CRESC News

"Moving things on"
The 2007 Conference

If CRESC theme 1 is about cultural economy, that means different things to various researchers. Some emphasise performance and the constitutive role of discourse, while others put their trust in ethnographic or other methods and more want to hybridise new cultural economy with the old structural concerns of political economy. The researchers within theme 1 have used these differences constructively to define a distinctive mixed methods approach to the remaking of present day capitalism around shared concerns like the active role of money and finance or the unaccountability of elites. The 2007 conference organised by theme 1 was a decisive test of whether CRESC's idea of cultural economy without one doxa could attract and engage a broader audience in debate which moved things on. After the conference, the answer to that question has to be a definite yes.

The first propitious indication was the number of delegates who came to the three day conference in Manchester from 5th to 7th September 2007. There are no departments or schools of cultural economy which provide a natural constituency so delegates were attracted in ones and twos from humanities, social sciences and business schools in many universities. Over 170 participants from about 20 countries attended. One major attraction was the starry cast of academic plenary speakers backed up by practitioners who offered timely analysis of current issues, as delegates have come to expect in theme 1 events. Thus, the conference was kick started with a pre conference lecture on the illusions of the Blair legacy by Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson of the *Guardian* and the *Mail on Sunday*. While negative stereotypes about business were then challenged by Steve Francis whose fluent, practitioner defence of finance led capitalism was for many delegates the (unexpected) highlight of the whole conference.

The papers were organised into half a dozen streams on finance, money and difference, consumer culture, new spirits of capitalism, management and elites, theorising culture and economy. Each stream was supported by academic plenaries where the speakers included Rachel Bowlby and Frank Cochoy on consumption and retail, the anthropologists

Chris Gregory and Eric Hirsch on money and Karin Knorr Cetina and Hugh Willmott on financial markets, with the envoi provided by Larry Grosberg and Nigel Thrift. The academic plenaries did not disappoint but the real measure of the conference's success was what happened in the open streams where some 140 papers were presented. Most notably there was vigorous cross over debate within and between streams which recruited researchers from different problematics, while outsiders were drawn into CRESC discussions in ways which promoted new activity.

In terms of debate, one of the most interesting developments was the cross over within and between the two streams on money, difference and borders and on finance and financialization. Those with an interest in money come above all from anthropological backgrounds, while those concerned with finance and markets have various kinds of business school and social science backgrounds with some (but not all) loyal to a Callonesque definition of cultural economy. Strikingly, there was then a good deal of cross over debate as individuals engaged with others from out of field. This was notably so in some sessions, like the one on "traces and signposts" organised by Sarah Green; and, more generally, through the incisive interventions of key intermediaries like Eric Pineault from Montreal whose broad

interests span many of the divides. The end result was a growing interest in the structural, evidenced by Paul Du Gay and Mike Pryke's commitment to a new theme 1 inquiry on sovereign wealth funds.

In terms of involving outsiders, the outcome was clearest in the discussion of elites within the management stream. CRESC is taking a leading role in reviving elite studies. A *Sociological Review* monograph edited by Mike Savage and Karel Williams will appear in 2008 and that was previewed in the conference with presentations by Harvey and Maclean on British and French business networks, by Froud and Tampubolon on non executive directors and by Griffiths on cultural elites. Equally interesting were the presentations on City and Westminster networks by researchers, like Aeron Davis of Goldsmiths and Yuval Millo of the LSE, who are not contributing to the forthcoming monograph. But, coming out of all this, Yuval Millo is along with Julie Froud organising a meeting at CRESC Manchester this December so as to put together a new network of those interested in elite studies. All in all, the 2007 theme 1 conference certainly helped to move things along intellectually and practically.

