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Northumbria Professors named Academy of Social Sciences Fellows

Two environmental experts from Northumbria University are among 47 leading social scientists to be elected to the Fellowship of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Professor Gitanjali Nain Gill, of [Northumbria Law School](#), and Professor Alister Scott, of [Northumbria's Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences](#), were both elected for their outstanding contributions to social science, and in recognition of the impact their research has had within industry, policy, and higher education.

[Professor Gitanjali Nain Gill](#) is a Professor of Environmental Law specialising in climate change, access to environmental justice, land rights, and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

She has received global recognition for her research into India's National Green Tribunal. In 2013 she was awarded a British Academy Grant to examine the work of the Tribunal and in December this year will conduct a research-led course on environmental justice at the National Law University, in Lucknow, India. This is supported by the prestigious Global Initiative of Academic Networks in Higher Education Award by the Indian Government's Ministry of Human Resources and Development.

Professor Gill acts as an expert member for several prestigious international organisations including the Sabin Centre Peer Review Network on Climate Change Litigation (Regional Lead for Asia), at Columbia University; the British Institute of International and Comparative Law, in London; and the World Commission on Environmental Law Special Task Force on Rights of Nature, IUCN.

She has also contributed to the United Nations Environment Programme by identifying best practices for specialised environmental courts and tribunals, which are of particular importance for the global south.

Through awareness and capacity-building empowerment programmes, Professor Gill's action and research has helped build coalitions, trust and confidence between Indian NGOs and marginalised communities to support victims of environmental degradation.

Speaking about her election, Professor Gill said: "Social science offers a holistic approach to environmental, climate and sustainability challenges by addressing the wider questions of social need, welfare, structural imbalances, and power differentials, thereby moving equity and justice to the centre-stage.

"I am delighted to become a Fellow of the Academy and be a member of this esteemed community. For me, the Academy provides a base that ensures solidarity, respect for all and shared responsibility.

"A changing world, not by choice but by necessity, simultaneously creates the

space to broadcast a fresh message that social science offers a pathway to embedding equity and justice into human and societal development that improves and strengthens social cohesions, thereby promoting a sustainable society.”

Northumbria’s [Professor Alister Scott](#) is an expert in sustainable land use and was nominated for an [Academy of Social Sciences](#) Fellowship by the [Royal Town Planning Institute \(RTPI\)](#) in recognition for his work finding new ways to improve policy and decision making across built and natural environments.

Over the last decade his innovative approach has led to greater public engagement with, and understanding of, the impact of planning on the environment.

In particular, he has worked as a Natural Environment Research Council knowledge exchange fellow to shine a light on the importance of green and blue infrastructure in delivering multifunctional benefits for people, nature and the economy.

Working with planning authorities he has co designed an assessment tool to improve policy responses. He also provides support as a member of the EU EKLIPSE methods expert group, supporting experts on knowledge synthesis methods including a current output for the EU Commission on biodiversity and pandemics.

He has also developed more novel outputs including the ‘Placemakers’ board game, developed as a joint enterprise between the RTPI and Northumbria, which aims to improve the way members of the public, including school children, engage in the planning process.

Professor Scott was also part of a large interdisciplinary team in Birmingham working to find new ways to improve health, wellbeing and prosperity in the city, as part of the national Urban Living programme.

Last year Professor Scott became a [Special Adviser to the House of Lords Land Use Committee](#) supporting the inquiry and report Making the most out of England’s Land, and he recently completed a four-year role as Chair of the Building with Nature Standards Board.

Speaking about his election as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, Professor Scott said: “I was honoured to be sponsored by the Royal Town Planning Institute for the Academy of Social Sciences Fellowship. As the professional body for chartered planners in the UK their support is highly valued. I was equally delighted to be accepted as a fellow of the Academy and I hope I can use my skills to help champion the social sciences that are increasingly needed to plan and manage our built and natural environments.”

[The Academy of Social Sciences Fellowship](#) comprises over 1,500 leading social scientists from academia, the public, private and third sectors. Their expertise covers the breadth of the social sciences, and their practice and research addresses some of the major challenges facing communities, society, places and economies.

All Academy Fellows are selected through an independent peer review which recognises their excellence and impact, including their wider contributions to social sciences for public benefit.

The new Fellows have been elected from 30 UK organisations, including 22 Higher Education Institutions and four non-profits, and from countries beyond the UK including Belgium, Canada and China.

Speaking about the new cohort of Fellows announced today, President of the Academy, Will Hutton, said: “It’s a pleasure to welcome these 47 leading social scientists to the Academy’s Fellowship. Throughout their careers so far, they have furthered our understanding, and made practical contributions, in a range of areas including improving the lives of children and adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa, post-conflict educational reforms and the role of education in peacebuilding, and working with planning authorities to value ecosystem services. I look forward to meeting and working with them to further promote the importance of the social sciences.”

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

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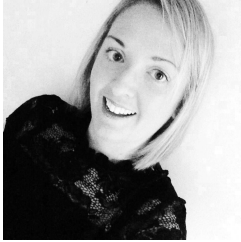
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