

SAMUEL STRONG MA MPhil PhD

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PROFILE

I am a political-economic geographer currently employed as Lecturer in Human Geography at Durham University and Associate Fellow at Homerton College, Cambridge. I obtained my doctorate in geography from the University of Cambridge in 2017, and have since held a stipendiary four-year Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) at Cambridge, a lectureship at QMUL, and numerous teaching and research appointments at Cambridge colleges. I am the author of 12 solo-authored, peer-reviewed articles and chapters, an award-winning teacher, and have secured ~quarter million pounds in research funding.

My research examines contemporary poverty and inequality from ethnographic perspectives. Influenced by feminist and postcolonial theory, my work sits at the intersection of economic, political, and urban geography, with an empirical focus on austerity, social reproduction, welfare reform, work, food charity, and mental health. It has advanced interdisciplinary theoretical questions around agency, governmentality, place, the politics of life, and affect – as well as methodological concerns with undoing past and present epistemic violence.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

09/22 – 09/24 Lecturer in Human Geography, Department of Geography, Durham University

Teaching and research post. I lecture on the Level 2 modules: *Social Research in Human Geography* (questionnaires; ethnography); *Theories and Concepts in Human Geography* (Feminist and queer theory); and *Urban Geography* (urban inequalities). I run a seminar series on Feminist Geographies for Level 2 human geographers, and am academic adviser for 30 students.

09/22 – 09/25 Associate Fellow, Homerton College, University of Cambridge

Non-stipendiary position: affiliation to support ongoing research, 'Unequal Lives,' with particular focus on public-facing impact and widening participation/EDI.

09/18 – 09/22 Junior Research Fellow, Homerton College, University of Cambridge

This role centred on running a new independent research project, 'Unequal Lives,' exploring lived experiences of inequality in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. I also launched two funded research initiatives, *London Inequality Studies* and *Social Power & Mental Health*.

Whilst a research-focused position, I co-convened three research-led undergraduate modules at the Department of Geography, supervised postgraduate students and completed 800 hours of small group teaching and supervised over 40 undergraduate dissertations between 2015-2022.

09/17 – 08/18 Lecturer in Human Geography, School of Geography, QMUL

Teaching and scholarship post with an administrative focus on implementing the QMUL Model (improving student employability) at a School-wide level.

I convened 2 research-led first year modules, lectured on 6 modules, co-led a fieldtrip of 120 students to Liverpool, acted as academic adviser for over 30 students, led three tutorial groups, and sat on examination board and teaching and learning committee.

09/17 – 03/18 Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Geography, Cambridge

Researcher on the ESRC funded project 'Operationalizing the Leave No One Behind Agenda' (PI Professor Sarah Radcliffe). Tasks included: literature review; case study analysis; disseminating results to academic, public and third sector organisations; organising and presenting findings at a workshop for representatives of numerous global institutions; and contributing to the design of a follow-up bid for a large, multidisciplinary grant.

09/16 – 06/18 Fellow for Study Skills, Girton College, Cambridge

A bespoke fellowship designed around my skills and expertise in teaching and learning. I was responsible for designing, producing and delivering a new study skills curriculum for all undergraduate and postgraduate students. This was delivered via lectures, small group and one-to-one teaching, and a virtual Moodle study skills portal I created. A blended academic and pastoral role, the fellowship also included working with other specialist services in the university.

09/16 – 08/17 Supervisor of Studies/Special Supervisor, Fitzwilliam/Robinson Colleges, Cambridge

Stipendiary posts recognising my contribution to teaching and administration in geography at both colleges. Duties included organising and running small and medium group learning, setting and marking exam papers, supervising independent research projects, pastoral and study skills support, and admissions and widening participation projects.

10/13 – 06/17 PhD in Geography, Department of Geography, Cambridge

Fully funded 1+3 year studentship sponsored by the ESRC.

Thesis title: 'The Production of Poverty: Politics, Place and Social Abandonment in Blaenau Gwent, Wales.' Submitted March 2017, approved April 2017, and awarded June 2017.