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CRESC Laboratories

Mike Savage

At our outset, one of CRESC's most innovative features was to set up research laboratories in cultural statistics and qualitative research methods so that we were able to explore how methods are themselves implicated in socio-cultural change. We were aware that theoretical debates about change did not inter-relate closely with methodological developments. In some respects this situation has been exacerbated by recent investments in the methodological capacity of the UK social sciences, especially through ESRC investments in the Research Methods Programme, the National Centre for Research Methods, and the E-Social Sciences. Although this has considerably strengthened the methodological research community, it has tended to demarcate them from those interested in more synthetic or theoretical debates. We were also aware that the striking growth of interest in using evidence, appropriately analysed, to guide policy interventions, and the proliferation of digital information needs to be related to social scientific scrutiny, and hence recruited researchers who were skilled methodologists, yet were also able to engage with wider bodies of academic research

Focused in the Cultural Statistics and Qualitative Research Laboratories, CRESC houses expert quantitative and qualitative researchers who are able to make their interests connect with those pursuing substantive research projects in our core themes. This has enabled us to reconnect theory to method, and allowed us to develop innovative ways of construing the remit of research methods in terms of the implicit notions social and cultural relations which they embody. We have become interested in how research methods themselves are not neutral resources for analysis, but themselves are agents of change. CRESC work has already impacted on the ESRC's methodological agenda, and has attracted interest from numerous research bodies. Although wide ranging, we can identify three main contributions of the research laboratories to date.

1: The challenge of transactional data. In a wide ranging synthetic paper published in *Sociology*, the official journal of the British Sociological Association, Savage and Burrows (2007) highlight the challenge to conventional social science methods posed by the proliferation of transactional and administrative data. This paper draws on Savage's historical research as well as his experiences within CRESC, and Burrow's role as co-ordinator of the E-Society programme. They argue that academic social scientists (and sociologists in particular) have rested their methodological expertise strongly on two methods, the sample survey and the in-depth interview, forgetting that these emerged in distinctive historical situations which have now changed. They claim that the rise of transactional digital data poses cultural as well as methodological challenges, as it requires visualising methods and interests in network applications. This article has inspired several responses in the journal *Sociology*. It led to a one day workshop (on 'Radical Data') organised by the Research Methods Programme. A session of the last

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conference of the Research Methods programme had a roundtable debating this paper.

2: Extending the use of Qualitative data. Although there is increasing interest in using archived qualitative data to inform analyses of change, there are few good examples of how this might be done in practice. CRESC's qualitative research methods laboratory has shown how archived qualitative research can be used creatively to inform understandings of recent change, in a special issue of *Sociological Research Online*, edited by Niamh Moore, and containing contributions by CRESC researchers Savage and Silva. These papers argue that there are no special theoretical issues posed by re-using archived qualitative data. The papers show that historians have creatively used archived social science sources, and that the social sciences can learn from this experience. Savage (2007) shows how some archived qualitative data, such as that of Mass-Observation, takes a longitudinal form, and hence can be mined to reveal the complexity of changing identities and values in ways which conventional survey analysis finds difficult. This work relates to the CRESC theme on Cultural Governance which has also used historical data on liberal governance in the 18th and 19th centuries to help unravel the specific nature of 21st century governance.

3: Championing visual methods. The proliferation of information poses challenges, in terms of knowing how to extract key data, or in lay terms 'seeing the wood for the trees'. Conventional statistical and narrative methods find it difficult to address these issues. Visual methods, by arraying complex data in visual form, allow the potential to make sense of complexity through processes of visual interpretation. CRESC researchers have used relatively neglected (in the UK) methods of multiple correspondence analysis, and social network analysis to explore cultural complexity. In both areas, they have encouraged increasing use of these methods in the UK social sciences. CRESC researchers have also shown that visual methods promote particular absences and have examined the cultural reach of digital images. Harvey and Knox has shown the absences and limitations of this kind of visual data in their study of visual methods in Peruvian road building, and Harvey has also shown how digital urban visual maps are now being used to design cities.

