

CRESC News

Issue 2

December 2005



Centre for Research on
Socio-Cultural Change

CRESC's First Conference

Questions of culture loom large in our understanding of social change. So the purpose of our inaugural conference in July 2005 was to take stock of disciplinary and theoretical divergences so that we could think about the potential for new frameworks for inter-disciplinary analysis. CRESC's research programme begins from the recognition that the 'cultural turn', in its various guises, has had a major impact on numerous social science and humanities disciplines, and has also carved out its own distinctive interdisciplinary spaces, notably around the cultural studies tradition. At the same time, because disciplines have their own, often long-established, ways of thinking about 'culture', it has stimulated quite different dialogues and research initiatives across academia, and limited engagement between theoretical and methodological debates. Our aim therefore was to take stock of disciplinary divergences (and convergences) to reflect on how approaches to 'culture' might energise our understandings of contemporary social change.

"Culture and Social Change: Disciplinary Perspectives"

In some respects this conference title was so ambitious that it would be impossible to claim that all relevant disciplines had their stake. What we did get, however, was a series of unusually reflective papers by researchers prepared to think about the re-positioning of disciplines, and more generally how academic research can best engage with the kinds of major social issues of the day. In the opening address,

Craig Calhoun, Director of the Social Science Research Council, and Professor of Sociology at New York University noted a loss of critical edge within cultural studies, but also in the difficulties of making researchers in business studies,



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psychology, economics and political science as centrally involved in debates on culture and social change as those in anthropology, sociology, and human geography. He emphasized the need for researchers to respond to new global challenges more effectively, one of which was the different status of university researchers themselves in an environment when commercial funded research proves more powerful.

Calhoun's call for a renewal of critical research around culture and social change was also taken up in the closing address by Veena Das, Professor of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University. Drawing on in-depth ethnography and survey research in India, she spoke movingly about the difficulties of poor households in Delhi, emphasizing their capacity to rebuild and maintain social life under conditions of extreme poverty. Her insistence on methodologically grounded, situated research proved an inspiring model for CRESC itself.

As well as these two key note lectures, there were numerous other highlights, notably an inter-disciplinary roundtable exploring the interface between culture and social change. The six representatives were Veena Das (Johns Hopkins), Anthropology; Angela McRobbie (Goldsmiths), Cultural and Media Studies; Frank Mort (Manchester), History; Elspeth Probyn, (Sydney), Gender Studies; Liz Stanley, (Newcastle), Sociology; Nigel Thrift (Oxford), Geography. One issue which was raised in this roundtable, as well as in numerous other papers in the conference, was the value of reflecting more critically on conceptions of the social through the lens of the cultural, an issue which is being taken up through historical studies of the shifting boundaries between the cultural and social in various CRESC projects. Altogether, 156 people attended from 19 countries and 121 papers were presented in 42 lively panels. Post conference feedback was very positive and showed that delegates appreciated a good balance and a wide range of sessions and speakers in a well-organised conference.

Workshop

Cultural Economy of Finance

From areas of so-called personal finance, such as mortgages, through to the leitmotif of global financial markets, derivatives, almost every aspect of today's world is touched in some way by money and finance. With the pervasiveness of money and finance, so there is a growing academic interest in both amongst an increasing number of scholars drawn from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds. Under the title of 'towards a cultural economy of finance', the workshop brought together leading figures from a range of some of the key disciplines – from social anthropology, sociology, politics, international relations, and of course, economics and accounting and finance – now working actively on finance. Under this umbrella title, the workshop sought to capture something of the breadth of research agendas now focused on finance, while remaining open to more orthodox approaches.

With this sense of openness, the main aim of the workshop was to allow conversations to develop around different approaches to finance and to allow the

variety of disciplinary understandings represented at the workshop to talk to one another. Appropriately, the workshop held at the Open University in September 2005 was jointly funded by CRESC and the Department of Geography at the Open University. The workshop organizer Michael Pryke facilitated the interdisciplinary conversation by dividing the two-day programme into six sessions, enabling pre-circulation of papers which were presented briefly before discussants opened general discussion. The sessions and discussions ranged over a fascinating collection of papers and issues.