09/12 – 08/13 MPhil in Geographical Research, Department of Geography, Cambridge

Fully funded 1+3 year studentship sponsored by the ESRC.

10/09 – 06/12 MA (Hons) Geography, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge

Triple first class, twice with distinction. 85.2% average across tripsos.

GRANTS AND FUNDING

03/20

Lush Charity Pot

£2,500 – to support conference held in April 2021 *Social Power & Mental Health*.

01/20

Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness Conference Award

£2,985 – to support conference held in April 2021 *Social Power & Mental Health*.

04/19

Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH)

£2,500 – to support conference held in April 2021 *Social Power & Mental Health*.

10/18

Junior Research Fellowship (Homerton College, Cambridge)

£151,984 (equivalent, not including institutional overheads) 4-year stipendiary fellowship.

03/16

Fitzwilliam College Tretheway Fund

£400 – to support conference panel organised at AAG 2016, San Francisco.

03/16

Cambridge University Doctoral Training Centre

£300 – discretionary funding to support doctoral fieldwork in south Wales.

10/15

Philip Lake scholarship award for research (Department of Geography, Cambridge)

£750 – to support doctoral fieldwork in south Wales.

09/14

Faculty of Earth Sciences & Geography Fieldwork Fund

£1,793 – to support doctoral fieldwork in south Wales.

08/14

Fitzwilliam College Travel Fund

£250 – to support doctoral fieldwork in south Wales.

10/12

Economic and Social Research Council 1+3 year studentship

£75,812 – administered by the Cambridge Doctoral Training Centre.

PUBLICATIONS

Monograph

Strong, S. (In preparation) *Vernaculars of Poverty: Feeling, Living and Knowing Inequality*. Developed with CRASSH *Opening Lines* Fellowship; to be proposed to publishers summer 2023 (University of Georgia Press Geographies of Justice and Social Transformation Series; RGS-IBG Book Series).

Refereed Articles

Strong, S. (under review). Unequal Lives in London: Urban Change, Intimate Inequalities and the Relational Epistemologies of Ruth Glass. *The London Journal* (submitted Feb 2023).

Strong, S. and Kiely, E. (minor revisions submitted Feb 2023). The Indexification of Poverty: The Covert Politics of Small-area Indices. *Antipode*

Strong, S. 2023. Love in the Space-Time of Inequality: Attachment and Detachment Across Unequal Lives. *The Sociological Review*. 1-18.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00380261221150085>

Strong, S. 2022. Taking Back Taste in Food Bank Britain: On Privilege, Failure and (Un)learning with Auto-Corporeal Methods. *cultural geographies*, 1-14.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/14744740221086258>

Strong, S. 2022. Facing Hunger, Framing Food Banks, Imaging Austerity. *Social & Cultural Geography* 23(9), 1333-1350.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2021.1921247>

Strong, S. 2021. Towards a Geographical Account of Shame: Foodbanks, Austerity and the Spaces of Austere Affective Governmentality. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 46(1), 73-86.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12406>

Strong, S. 2020. Food Banks, Actually Existing Austerity and the Localisation of Responsibility. *Geoforum* 110, 211-219.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.09.025>

Strong, S. 2019. The Vital Politics of Foodbanking: Hunger, Austerity, Biopower. *Political Geography* 75, 1-10.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2019.102053>

Strong, S. 2014. Underclass Ontologies. *Political Geography* 42, 117-120.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2014.07.008>

Book Chapters

Strong, S. 2023. Austere Rationalities, Food Banks and the Depoliticization of Need. In I. Desportes, A. Corbet and A. Siddiqi (eds.) *Depoliticizing Humanitarian Practice*. London: Routledge (forthcoming).