4: Methodological hybridity: numbers and narratives. In place of methodological spcialisation, which sees advance as resting on ever more specialised elaborations of research methods, CRESC has shown how hybrid explorations of the intersections between 'numbers and narratives' is essential in the contemporary situation of data proliferation. CRESC's business research, for instance, is methodologically innovative by mixing methods so as to challenge received ideas about what management can do or to persuade sceptics who doubted whether elite exchange influences behaviour. The book *Financialization and Strategy* is the first to combine cultural analysis of corporate narratives and performative initiatives with numbers based analysis of long run performance. It is possible to show that transferable techniques are less important than many suppose, because GE's financial results come from an undisclosed business model of combining financial services and manufacturing; and not from the ostentatious performative initiatives of Jack Welch. The forthcoming working paper by Froud et al (2008) on non-executive directors provides another demonstration of how mixed methods can be used to convince readers. In this case network analysis is used to map the exchange of current and former FTSE 100 executives under the current system of proceduralised governance within the giant firm sector; the behavioural effects of such exchange are then established by case study of takeovers in the building materials sector where NEDS play a new and crucial role in ensuring everything is for sale

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ICT-enabled Service Work, Globalisation and Gender

Debra Howcroft

This research aims to bring together researchers, from both within and beyond CRESC, who are working on related themes from different disciplines, but whose paths may not have previously crossed. With Helen Richardson, a Theme 1 workshop has been planned for February 21st-22nd 2008 entitled Gender and Service Work in the Cultural Economy, where it is hoped that we will have a lively dialogue. The workshop will involve a range of speakers from sociology, anthropology, management, gender studies, and science and technology studies. The presenters include: Alison Adam (Salford), Laurie Cohen (Loughborough), Marisa D'Mello (Mumbai), Susan Durbin (Bristol), Hazel Gillard (London), Ursula Huws (London), Marek Korczynski (Loughborough), Susanne Langer (Manchester), Leo McCann (Manchester), Marcela Miozzo (Manchester), Diane Perrons (London), Phil Taylor (Strathclyde), and Juliet Webster (London).

The aim of the workshop is to explore the social and cultural issues within the economic changes that have given rise to service work, which is rapidly becoming one of the largest sources of employment generation. This sector is highly polarised with highly paid 'knowledge workers' operating in global cities co-existing with low paid, part-time service workers situated in low-cost locations. The feminization of employment has meant that women workers comprise a large proportion of the service sector, but their work tends to be centred on low-paid, temporary, part-time occupations. The workshop is intended to focus primarily on ICT-enabled service work (such as call centres, the IT industry, and shared service centres) as technological developments enable work to be carried out virtually and across boundaries, whilst also facilitating work restructuring. The workshop will also consider other aspects of service work, such as the role of care workers in the 'knowledge economy'.

Related to the workshop is a Theme 1 project that is supported by the European Social Fund (£157K)* . The project team comprises three researchers: Debra Howcroft, Susanne Langer, and Chris Westrup. Its aim is to specifically investigate the employability barriers to women working within the regional shared services sector, but, more generally, the project is concerned with new ways of organising service work. The shared services area represents an important aspect of business services, currently employing around 4million people in the UK with predictions of huge global expansion. The sector has grown almost ten-fold in the last decade,

with Manchester being one of the largest international regions where much of the activity is clustered. Shared service centres are rarely discussed within either the academic literature or the popular press, which is surprising given that so many large corporations are unbundling their business services and bringing together in one location 'back office' functions that were previously dispersed, either nationally or internationally. These functions typically cover activities such as accounting, human resources, and logistics, but can contain others.

Shared service centres span a range of different industry sectors and examples of firms which operate with a shared services function include: BP, GE, and Ford Motor from the manufacturing sector; SAP, IBM and HP from the technology sector; and Marks and Spencer and Sainsbury within retail. However, this model of organising is not restricted to private companies, but also exists in the public sector. For example, in the UK, the Cabinet Office Shared Services Team is providing recommendations as to how back-office functions can be shared and provided to multiple councils in order to generate efficiency savings (see: http://www.cio.gov.uk/shared_services).

Shared Service Centres, as a subset of service sector work, are an interesting example of the reorganisation and restructuring of organisations, clustered in particular locales. They exemplify a reorientation within companies from 'departments' to 'functions' and from 'jobs' to 'roles' where similar roles are identified, lifted from their locations and brought together in centres dedicated to certain

activities. Our interest lies with the processes of division of service work from people and location, which are mediated by ICTs and impersonal service standards. As information becomes digitally encoded, mobile and combinable, it becomes possible for work to become performed in different places, to separate service work from production sites, and to bring that work together in new geographical sites. Using in-depth interviews with service workers, managers, and policy makers across multiple sites in the North West region, our work aims to explore how these processes are played out in practice.