International contributors

The workshop began by considering an opening question 'what is money?' with Geoffrey Ingham of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Cambridge considering what the answers to such a question imply for a study of finance. The breadth and diversity of the subsequent sessions is best indicated by a listing of themes, authors and affiliations: the performativity of finance and financial models by Donald MacKenzie, Sociology,

Edinburgh; emotions and financial markets by Jocelyn Pixley, Sociology, UNSW, Sydney; the emergence and workings of derivatives by Richard Bryan, Economics, Sydney; the rise of Islamic mortgages by Bill Maurer, Anthropology, UC at Irvine; back office life in Tokyo's financial centre by Hiro Miyazaki, Anthropology, Cornell); function, position and high pay by Ismail Erturk and others from MBS at the University of Manchester, the role of trust in financial transactions by Costas Lapavistas, Economics, SOAS; the emergence and consequences of the global spread of 'collateral knowledge' in financial markets by Annelise Riles, Anthropology and Law, Cornell; the war on 'terrorist finance' by Marieke de Goede, Political History and International Relations, Amsterdam; markets as 'calculative collaborative devices' by Fabian Muniesa, Centre de Sociologie de L'Innovation, Ecoles des Mines de Paris); visualizing financial markets by Daniel Beunza, Economics and Business Sciences, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona; and the integration of meteorology and finance in the making of markets in weather derivatives by Michael Pryke, Geography, OU. The discussants were drawn from the above presenters but also included Grahame Thompson, Politics, OU and Paul du Gay, Sociology, OU.

Workshop

Qualitative Methods

CRESC held its first Methods Workshop in September 2005 at the University of Manchester. One of CRESC's innovations as an ESRC Research Centre is the creation of two linked methodological 'laboratories', a Qualitative Research Laboratory, and a Cultural Statistics Laboratory. These laboratories, figurative rather than physical, open up an intentional space in CRESC for working through methodological questions around researching socio-cultural change. This first workshop of the Qualitative Research Laboratory, on 'Reusing Qualitative Data', has emerged out of CRESC's interest in drawing on data from previous research projects to examine socio-cultural change. This dovetails with an increasing interest across the social sciences in reusing qualitative data. Yet despite the increasing turn to reuse, it remains a contentious practice, with continuing concerns about methodological pitfalls and clashes over its epistemological status. The workshop brought together speakers from the two major British archives for qualitative data (Qualidata and Mass-Observation), and two CRESC researchers, with a range of

discussants from diverse perspectives: Corinne Squire (Centre for Narrative Research at UEL), Elizabeth Silva (Sociology, OU), Nick Hubble (Centre for Suburban Studies, Kingston) and Jeanette Edwards (Anthropology, University of Manchester). The day aimed at opening up a debate that risks becoming polarized between advocates of reuse and those more sceptical of the possibilities.

Reusing qualitative data

CRESC researcher Niamh Moore opened the workshop with a paper querying the 're' of 'reusing data', asking 'how does *reusing* qualitative data differ from *using* qualitative data?' This question was taken up by Libby Bishop from Qualidata, who provided a rare detailed account of the process of reuse. Her account vividly demonstrated how her reuse of two datasets at Qualidata, led to her shifting the focus of her research questions and effectively constructing a different and new dataset for her project on convenience food. This paper thus provided an illustration of an argument gestured at by Moore, that reuse is not so much about reusing 'pre-existing' data, but that as Bishop noted, 'data

are co-constructed whether reading or doing a live interview', and that attending to the process of co-constructing the contemporary dataset can return us to existing practices for understanding qualitative research. This was followed by a paper from Sandra Koa-Wing introducing the work of the Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex, and providing an account of some of the complexities of constructing an archive of data which is primarily intended for reuse. Mike Savage's paper told of his engagement with data from the Mass Observation Archive and asked how we could use qualitative data to examine change over time. Specifically the paper looked at changing popular identities, using Mass Observation data on class from the 1940s and from the 1990s. The day's discussions were put into a wider context with Jennifer Mason's illuminating concluding reflections on the place of qualitative data sources in the ESRC, drawing on her experiences on the ESRC Data Resources Board.