Strong, S. 2021. The Work of Looking for Work: Surviving Without a Wage in Austerity Britain. In W. Monteith, P. Williams and O. Vicol (eds.) *Beyond the Wage: Ordinary Work in Diverse Economies*. Bristol: Policy Press, 45-70.
<https://doi.org/10.51952/9781529208948.ch002>

Strong, S. 2020. Austere social reproduction and the gendered geographies of debt. In J. Gardner, M. Gray and K. Moser (eds.) *Debt and Austerity*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing; 151-173.
<https://doi.org/10.4337/9781839104350.00016>

Strong, S. 2020. People's Geography. In A. Kobayashi (ed.) *The International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Second Edition, 55-59.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-102295-5.10485-8>

Strong, S. 2017. Re-placing Poverty. *The King's Review* (Volume: Extremes), 78-88.

Reviews

Strong, S. 2021. Alpha City: How London was Captured by the Super-Rich. *Urban Geography* 42(2), 245-247.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2020.1833592>

Selected Recent Public Scholarship

The Social Power & Mental Health Steering Group 2023. *A Road Map for the Future of Mental Health Service Provision*.
www.tinyurl.com/socialpowerreport

Strong, S. 2021. I'm Hungry. Whose Fault is That? And who Should Fix it? *The Homersphere*.
<https://tinyurl.com/3anafkt8>

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Department of Geography, Durham University (2022-): I have delivered **30 hours of lectures** across four modules including **methods courses** on ‘questionnaires’ and ‘ethnography,’ and conceptual blocks on **‘feminism and queer theory’** and **‘urban inequalities.’** I am academic adviser to 30 students, run a seminar series for second year students on ‘feminist geographies,’ and am co-leader of a week-long **residential fieldtrip** to Liverpool.

Department of Geography, University of Cambridge (2015-2022): I co-convened three modules – *Austerity and Affluence; Inequality;* and *Political Appetites* – delivering three blocks of four lectures on ‘Intimate Austerities,’ ‘Living Inequalities,’ and ‘Technologies of Self-Improvement.’ This included **setting and marking exam papers** and **module moderation**. I also delivered **multiple methods lectures and practical classes (qualitative and quantitative)**; ran **fieldtrip teaching** on the second-year paper *Citizenship, Cities and Civil Society*, including a ‘virtual’ fieldtrip during the pandemic; completed **over 800 hours of small group teaching**; and **supervised over 40 undergraduate dissertations**. I was an assessor for the MPhil’s in Geography and Geographical Research and on **supervisory committees for four postgraduate students**. I received the Fitzwilliam College Graduate Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2017 in recognition of pedagogical distinction. I also undertook **admissions work** (outreach talks, marking assessment materials, running open days, interviewing) for seven different colleges.

In official student feedback my teaching was described as: “exceptional, so so so engaging, and very interactive,” “incredibly well organised,” and maintaining an “engaging, kind, and calm lecturing style [with a] willingness to get us discussing topics that brought us with him into contemporary issues.” Other students said that “Sam presents ideas really clearly,” “his examples were fascinating... I loved these lectures!” and that my teaching “reminded me why I love studying geography.” My lectures have also been singled out as “my favourite of the entire geography course,” with requests “Sam should lecture for longer – he was really good!” and that “Sam is the best lecturer in the department!”

School of Geography, Queen Mary University of London (2017-18): I convened two courses: *Cities and Regions in Transition*, an entirely new module I designed and solo-lectured that was **rated 4.93/5 for satisfaction with the quality of the module in official student feedback** (20 hours lectures, designed and marked 2 pieces of coursework); and *Research Methods for Geographers*, a module taken by all **200 first-year undergraduates** (23 hours lectures/practicals, designed and marked 1 coursework and moderated the module). I also taught on *Reinventing Britain* (4 hours lectures; **co-leader and organiser of 5-day residential fieldtrip for 120 students**); *Geography in the World* (2 hours lectures); *Contemporary London: Life in the Global Metropolis* (two-hour lecture); *Geographical Research in Practice* (weekly tutorials); and *Ideas and Practice in Geography and Environmental Science* (2 hours lectures; weekly tutorials; and **designed a new block of lectures on ‘Theoretical Approaches in Geography’**). I was **academic adviser to over 30 students** across all year groups; supervised student dissertations; contributed to **examination board and teaching and learning committees**; and held an administrative lead implementing the QMUL model at School-wide level.