On the issue of shifting locations and spatial reconfigurations, a CRESC inquiry titled 'Assumptions and contradictions in research on the global location of IT-enabled shared service centres' explores the assumptions and contradictions concerning the rationale for the location of shared service centres in the broader context of global capitalism. Given the increasing deployment of ICTs, dematerialised products, and the standardisation of work, reorienting entire jobs into tasks as 'part-process' indicates that new divisions of labour are emerging. This suggests that it is possible to disregard location and move shared services work to centralised sites based primarily on cost considerations and technological infrastructure. Despite the simplicity of appeal of this model, some of the purported benefits have been difficult to achieve in practice and evidence shows clustering in specific locations: Manchester rather than Leeds in Northern England; Hyderabad rather than Surat in India; India rather than Pakistan, and so on.

So, while Increasing attention is being paid to the so-called epochal changes associated with the rhetoric of the global knowledge economy, work in services tends to be both location less (and global) and location specific (and local), with a crucial role being played by brokers, consultants and development agencies in shaping shared service centre locations. Pressing issues such as whether practices and procedures can easily translate across boundaries, how skills and knowledge are enacted in situ, and how this supposedly seamless integration of distributed service work affects cultural identities, recruitment and work processes, is worthy of exploration. This research aims to understand how this unfolds in practice.

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See also 'Missing women': Gender, ICTs and the Shaping of the Global Economy', CRESC Working Paper Series, no.29

The Internet @ Home: Users and Genres

Hugh Mackay

The Internet lies at the heart of many of the arguments about the epochal nature of contemporary social and cultural transformation, yet it's the subject of remarkably little research in the social sciences or media studies. McLuhan's 'global village' is a notion that has considerable resonance in the age of the Internet; and Castells' argument that we live in a network society places the Internet squarely at the centre of society and culture. New media theorists talk of a 'second media age' and 'Web 2.0', seeing the Internet as the dawn of a new era, empowering users, challenging the powers of corporations and states, and begging a complete re-think of how we understand the mass media. But most research on the Internet has focused on 'life behind the screen', on what's going on in cyberspace as people communicate via keyboards and webcams. And the prevailing policy discourse of the Internet is largely technical, focusing on capacity and availability – leading to debates about broadband availability and the problem of the 'digital divide'.

My interest and endeavour, in this context, is to develop a sociological account of the Internet as a whole. I'm trying to understand not simply one Internet activity or form of use, nor Internet use as something that is abstracted from everyday social life, but to make sense of the Internet as a mass medium and a social phenomenon. To make the task manageable, and building on my earlier work on how users shape technologies, I have narrowed this down to focusing on users – in part because users and uses don't feature prominently in discussions about the Internet. Looking at users has led me to examine, under the auspices of CRESC theme 2, how the Internet is becoming embedded in everyday life in households, how it's being used in mundane and extraordinary ways, and why and how it is taking the form that it is.

I've been exploring how the Internet is used in a small number of different households, looking at how its use connects with family life – what Roger Silverstone calls the 'domestication' of new information and communication technologies. Whilst it's essentially an individual, 'lean-forward' activity, Internet use also serves to bring members of families together – which is facilitated by locating the computer in the living room. The speed-up, instantaneity and time-saving facilitated by the Internet is appreciated, but in other cases it is seen as distracting and time-wasting. The generational distribution of Internet expertise means that power in households can be redistributed with the arrival of the Internet; and in some cases the Internet replaces parents as sources of information. The sheer volume of information that is available on the Internet is a source of considerable pleasure and even enlightenment; but there are frustrations about speed, concerns about privacy and security, feelings of guilt when time is wasted and a sense of pressure that is generated by the infinite choice that is available. Whilst for some the Internet has replaced letter-writing, faxing and even radio, in most households it has added to the blend of mass media, with some Internet use undertaken simultaneously with using the radio and television.