Niamh Moore's paper, '(Re)using Qualitative Data?', will shortly be available on the CRESC website; and the intention is to publish a number of the papers as a themed section in a sociological journal. Next year, autumn 2006, there will be another CRESC Methods Workshop, this time organised by Shinobu Majima under the auspices of the Cultural Statistics Laboratory.

Research Theme 1

Cultural Economy

Cultural economy aims to connect economic analysis with the rest of the social sciences after the cultural turn. It offers something different from both the purely technical analysis of mainstream economics and the institutionalism that animates much political economy. As such, cultural economy is work in progress which theme 1 researchers want to bring back to the empirical question of what is distinctive about present day capitalism in terms of its cultural economic processes and socio economic structures. From this point of view, we do not wish simply to celebrate discourse and social construction but aim instead to interrogate the often contradictory effects; and we do not wish to predefine change by announcing an epochal shift but aim instead to find out what's going on through careful empirical research.

At the end of year one, theme 1 researchers can report how they are addressing this agenda by working together. In year one we started with the advantage of two established teams of Manchester business researchers (Erturk, Froud, Johal, Leaver and Williams; Edwards, Shaoul and Stafford) accustomed to working together; Pryke and du Gay from the Open University added overlapping interests in the cultural economy of finance and public management; and Green brought an anthropological perspective while Savage, Warde and our theme research officer, Tampubolon contributed an interest in Bourdieuvian sociology. The major strategic decisions were about how to use this resource for team working so as to deliver substantial intellectual innovation within the first year and plan its continuation through the life of the centre.

Giant firm strategy

Four business researchers (Froud, Johal, Leaver and Williams) volunteered to lead the theme one effort in year one by writing a book on giant firm strategy which asked a fundamental question about how the intrusion of the capital market, through demands for shareholder value, had changed giant firm strategy. If strategy in giant UK and US firms was classically about firm in product market, the CRESC researchers argued that strategy is now about managing the relation between narrative and numbers. Their exploration of these cultural issues highlighted the complex and contradictory interaction of the narrative and performative with financial numbers in a world of constraints

and false attributions. In January 2006 Routledge will publish their book, *Strategy after Financialization* and an extract from the book is already available on the web as a CRESC working paper on GE under Jack Welch.

The strategy book was partly about getting a historical perspective on how messy and unintended consequences often result from the discursive framing of problems and possibilities. This theme was taken up in two separate first year projects by Green and du Gay. Green looked back at the new economy mania to consider how connectivity became an end in itself in an article which will appear in *Current Anthropology*. Du Gay's work on the ethic of office continued his critique of the assumptions guiding civil service reform since the late 1960s and developed his defence of the traditional civil service role and ethos. The results include a book on *Organizing Identity* whose manuscript will be delivered in late 2005.

Work in progress

du Gay's scepticism about the new public management was echoed in the initial stages of the Shaoul and Edwards project on Public Private Partnerships supported by a £25k grant from the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland Their project complements the work of du Gay, so that we hope to develop and articulate a distinctive CRESC position on public sector reform that parallels the MBS team's work on private sector restructuring in the year one strategy book. This should continue the theme 1 aim of ensuring that we produce distinctive work which tackles the big issues of the present day in ways that are policy relevant.

