

LSE ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

Title Page

Ref. No.: THS027

Wav file Refs:

Collection title: Tales from Houghton Street: an LSE oral history

Interviewee's surname: Livingstone OBE

Title: Professor

Interviewee's forenames: Sonia

Sex: F

LSE connection: Professor of Social Psychology,
Department of Media and Communications

Date of birth: 30/4/1960

Date(s) of recording, Compact Flash used, tracks (from – to): 19/8/2015

Location of interview: LSE

Name of interviewer: Clara Cook

Type of recorder: Tascam DR-40

Total no. of tracks: 1

Recording Format: Wav 24bit 44.1khz

Mono or stereo: Mono

Total Duration: 00:35:01

Additional material:

Copyright/Clearance:

Interviewer's comments:

THS027 Sonia Livingstone

Track 1 [35:01] [Session one: 19 August 2015] Sonia Livingstone [SL], born 1960. [00:25] Arrived at LSE October 1990. [00:35] First impressions of campus. SL was glad to have an office and describes the campus small and contained. It was fantastic to be in the centre of London. [00:58] SL arrived as a lecturer in the Department of Social Psychology and describes the department. [01:47] SL talks about teaching when she first arrived; mostly British undergraduates who she wasn't much older than. She taught how social psychology moves into media and communications. Now there are more international students. [02:49] SL describes the Social Psychology department as being in transition. [03:24] The SDR was male-orientated. [03:43] The School felt very competitive although interesting things happened, such as creation of the Gender Institute and the Department of Media and Communications. This was the beginning of interdisciplinarity despite the separate spaces. [04:33] SL discusses why Media and Communications was begun. The Department of Social Psychology was begun under Hilde Himmelweit in the 1960s and she drew attention to the importance of media. LSE was behind compared to the US. SL first proposed a joint Master's degree between Social Psychology and Government. The Department of Media and Communications was formed in 2003, ten years later. [06:43] Forming the department was a defining activity for SL at LSE. [07:12] SL talks about LSE as an institution. The 1990s saw the development of the Gender Institute, European Studies and new interdisciplinary structures. [08:05] SL talks about structural changes in and attitudes towards the Department of Media and Communications. She describes how international students makes teaching more student focused. [09:29] SL discusses changes in her role and her ability to define a research agenda. [10:03] High points: different departments coming together to make things happen, such as the Department of Media and Communications and the Gender Institute. [10:56] SL describes Tony Giddens as Director and his vision for LSE. [11:37] SL on the point of view of "littler" departments. [12:03] SL mentions the White Horse pub on campus. LSE works well when people want to talk to each other. [12:48] SL's daughter went to the LSE nursery. She describes her experience at LSE as a working mother/parent and as a female academic. As Head of Department she was able to make positive changes but there is still work to do on this at LSE. [16:46] SL's favourite place on campus is her office, but her department is moving from St Clement's to Towers. Also mentions the Senior Dining Room, White Horse, Lincoln's Inn Fields. LSE feels enclosed but is near Aldwych, Covent Garden, Holborn. [18:56] SL describes changes over the years, such as the use of email. Used to find memos in pigeonholes. The Head of Department would dictate them to secretary who would type them. When an email came in he would dictate those too. SL describes changes in use of technology for her work, e.g. coordinating international networks and [21:40] changes in methods of communications, dissemination of work through different types of media. [24:13] SL describes forming new departments, relating with other faculty. At LSE we have fantastic conversations about ideas. [25:55] SL discusses how she began working on issues around children and young people. People from all disciplines were interested. [27:10] LSE is bigger than the sum of its parts. Funding and management structures can restrict people to disciplines. A lot of interdisciplinary work or assistance is not recognised but people need to be able to meet and speak to each other outside of their disciplines. [28:40] Future of LSE. There are issues of funding, comparison to American universities. SL would like a stronger discourse of what LSE is. [32:18] SL

was on the first agenda committee for Academic Board in the early 1990s. She also served on a committee deciding on prize-winners and honorary degrees.