A major part of my work is to extend 'domestication' work on communication technologies by connecting it with 'social shaping of technology' debates, by examining how users' practices – using particular sorts of web sites (and not others) – are shaping the Internet. The outcome of user practices (in the aggregate) is that particular Internet genres, which are stabilising, can be identified – rather as did broadcasting genres in the 1920s. Although it's not entirely unproblematic to apply notions of 'genre' to the Internet, it seems a productive notion for trying to make sense of the breadth of Internet practices, uses and types. Using both my qualitative data from six households and a breadth of quantitative data from various national and international surveys of Internet use, I've identified five stabilising domestic Internet genres:

- Information searching. For some, this is the major, or even only, use of the Internet. Most common in several households was checking the weather, with banking, job-searching, homework and informing decisions as consumers also significant. This raises questions about authority, empowerment and citizenship; and also points to the 'informationalisation' of leisure.

- Shopping. Internet shopping extends shopping-at-a-distance by catalogue and other means. With the likes of eBay, it adds a dimension of 'play' and community to the retail experience. For some people, price was the main motivation; in other cases the issue was availability – specialist Indian shopping, for example.

- Gaming. Providing a new sort of relationship between producer and consumer, gaming involves working/playing with texts which, to a degree, are created by users. Gaming is practiced most by the demographics (teenage males) that are associated with the greatest decline in television viewing. One young man spends most of every weekend on his interactive gaming.

- Downloading. This offers to transform the music, film and even television industries by challenging intellectual property rights. In some senses it empowers consumers (as producers) and democratises media production. Internet downloading connects with an assemblage of related technologies that are core to the everyday lives of young people – notably iPods and mobile phone cameras. Downloading also involves the only paid-for Internet service (apart from financial information) in the form of pornography – though this is not an easy one to research.

- Networking. With email, synchronous text messaging (like MSN), social networking sites (Bebo, MySpace, Facebook) and blogs, networks are facilitated in ways that by-pass traditional media and institutions, with new time-space connections as well as the reinforcement of local communities. Generally, Internet networking is with members of co-present communities, e.g. schoolfriends. For some, letters and the telephone are seen as superior forms of communication.

My conclusion is that these five genres, together, are responses to the same sorts of social phenomena as led to broadcasting that Raymond Williams identified – the centralisation of power, the need for social integration and 'mobile privatisation'. Thus the Internet represents continuity with traditional media. At the same time, the Internet is being used in different ways and for different purposes than are broadcasting and the press. These uses have little to do with broader conceptions of 'interactivity' or with 'citizenship'. More obviously, they connect with new leisure forms, the speed-up of interaction, the growth of networked individualism and the development of consumer culture.

Hugh Mackay is writing a book with the provisional title The Internet @ Home: Users and Genres. Hugh Mackay can be contacted at h.mackay@open.ac.uk

Race and Sex in Latin America

Peter Wade

In Latin America, the upsurge of indigenous and, more recently, Afrodescendant social movements has had repercussions in the area of sexuality that, at first sight, seem surprising. The first indigenous president in Latin America, Evo Morales (Bolivia), has subtly managed an image of himself as virile and masculine, against a pervasive image of indigenous men as asexual or feminised. Indigenous social movements have found themselves in the position of publicly reversing the old Freudian association between 'primitiveness' and sexual 'perversion': homosexuality, they say, is a Western, white 'problem', which does not affect indigenous peoples. Their argument has illustrious forebears: this was something that the Martinican psychiatrist and revolutionary writer Frantz Fanon also maintained; and the philosopher Gilles Deleuze also argued that the Oedipus complex is a modern Western - and white - phenomenon. Perhaps so, but this certainly puts indigenous and black gays and lesbians in a quandary. All these issues have been played out over several decades in the USA, where the sexual politics of racial identity have long been a hot potato, handled, in one apocryphal tale, by a black leader who, when asked what was the position of black women in the Black Power movement, replied tersely, 'Horizontal'. Apparently assertions of black identity were, from his point of view, assertions of black masculine identity.

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My interest in these themes in a Latin American context stems from my previous fieldwork in Colombia on racism and black identity. I did fieldwork in a rural village and a big city and found that intimate, romantic relationships between people of different racial identities were often carried a baggage of complex meanings - in Ann Stoler's phrase, they were 'tense and tender ties'. A dark-skinned woman who married a lighter man might be accused by others of primarily obeying a desire to 'whiten' her children - what in North America would be called 'race suicide'. A white man who had relationships with black women might provoke anger among black men who felt that he was using his whiteness to gain sexual access to 'their' women.