In workshop and seminar organisation, the main burden was carried by Michael Pryke who persuaded most of the major international names in the field to come and present papers at a two day workshop on the *Cultural Economy of Finance* at the Open University from 15-16 September. The workshop, described elsewhere in this newsletter, was an outstanding success and will lead to a journal special issue. The Manchester business academics aim for similar ongoing benefits from their new International Working Group on Financialization. Here Adam Leaver has played the leading role in organising a web site (iwgf.org) and recruiting 150 academics from a variety of disciplines.

Integrative project on elites

Inevitably, part of the first year was spent in planning our activities and future projects. Some of the planning took the form of work on future projects by established teams or individual researchers like Adkins and Warde whose projects begin in year two of CRESC. But the outstanding question was then about whether and how we could use an integrative project to bring together business and sociology researchers in collaborations which would not exist if the CRESC centre had not been funded.

Before the centre opened, we had decided to work on business, political and cultural elites whose study has been unjustifiably neglected in our society of increasing inequality. Through internal CRESC meetings plus joint work for presentations at the CRESC conference and the Sociology Congress at Stockholm in summer 2005, the business researchers then arrived at a shared understanding with the sociologists. The sociologists brought a Bourdieuvian perspective on stratification whereby elites did not have to be clubs or conspiracies; while the business researchers observed that present day capitalism interestingly combined neo liberalism restructuring with regulation in the interests of social responsibility.

The outcome so far is a proposal to shift the focus of existing business elite research in a jointly written position paper "re-thinking elites" which will become a CRESC working paper in the New Year. This paper argues for a problem shift on the grounds that the attention given to high paid corporate executives has distracted from analysis of the cadres of restructuring and compliance (like investment bankers and accounting partners). Our work on elites is in the early stages but, like the work on giant firm strategy, represents an attempt at fundamental innovation which should make a major contribution to understanding the socio cultural changes of our time.

Research Theme 2

Transformations in Media, Culture and Economy

Are the media catalysts or merely reflectors of social and economic change? Do they promote social fragmentation or foster social and cultural cohesion? Do the media make better-informed citizens and more critical consumers or do they contribute to 'dumbing down' and disenchantment with politics? Does public service broadcasting have a future and how should it be organised and financed? What are the likely social consequences of transformations in media and communications technologies? What should our media be like and how should they be regulated?

These are just some of the questions we are currently researching in our media projects at CRESC where we are drawing on existing and new empirical data in order to assess such contradictory claims about transformations in media, culture and economy. Our aim is to test general theoretical claims about change in the light of particular empirical studies and specific local circumstances. Our approach is interdisciplinary and many of our projects offer historical or comparative perspectives on questions of change. Over the course of the next few years we hope to deliver a measured assessment of the nature and pace, the scale and scope of change in media cultures and economies. Here are some of the highlights of our first year's research.

Media production

David Hesmondhalgh was awarded a grant of £98,088 by the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a project on *Creative Work in the Cultural Industries* which will run from January 2006 to January 2008. The research plugs a major gap in research into the experiences and working conditions of creative personnel (actors, musicians, directors, writers, etc. primarily responsible for making cultural products) and those who supervise and work with them. Surprisingly these issues have been neglected in media research and this study will provide a better understanding of working conditions in the television, recording and magazine publishing industries. These three industries have been chosen to test claims that each operate under distinctive conditions and dynamics. The project therefore seeks to develop knowledge of how different cultural industries work.

A collaborative inquiry into the independent media production sector, led by Karel Williams, threw up some interesting findings. It exposed a gap between *the promises* (TV producers as independent, creative agents with few organisational constraints) and *the practical outcomes* of the sector (a few giants like Endemol, a consolidating set of middle sized firms and many minnows which insecurely depend on one or two commissioners). A draft report on this work was presented at the CRESC inaugural conference in July 2005.

Media audiences, public, users

Our research into media audiences benefits from a number of large-scale affiliated inquiries that were initiated prior to advent of CRESC, the findings of which are shaping our current research on audiences. One of our main aims is to document changing patterns and practices of media consumption and assess their consequences. Tony Bennett and David Wrights' research on the social organisation of the media field is providing rich data on this subject. It comes out of their ESRC project *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion: A Critical Investigation*. It analyses statistical data on film and television viewing practices of a nationally representative sample. Their findings will appear in a special issue of *Cultural Trends* and a report for the British Film Institute during the course of 2006.

