunch deals’) and its mainstream adoption; consideration of media coverage of various aspects such as the activities of banking, bankers and the bonus culture within; how it will change the face of work. What we got was a refreshing and stimulating outlook on some of these aspects and more besides.

The contributors should be congratulated on their willingness to ‘stick their heads above the parapet’ on a relatively complex issue that is still being worked through and attempting reflective and stimulating accounts of what is going on in relation to the financial crisis. As Liz Stanley pointed out in an editorial of one of the early Rapid Reviews sociologists sometimes appear trained in not speaking out and showing a need to be considered once the evidence is in. Sociological debate however moves forward and moves forward faster by engaging with issues as they emerge and, on an issue such as this, not leaving it to the economists or political economists to strike the first chords.

John Bone in The Credit Crunch: Neo-liberalism, Financialisation and the Gekkoisation of Society looks to compare the current crisis with that of the ‘great crash’ of 1929 and argues that the return to neo-liberal economics in the late 1970s restored the structures that had contributed to the 1929 crash and ultimately produced a similar outcome. Bone also suggests that the current situation is as much a reflection of social and cultural decay as it is a failure of economic governance. Graham Crowe et al in New Divisions of Labour?: Comparative thoughts on the current recession interestingly compare the current situation with Pahl's groundbreaking work on the Isle of Sheppey during the economic difficulties of the late 70s and early 80s who too, sought to compare past contexts with those they were studying. Shifts in expectations, changing

class and gendered cultures in relation to employment and work, and changed and changing ‘industries’ within which to work. Reflections are made on: how we got to the current situation; on the types of sociological analyses that are (re)emerging (e.g. around the meaning of money); on those that have lost and those that have gained, and on where we are going. Chris Yuill in The Credit Crunch and the High Street: “Coming like a ghost town’, draws on primary visual data and secondary sources to partly continues the theme of using ‘locality’ to reflect more broadly on changes elsewhere and in this rapid response piece speculates on the changes to the British high street that have occurred as a consequence of the ‘credit crunch’. He argues that the changes are much more profound than simply the loss of a place to shop, that there are losses within the place and space of the high street that for both individuals and wider society carry implications for issues of self-identity, social contacts and social exclusion. John Horne in Sport in a Credit Crunched Consumer Culture considers the impact of the credit crunch for recent trends in professional sport and suggests that the sociological study of sport faces the same concerns as other sociological domains of interest and indeed that sport may be seen as a means of resisting as well as subscribing to these conditions. Lastly, Krings et al in Migration and Recession: Polish Migrants in Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland look at the effects of the economic downturn on intra-European mobility by focussing on Ireland's recent migratory activities and the motivations and experiences of European migrants. They argue that the decision to ‘stay or go’ is more complex than any simplistic assumptions about ‘Poles going home’ due to worsening economic conditions ? the common assumption - allow for and that there are a complex range of intervening factors, independent of the downturn, that are impacting upon decisions to stay or leave for these supposedly ‘economic’ migrants.

We hope that these stimulating papers inspire others to contribute to a debate that can be carried forward and we encourage further contributions on this issue.

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