Later I was also involved in a project that looked at how new technologies of reproduction - IVF, but also transnational adoption (a 'bureaucratic technology') - intertwined with ideas of race. Asian women who come to the UK to get donated eggs from white women, so as to whiten their children - despite guidelines from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority that promote 'ethnic matching' of eggs to parents - create new situations in which a 'mixed-race' child comes out of a 'non-mixed' marriage. Norwegian and Spanish parents who adopt Asian and African children also create new families of white parents with non-white kids. This added a different dimension to thinking about sex and race, not so much in terms of the sexual images attached to racial identities, but how sexual reproduction unsettles (or not) the continuity of racialised lineages.

All this inspired my plan to write a book on race and sex in Latin America. Latin America is an interesting region because a great deal of work on race, gender and sexuality comes out of the North American experience, where sexual-racial segregation was a bedrock of society. In contrast, many countries in Latin America explicitly admit and even pride themselves on their origins in racial and cultural mixture *(mestizaje)*: sexual relations between people of different 'races' has become what Doris Sommer called a 'foundational fiction' in nationalist discourse. The question arises of to what extent this alters - if at all - the way sex is racialised and race is sexualised in comparison with the North American experience.

Recently, I and a Colombian colleague won some British Academy funding to run two workshops on race and sexuality in Latin America to explore these themes. The examples of Evo Morales and of the indigenous social movements that I gave above came out of those workshops and suggest that there are strong parallels between the North American and Latin American contexts, despite their different histories. In both cases, racial identities have powerful sexual connotations and sex acts as a powerful 'marker' of racial boundaries.

I am interested in how to conceptualise (sexual) desire in a framework of power difference and inevitably this brings in perspectives from psychoanalysis and philosophy. Anthropology is traditionally highly suspicious of psychoanalysis - and already several colleagues have warned me off it - but it seems to me that the typical reduction in much social science of desire to power, as if power difference were the only thing needed to create desire (usually in men), is inadequate. On the other hand, I am equally conscious of the more social science perspectives that see desire as emerging solely from social and historical formations and that are suspicious of psychoanalytic approaches that tend to universalise what might be Western dynamics of sexual subject formation. I want to try and reconcile these approaches in the Latin American context.

My book takes forward these interests in race and sex at a key time when Latin American nations are redefining themselves as multicultural and pluriethnic (leaving more or less unspoken the word race). As part of this broader interest, in March 2007, I and Theme 3 colleagues Susanne Brandtstadter and Kath Woodward organised a CRESC workshop on 'Governing Cultures? Neoliberalism, Democracy, and the Question of Diversity', with participants from within and outside CRESC. A key theme was the phenomenon of 'neoliberal multiculturalism' (a term coined by Charles Hale, one of our participants). This captures the tension between neoliberalism's emphasis on the self-organizing and self-regulating individual citizen and multiculturalism's promotion of collective cultural communities. In fact, the two regimes can work hand in hand.

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The Values of Printed Matter

Nicholas Thoburn

Consideration of the relationship between political writing and political aggregation has rarely taken a route through the material formation of 'the book'. This is no doubt in part an effect of our experience of language as an apparently immaterial plane of communication divorced from material substrate. Yet the interaction of the complex object of the book, or of printed matter, with the affects, fantasies, and volitions of politics is a rich sociological field.

In research I am currently doing under the CRESC Theme 4 of 'Cultural Values and Politics' I take up this idea of the book as a dynamic object to investigate the material values of self-published, ephemeral media at the intersection of political and art practice. With an empirical focus on four contemporary self-publishing and archiving ventures, the research explores the pamphlet or small distribution book-work as a material object that constitutes, or is in arrangement with, particular and inventive forms of value, affect, and public.