Changes in media technologies and in modes of consumption (new kinds of interactivity and self-scheduling, surfing and zapping, ways of recording, storing and consuming media) require innovative research methods and techniques. Helen Wood is devising and testing out new methodologies aimed at capturing a range of new media and cultural practices. Her presentation at the CRESC inaugural conference stimulated a lively methodological debate. Helen is also contributing to CRESC our audience research strand through her project *Making Class and Self through Televised Ethical Scenarios* (with Prof Bev Skeggs), funded by the ESRC Identities and Social Action programme.

Hugh Mackay has been researching analogue switch off in Wales. This study develops his previous research on the study

of new technologies at the moment of their arrival in households. His paper on multi-channel viewing by the 'reluctant 50%' was very well received at the CRESC inaugural conference in Manchester in July 2005. Hugh is developing and extending this research on the internet and we look forward to some interesting findings during the course of the year.

Transformations in technologies, economics and textual regimes are most particularly visible in the genre of television news – not least at times of war. *Shifting Securities: News Cultures Before and Beyond the Iraq War 2003* is a project led by Marie Gillespie involving 12 researchers funded by the ESRC New Challenges to Security Research Programme. The project integrates audience ethnography, discourse analysis and interviews with military and media professionals and policy makers. The project runs until October 2006. Check out the website below for details of an international conference in June at which our findings are presented (www.mediatingsecurity.com).

Public Service Broadcasting and media policy

Much of our CRESC work over the last year has focused around the PSB project led by Professor Richard Collins. At our regular theme meetings, for example, there have been a number of productive interdisciplinary exchanges and discussions stimulated by discussions of a range of readings nominated by theme members. Richard Collins is now advising the House of Lords Select Committee on Charter Renewal

David Hesmondhalgh launched, completed and published an inquiry into 'Media and Cultural Policy as Public Policy: the Case of the British Labour Government', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 95-109. While Jason Toynbee's inquiry into Media policy and copyright is at the literature review stage and will soon begin empirical work. Certain areas of this enquiry will now be further developed in a collaborative enquiry which is part of the Cultural Industries integrative strand in CRESC.

Finally, on upcoming events, we would remind you that the Centre will be hosting an international conference in September 2006 on Media and Social Theory which provides a focus for much of what we are doing about presentation, networking and dissemination. Find more details about the 2006 Conference in the announcement at the end of this newsletter and on the CRESC website (cresc.ac.uk).

Research Theme 3

Culture, Governance and Citizenship

A central concern of Theme 3 is with the way in which the material, the cultural and the political interact, with a particular focus on how various regimes of material and cultural power have sought to produce certain kinds of political subjects. Its investigations in this area are shaped by a set of theoretical interests centred on the historical development and transformations of liberal government and the distinctive place of culture within these.

The theme is divided into two projects: *Material and Ethical Practices of Government: States, Cities, and Markets*, and *Making-up Citizens: Cultural Knowledges, Governance and Social Change*. The first of these focuses on the ethical and material practices of governance, particularly as embedded in the operations of states, cities and markets, and the second focuses on the role of cultural knowledges in both making up and acting on citizens through the operations of cultural institutions.

Liberalism in historical perspective

A good start was made to both projects. In the first, three inquiries were initiated, all with a strong historical focus. Patrick Joyce's *State of Freedom* inquiry looked at the formation of the postal system and its role in providing a cultural-material infrastructure for the development of a liberal state. Liz McFall's work on the development of life assurance schemes, and the resistances they encountered, similarly had a primarily nineteenth-century focus.