In official student feedback my teaching was described as: “fascinating and stimulating.” Students welcomed my approach to teaching through reflection on the contemporary world: “I think it is great as it is engaging and you learn everyday rather than just in class.” My module *Cities and Regions in Transition* was described as “taught clearly and thoughtfully so I always go away feeling like I have learned something.” Students also mentioned that “Sam always makes sure we understand key concepts in every lecture,” “Sam is really good at getting points across and really shows how much he cares about each individual student by having a clear teaching technique.” One student wrote that “Sam is the best lecturer.”

Girton College, University of Cambridge (2016-8): I designed and implemented a **new study skills curriculum across the college**, suitable for all academic disciplines and **undergraduate and postgraduate** students. Identifying the need for cross-college provision, I delivered lectures on ‘time management,’ ‘reading and writing skills,’ ‘essay writing,’ ‘revision techniques,’ and ‘essay writing under exam conditions.’ I also created a **study skills virtual learning environment**, and undertook bespoke supervisions with students facing varied barriers to learning—including **counselling, motivating, and enabling students from diverse backgrounds to thrive**.

In official student feedback my teaching was described as: “so useful for helping me organise my term,” with one student noting that “it’s stopped me getting overwhelmed with my work now.” Another said that “I’ve already used Sam’s techniques to use my time more wisely,” and that “Sam gives us so many methods to get work done more easily. I feel less stressed and able to get more done now.”

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

03/21	CRASSH Opening Lines Fellowship, 2021-22.
01/17	Fitzwilliam Graduate Award for Excellence in Teaching 2016 (£250, sole recipient, for teaching excellence).
10/16	Fitzwilliam College Senior Graduate Scholar 2015-6 (£1500, sole recipient, for research excellence).
06/16	Best oral presentation prize at RGS-ENRGHI 2016 Conference for talk on 'The struggle for care in austere times' (£50, sole recipient).
10/15	Fitzwilliam College Senior Graduate Scholar 2014-5 (£1500, sole recipient, for research excellence).
09/15	Blaenau Gwent GAVO Communities First Volunteer of the Year 2015 (runner-up, for community work during doctoral fieldwork).
06/12	Fitzwilliam College Scholar of the Year (£1000, sole recipient, for highest finalist academic achievement across the college).
06/11	Excelet Scholarship (£250, sole recipient, for highest academic achievement amongst second year students across the college).
06/10	Barbara Humphrey Prize and Irene Walker Scholarship (£500, for highest academic achievement amongst first years across the college, sole recipient).

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Scholarly referee	Agriculture and Human Values; Area; CITY; Economy and Society; EPD: Society and Space; Emotion, Space and Society; Food Ethics; Geoforum; Political Geography; Routledge Research in Planning & Urban Design book series; Social Science & Medicine; The Sociological Review; Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.
Grant referee	Independent assessor for the Independent Social Research Foundation (early career fellowship, 2020); independent reviewer for the Economic and Social Research Council (new investigator grant, 2018).
Committee work	Ordinary Member of RGS-GHWRG 2016-2019; Postgraduate Representative of RGS-PolGRG 2015-6; Cambridge ESRC-DTC Student representative 2016-7. Board of Studies (Durham 2022-); Governing body, dean's committee (Homerton, 2018-2022); QMUL Model working group, teaching and learning committee, exam board (QMUL, 2017-8); education board, chair of study skills working group (Girton, 2016-8).
Research networks	I co-convoked (with Prof. Simon Reid-Henry, QMUL) <i>London Inequality Studies</i> , a network of over 80 multidisciplinary academics, practitioners, activists, and members of the public with an interest in issues of in/equality. We organised numerous in-person and virtual events since launching in 2018, including talks from academics at the University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, UCL, and researchers from the Resolution Foundation. I also co-convoked <i>Social Power & Mental Health</i> (with Dr Ed Kiely, Cambridge), a steering group consisting of practitioners, academics and experts by experience co-producing research into mental wellbeing. This culminated in a festival of events held in April 2021 that was engaged with by over 1000 people from six different continents. I curate our website (http://socialpowermh.crassh.cam.ac.uk/), and we have co-produced a report with local experts by experience for national and regional decisionmakers to function as a roadmap for the future of mental health service provision. The initiative is funded by several organisations including CRASSH, the Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness, Lush, QTI Coalition of Colour, the NHS and the University of Cambridge.