A notable recent exploration of the materiality of print, perhaps unsurprisingly from the field of art rather than social science, was the 2006 *Undercover Surrealism* exhibition on the dissident journal *Documents* at London's Hayward Gallery. Following the curators' aim to present not a movement or school but 'the magazine itself as an active force', the exhibition took the somewhat unusual approach of assembling the heterodox material objects that were so much of the journal's concern. In the catalogue this active force is glossed as the magazine's 'core ideas' — these being 'the means of presenting the objects they made extraordinary' — rather than the material object of the magazine itself, but the relation held between object, idea, and journal in the space of the gallery did much to exhibit *Documents* as an open and vital material artefact.

Such concerns with the relation between printed media-objects, ideas, and social processes are not confined to reflection on historical formations. Indeed, an interest in the aesthetics of printed media has in recent years emerged as an intriguing modality of contemporary art practice, as exemplified by the 'KIOSK Modes of Multiplication' touring archive which visited the ICA in 2005 and London's new annual 'Publish and be Damned' self-publishing fair.

To frame these media-objects in the categories of the 'artist's book' or the 'book work', they are printed materials that take

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the conceptual field of the book and its temporal, tactile, visual, spatial, and narrative aspects as the object of the art work. Certainly, there is a long history of these kinds of practices — with Fluxus and Mail Art, Russian Constructivist and Futurist books, and William Blake's illuminated printing as key instances — but there is also something particular to their current manifestation, their presence in a media environment increasingly dominated by digital media.

Whilst discourses of the 'end of the book', which date back at least a hundred years, need to be taken with a pinch of salt, the distributive, archival, and interactive capacities of digital media would seem to have raised such speculations to a not wholly outlandish prospect, inciting reflection on the future of the book from a philosopher as significant as Jacques Derrida. As it is articulated within the digital media environment it is clearly the case that the nature of printed media is undergoing change. But it is misleading and unhelpful to conceive of this with the narratives of epochal transformation common to discussion of technological invention, with the un-dynamic and linear conceptions of culture that these frameworks deploy.

In this research, then, I am exploring printed media not as a media form on the wane, but as one with particular contemporary expressions and possibilities as it operates within a variegated media field. This is a media environment of layered and disjunctive forms and temporalities, of complex and varied modes of production and distribution. It is also an environment within which much received wisdom about communication, interaction, and public culture is being challenged. Indeed, it might be said that it is, in part, the disruptive effect of new media and its attendant field of research that is encouraging art practice to reflect upon the nature and possibilities of media forms more widely.

If a problematic of printed matter exists in art practice it is less apparent that it operates in political cultures, where the question of the book tends to be limited in scale and complexity to one of information transmission. That political formations and the book are of course integrated is more than apparent if one thinks of the articulation of passion and object in Mao's 'Little Red Book' and Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, or of the place of the book in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. But this articulation in political cultures is not often framed in terms of the book's material properties, not least because one of the attributes of the book is its apparent transcendence from the material everyday.

In this context, then, the project is concerned with media-objects whose material forms problematise the conventional image of political communication — as clean, information-transfer to a mass audience — and open to extra-textual modes of expression as they act as points of displacement, affective relay, and experiment in relations between their creators, environments and users. In posing the possibility of considering self-published pamphlets or book-works as political objects the specific aim is to assess how these extra-textual dynamics are inflected through two themes: sensuality and the critique of the commodity form, and articulations of the public.

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Upcoming events at CRESC

21-22 February 2008

CRESC Workshop: Gender, Service Work and the Cultural Economy

Plenary Speakers: Ursula Huws, Diane Perrons, Phil Taylor

Venue: MBS Harold Hankins Room 2.40, The University of Manchester

28 February 2008

CRESC One Day Symposium: The Creative Industries: Ten Years After

Speakers include: Justin O'Connor, David Hesmondhalgh (Leeds), Andy Pratt (LSE), Kate Oakley (City), Chris Bilton (Warwick), Mark Banks, Jason Toynbee (OU)

Venue: Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes. Central Meeting Room 1

To register please contact Karen Ho at k.d.ho@open.ac.uk

13-14 March 2008

CRESC Workshop: Credit and Debt in Present Day Capitalism

Plenary speakers confirmed: Gérard Duménil (Univerity of Paris X, Nanterre), Keith Hart (Goldsmith, University of London), Robert Manning (University of Rochester), John Toporowski (SOAS, University of London)