Francis Dodsworth contributed work in two inquiries focused toward the end of the 'long eighteenth century'. His inquiry into the relations between 'liberalism' and 'police' probed the changing relations between these two mentalities of government in the course of the eighteenth century while his work on the relationship between architecture and administration focused on the first Treasury building as a statement of civic virtue that drew on earlier models from the liberal culture of civic humanism. Maiken Umbach's work, by contrast, focused on late nineteenth and early twentieth century Berlin and the role of domestic décor and architecture in relation to the practices of *Bildung*. Her interest in these focused on their role in shaping new forms of interiority that contributed to shaping a distinctive

liberal ethos among the German bourgeoisie.

Citizenship, culture and difference

Kath Woodward's inquiry into the relationships between sports management, the shaping of identities and cultural diversity policies was the first major inquiry to get underway in the theme's second project. Its focus on the ways in which soccer clubs use their fan clubs and websites, and staff training programmes, to combat racism in the dressing room just as much as on the terraces is a distinctive contribution to the literature. Tony Bennett's inquiry into the role of museums in ordering cultural differences similarly focused on questions of cultural diversity examining the respects in which these questions have impacted on debates concerning the need for significant transformations in the nature and operations of museums if they are to contribute productively to these aspects of contemporary governance. His parallel work on museums as civic laboratories explored the theme's methodological concerns with the relations between science studies and governmentality theory.

Other work related to the *Making Up Citizens* project consisted in plans for a symposium on *Diversity in Question?* Kath Woodward and Sophie Watson took the lead here, breaking new ground for CRESC in planning this event in conjunction with *Open Democracy* whose website has made such a valuable contribution to the development of an international public sphere.

Both projects contributed a number of papers to the theme strand in CRESC's inaugural conference and a selection of these – and other papers presented in the strand – will be published as a special issue of the international journal *Cultural Studies*.

Integrative project

The year saw equally important advances in the development of a set of cross-theme issues to provide a common agenda for collaborative work. The development of an integrative project on the nature and limits of liberal government was an especially fruitful outcome of this process. This will serve as a framework for organising a series of theoretical and historical interrogations of the limits and boundaries of liberal

government: limits with regard to historical periods, with regard to territorial boundaries, and with regard to the populations to which it is applied. Three initial foci for this integrative project have been agreed. The first focuses on the relations between liberalism and the emergence of the economy as a distinct sphere, and the conditions, representational and material, for this 'fixing' of an economy in place to be possible. The second focus concerns the role of mapping in the construction and ordering of the social. Work on this consisted in the planning for a workshop to be held in early 2006.

However, the major initial focus for this integrative project is on the methods and techniques through which liberal subjects have been assembled in the context of varying strategies of governance over the period from the late eighteenth century to the present. This will be pursued through a book project - *Assembling Liberal Subjects* – that will examine the ways in which liberal subjectivities have been constructed through a series of cultural and material practices, paying particular interest to the relationship between citizenship and aesthetics, the importance of particular notions of civic performance and the material structure of the civic environment. The book will make a distinctive contribution to the literature on citizenship by going beyond unitary notions of citizenship and the state to analyse the relationship between subjects and non-state bodies, such as corporations or religions, addressing questions of toleration, diversity and multiculturalism.

A second area of work focused on issues shared by the theme's two main projects was geared to the methods seminar that the theme will organise in 2006. This will be dedicated to the topic of *New Cultural Materialisms* and will examine the ways in which the ground assumptions of what might count as materialist forms of cultural analysis have been changed across a range of social science and humanities disciplines.

Research Theme 4

Cultural Values and Politics

Theme 4 brings together predominantly anthropologists and sociologists committed to empirically focused and methodologically innovative, systematic, accounts of changing cultural values. The projects divide into two areas: one cluster on social cohesion focusing predominantly on British based projects (led by Mike Savage), and another on the politics of expertise focusing on Latin American issues (led by Penny Harvey). We have found it very useful to consider issues arising from the two projects alongside each other as a means of avoiding ethnocentric and British centred frames of reference and challenging simple arguments about globalisation. During the first year great emphasis was based on team building, and establishing points of dialogue between anthropological and sociological perspectives to allow us to establish fruitful lines of inquiry.