QUALIFICATIONS, MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

Associate Fellow of the HEA (Higher Education Academy) following successful completion of Teaching Associates' Programme, September 2017.

ITC Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work and Outdoors valid until 2026

Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) and the **American Association of Geographers (AAG)**

SELECTED INVITED TALKS, PUBLIC LECTURES AND CONFERENCES ORGANISED

Conferences, Workshops and Panels Organised

Blurred Boundaries: Caring Institutions in Pandemic Times (Aug 2021): panel sessions at the RGS-IBG annual conference. PyGyRG and GHWRG sponsored.

Social Power & Mental Health: Evolving Research through Lived Experience (Apr 2021): a week-long virtual festival of events exploring the links between inequality and mental wellbeing. Sponsored by CRASSH, FSHI, QTI Coalition of Colour, NHS-CPFT.

New and Emerging Research in Health and Wellbeing (Aug 2017): panel sessions at the RGS-IBG annual conference. GHWRG sponsored.

New Forms of Data: Innovation in the Social Sciences (Dec 2016): co-convenor of postgraduate conference for those affiliated with Cambridge ESRC-DTC and Anglia Ruskin. Funded by Cambridge ESRC-DTC.

Public Geographies (with Professor Don Mitchell; Nov 2016): workshop sponsored by Department of Geography, Cambridge.

Realising the Right to Food (Apr 2016): panel session organised at the AAG annual conference.

Selected Invited Academic Talks

Living, feeling and surviving indebted life in pandemic times. *Debt & Covid: Implications of the Pandemic* St. John's College, University Cambridge, Jun 2022.

The work of looking for work. *Beyond the Wage Launch Seminar* Department of Sociology, University of Cambridge, Oct 2021.

What kind of teaching do our students need now? *Homerton Annual Teaching Roundtable* University of Cambridge, Sep 2021.

Grenfell, grief, inequality. *Research Supper Series* Homerton College, Cambridge, May 2019.

Austerity, credit, inequality: Gendered geographies of debt, affect and emotion. *High-cost Credit in an Age of Austerity* CRASSH, Cambridge, May 2019.

Food banks beyond the 'face' of austerity? Thinking through emotions, scale and intersecting inequalities. *Feminist Engagements with Austerity* University of Bristol, Jan 2019.

On being precarious. *Post-wage Economy: Rethorizing 'Work' across the Global North-South Divide* School of Geography, QMUL, Jun 2018.

Food banks and the spaces of affective governmentality. *Research Seminar Series* School of Geography, QMUL, Dec 2017.

Against a 'poverty of aspiration': Neoliberal governmentality, surplus labour and the organised abandonment of place. *Human Geography Seminar Series* Department of Geography, UCL, Nov 2017.

Populism, protest or the persistence of poverty? On placing Brexit. *The Chorley Society* Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, Mar 2017.

Inequality, Brexit, geography. *Inequality, Brexit and More* Murray Edwards College, Cambridge, Jan 2017.

The spatial politics of aspiration. *Cultural and Historical Geography Research Group Seminar* Department of Geography, Cambridge, Nov 2015.

Selected Public Talks and Outreach

Food banking and the geographies of emotion during times of austerity. *Fitzwilliam College Progress in Geography*, annual taster day for sixth form pupils, Jun 2017.

The geographies of food. *Girton College Open Day*, geography taster day with sixth form pupils, Feb 2017.

The geographies of globalisation. *Cambridge HE+ Masterclass Weekend*, Swansea, Feb 2016.

The geographies of the British economy. *Cambridge HE+ Masterclass Weekend*, Swansea, Feb 2016.

Why study geography? *Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone*, workshop for GCSE geography students, Jul 2015.