Venue: MBS Harold Hankins Room 10.02, The University of Manchester

28-29 March 2008

Conference in honour of Patrick Joyce: Liberal Subjects: The Politics of Social and Cultural History since the 1980s

Venue: Hanson Room, Humanities Bridgeford Street Building, The University of Manchester

3-5 September 2008

CRESC Annual Conference: Cultural Citizenship

Keynote speakers to date include: Mieke Bal (University of Amsterdam), Engin Isin (Open University), Nina Glick Schiller (University of Manchester, Ghassan Hage (University of Melbourne), Mary Poovey (New York University), Nick Stevenson (University of Nottingham)

Venue: St Hugh's College. Oxford

For more information please visit www.cresc.ac.uk

Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change

New working papers

The following working papers have been added to the CRESC website http://www.cresc.ac.uk/publications/papers.html

Working Paper No.35

Nation States and Networks of Flows: The Role of the State in Jordan's ICT Enabled Development

Chris Westrup, Saheer Al-Jaghoub (University of Manchester)

September 2007

Working Paper No.36

Linguistic Globalisation or Localisation? The Practice of Intercultural Communication in Multilingual Spaces

Hanne Tange (The Open University)

September 2007

Working Paper No.37

Producing Population

Evelyn S. Ruppert (The Open University)

October 2007

Working Paper No.38

Is the Stock Market a Disciplinary Institution? French Giant Firms and the Regime of Accumulation

Sukhdev Johal and Adam Leaver (University of Manchester)

October 2007

Working Paper No.39

Trajectories of Time Spent Reading as a Primary Activity: A Comparison of the Netherlands, Norway, France, UK and USA since the 1970s

Dale Southerton, Alan Warde, Shu-Li Cheng & Wendy Olsen (University of Manchester)

November 2007

CRESC Annual Conference
3 - 5 September, 2008 - St Hugh's College, Oxford
Call for Papers
Culture and Citizenship

Citizenship and Culture represent two of the most central concepts in contemporary social thought and, over the last decade, the relationships between them have been highly contested. Debates on citizenship have shifted from a focus on democracy, political rights and responsibilities and questions of belonging to a concern with culture, both formally and and informally inscribed. The focus of citizenship historically tended more toward universalistic issues, with the realm of culture assigned to the particular, and to questions of difference and meaning. The interconnections between these approaches have become of growing academic interest on the one hand, as well as being of crucial significance in the political realm on the other. Thus claims for citizenship rights are increasingly required to consider the more culturally defined questions of identity, gender, sexuality, race, that are typically the concern of the new social and political movements. At the same time the issues of emancipation, responsibility and freedom remain key questions for debates concerning citizenship and culture.

This conference seeks to explore the inter-relationships between citizenship and culture and their contemporary social, cultural and political significance in a number of different contexts. The themes proposed for the conference are as follows:

- *Cultural Diversity/After Multiculturalism* • *Cities and Citizenship*
- *The Politics of Citizenship* • *Liberal government and the citizen: histories and trajectories*
- *Arts and cultural policies and citizenship* • *Cultures of collecting and citizenship*
- *Science, technology and citizenship* • *Europe and the citizen*
- *The relationships between religious and secular conceptions of citizenship*
- *Culture, citizenship and transnationalism* • *The media and citizenship*
- *Post-colonialism and Citizenship* • *Sexual Citizenship*

Keynote speakers to date include: Mieke Bal (University of Amsterdam), Engin Isin (Open University), Nina Glick Schiller (University of Manchester, Ghassan Hage (University of Melbourne), Mary Poovey (New York University), Nick Stevenson (University of Nottingham), Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (New York University)

Conference organising committee:
Tony Bennett (Open University), Francis Dodsworth (Open University), Patrick Joyce (University of Manchester), Helen Rees Leahy (University of Manchester), Sophie Watson (Open University)

Please submit either (a) 300 word abstracts for individual papers, or (b) proposals for panels including 3 papers by the end of February 2008. Proposal Forms are available online and should be sent to:

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