Network thinking

The most important development of the first year was our interests in examining the potential of network thinking. Today, the idea of networks proliferates to an astonishing extent. We have been told that we are living in a 'network society': technical networks, such as those of the internet and other kinds of virtual communication, are said to surround us; it is claimed that businesses and organisations more generally are organised along network lines (see the discussion in Thompson 2003); and international crime and terrorism has come to be described in network terms. The sociology of science and technology has become highly influential, and fascinated by the ubiquity of 'networks' in contemporary political and economic life, networking and interactivity has been seen to dominate contemporary western thinking, operating, in Andrew Barry's words, as both 'metaphor and model of individual and collective life'. Actor-network theory is currently the most popular means of examining the relationship between technical and social relations (Latour 1990). Beyond the social sciences, network ideas are being championed within numerous sciences and a recent host of popular books have emphasised the new appeal of networks in scientific endeavours (Barabási 2002; Newman, et al. 2003). Yet at the same time, this network thinking has proved elusive and has failed to generate interdisciplinary research programme

where qualitative and quantitative approaches speak meaningfully to each other.

Our particular interests in networks have led us to explore the divergence of network thinking in social network analysis and anthropology (in a working paper written by Hannah Knox, Mike Savage and Penny Harvey shortly to be published in *Economy and Society*). We are interested in examining how social network analysis, which has become highly quantitative in its specialist applications which are prominent in the US and parts of Europe, might re-engage with the ethnographic imagination. Ethnographies of social networks as social forms have shown that the political and powerful affects of being in or outside networks are generated through ambiguities and multiple meanings. The network simultaneously points to a structural or morphological form, recognisable through forms of inscription such as that conducted by Social Network Analysts; is also used in a metaphorical sense to evoke connectedness and produce exclusion through relationships which are performed in new spatial ways – either by crossing physical space through new forms of communication and transport, creating other kinds of spaces e.g. virtual/online environments, or being sensitive to the ways in which the network itself stands as a critique of Euclidian basis to our thinking about space (ANT); and, finally, serves as a design for action and prescription of how to organise. All contained within the same term, these different meanings come to stand in for one another in complex ways which produce discursive engagement both amongst those who mobilise networks as a form of social organisation, and between social scientists who continue to explore how networks might produce novel and productive ways of analysing social life. However, we have noted the recent emergence of a cultural sociology of networks within social network analysis which responds to various methodological problems within SNA itself and which offers a potentially stimulating and exciting way of connecting with debates in anthropology.

In taking up this exciting agenda, CRESC is uniquely fortunate in being able to use the expertise of researchers with expertise in social network analysis (such

as Nick Crossley, Mike Savage, Gindo Tampubolon and Alan Warde) and in anthropology (such as Penny Harvey, Hannah Knox and Karen Sykes). We hope to explore further the possible intersection of interests further in the ethnography of road provision which Harvey and Knox are conducting, as well as in a group of research projects on social networks, to be co-ordinated by Tim Jordan, which are to begin in summer 2006.

Interdisciplinary possibilities

This interest in network thinking is only one example of the kinds of interdisciplinary possibilities which are being explored in theme 4. A further cluster of projects are specifically examining the micro-politics of social cohesion. Nick Crossley began an inquiry on use of gyms, using both quantitative and qualitative data, mainly allowing him to probe the subtle relationship between processes of individualization yet also collective identities in the gym context. Elizabeth Silva has studied how household technology affects forms of household intimacy and gender relationships. Both these projects are proving invaluable in allowing us to consider how forms of social cohesion arise in small-scale contexts, but also in demonstrating how cohesion also involves creating social boundaries that define social divisions and tensions.

Mike Savage is completing his innovative re-use of the fieldnotes of post-war social science researchers to write a new history of popular identities in England since 1950. His argument that emerging social science researchers, and especially sociologists, created a concern with the 'new' and 'modern' as a means of carving out a distinctive jurisdiction for their own expertise allows us a way of reflecting on contemporary socio-cultural change from a different perspective, in which we take current preoccupations not at face value, but as an enduring cultural form in their own right. When completed, it is hoped that this book will offer a distinctive new perspective for understanding socio-cultural change which will illustrate, in small scale, CRESC's potential to rework critical research agendas.

CRESC Working Papers



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The CRESC working papers series is now well underway with eleven titles already published and new titles appearing regularly. The papers cover the range of research activity being undertaken in CRESC within the four themes and can be downloaded from the website at http://www.cresc.ac.uk/publications/workingpapers/workingpaperslist1_30.htm

Opposite is a full list of the current published titles:



Future CRESC Events:

February 2006, date TBC

CRESC/ North West Culture Observatory Seminar 2: Cultural Taste and Participation Council Chamber, The University of Manchester

23 March 2006

CRESC/ North West Culture Observatory Seminar 3: Space, Place and Cultural Identity Council Chamber, The University of Manchester

26 April 2006

Theme 4 After New Social Movements workshop. Venue TBC

4 May 2006

CRESC/ North West Culture Observatory Seminar 4: Cultural Capital and Family Transfer Council Chamber, The University of Manchester

6-8 September 2006

2nd Annual CRESC Conference (see announcement opposite)

Working Paper 1

Social networks and spatial relations: networks as method, metaphor and form
Hannah Knox, Mike Savage, Penny Harvey

Working Paper 2

Civic Laboratories: museums, cultural objecthood and the governance of the social
Tony Bennett

Working Paper 3

Cultural Capital and the Cultural Field in Contemporary Britain
Tony Bennett, Mike Savage, Elizabeth Silva, Alan Warde, Modesto Gayo-Cal and David Wright

Working Paper 4

Cultural capital in the UK: a preliminary report using correspondence analysis
Mike Savage, Modesto Gayo-Cal, Alan Warde, Gindo Tampubolon (with the assistance of Johs Hjellbrekke, Brigitte LeRoux and Henry Rouanet)

Working Paper 5

General Electric: The Conditions of Success
Julie Froud, Sukhdev Johal, Adam Leaver, Karel Williams

Working Paper 6

In the Gym: Motives, Meanings and Moral Careers
Nick Crossley

Working Paper 7

Social Movements and Social Change
Tim Jordan

Working Paper 8

On and Off the Pitch: Diversity Policies and Transforming Identities?
Kath Woodward

Working Paper 9

The Democratisation of Finance? Promises, Outcomes and Conditions
Ismail Erturk, Julie Froud, Sukhdev Johal, Adam Leaver and Karel Williams

Working Paper 10

The Rise of Cybernetics? Government and Change in Lithuanian Cultural Policy
Egle Rindzeviciute

Working Paper 11

The Reinvention of Prudence: Household Savings, Financialisation and Forms of Capitalism
Ismail Erturk, Julie Froud, Stefano Solari and Karel Williams

2006 Conference: Media Change and Social Theory

A major international conference organised by the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC) at The Open University and The University of Manchester, in association with the Centre for Media, Culture and History, New York University.

St Hugh's College, Oxford

6 - 8th September 2006

Confirmed plenary and keynote speakers:

Annabelle Sreberny (School of Oriental and African Studies, London)

Daniel Hallin (University of California San Diego)

Faye Ginsburg (New York University)

Karel Williams (The University of Manchester)

Liesbet van Zoonen (University of Amsterdam)

Nick Couldry (London School of Economics)

Philip Schlesinger (University of Stirling)

Purnima Mankekar (Stanford University)

Toby Miller (University of California Riverside)

Tony Bennett (The Open University)

Further information and a call for papers is available at:
www.cresc.ac.uk or email: cresc@manchester.ac.uk



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