ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change

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New Convening Director

Penny Harvey talks about her new role as CRESC Convening Director

I'm very much looking forward to taking up the role of the CRESC Convening Director. I've been involved with CRESC since it first started, eight years ago, working initially alongside Mike Savage in a research theme that addressed the broad brief of 'politics and cultural values'. It was an area of CRESC in which we began to tease out some of the significant ways in which anthropological and sociological approaches converged and differed, not only in relation to the political but also with respect to our different approaches to the cultural. Such discussions also led to a comparative focus on the research methods that shaped the ways in which we both posed and answered questions. As an anthropologist, I was disposed, indeed trained to treat the task ethnographically, and as a participant observer I learnt most when sitting down to write a joint article - together with Mike and CRESC colleague Hannah Knox. The learning process involved in writing things with other people has in my opinion been one of the most exciting aspects of my CRESC collaborations and our many jointly authored publications, research proposals, and reports are among the most significant achievements of a research centre that was less interested in inter-disciplinarity per se, and more committed to a model of experimental engagement, and a willingness to see where things might lead if you entertained another's perspective.

With two more years to go of our ten year research agenda there is a lot to do! Over the past eight years CRESC has moved from an initial focus on the relationship between changing configurations of cultural capital (and the culture industries) in contexts of social change, to a wider research portfolio that addresses the political and economic dimensions of cultural and social life more generally, including a core concern with the cultural and social dimensions of contemporary political and economic relations. Our various research themes explore: financialization, economic renewal, neoliberal politics (including issues of leadership, responsibility and participation), expertise and technological practice, social and cultural differentiation (the middle-classification of Britain, the ethnicization of the working class), and organizational change. These themes involve a focus on what moves people (affect) and what persuades people (narrative/rhetoric), issues of diversity/multiplicity, and basic questions of knowledge (or the social life of methods as we call it). CRESC is unusual in that we work right across this mix of concerns, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches and working across the humanities and the social sciences.

Our work is empirically led and is thus responsive to specific contemporary or historical conjunctures - and to the critical analysis of financial institutions and political systems, attentive to organisational change in private and public institutions, changing citizenship practices, and cross-generational change. Because we approach these issues empirically we find that our different starting points routinely converge. Our empirical focus on social change also involves the building of close relationships with other people and engaging with the efforts that they are making to transform and improve social institutions, material infrastructures, organizational practices, or simply to get by in a precarious and unstable world. Ours is not a synthetic project and we resist the synthesis because we are committed to addressing social complexity, and acknowledging the unevennesss of human experience. However taken together the projects that we have undertaken over the past eight years provide a unique perspective on the transformations that have taken place both in the UK and internationally. I am excited by the prospect of drawing these findings together, of articulating the resonances, and reflecting on the models of collaborative research that we have built with each other, and with our diverse research partners. At the same time we continue to build our research networks, and to develop ideas of how best to keep the momentum of our research activities going beyond the limits of our current funding period. As a research community we recognise the need to think flexibly about our legacies and our future activities and we are looking to extend our very successful model of mixed source funding for future, post-CRESC initiatives.

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The eurozone crisis and "deep stall"

Karel Williams

One trillion euro of cheap loans by the ECB and a second Greek bail out only bought a little time in the first quarter of 2012. The Spanish bank bail out left the Spanish aggrieved by more conditions and still, like the Italians, paying more than 6% on new government borrowing at the end of the second quarter. The Eurozone crisis continues though most stifle a yawn because we have been living with financial crisis since 2008 and it seems that it only matters if and when there are domestic implications. So it is important to explain therefore, how and why the current crisis threatens us all (including the British outside the Eurozone).

Most accounts of the crisis focus on politico economic problems inside the Eurozone and the problems arising from 1990s monetary union. The German government and allied Northern creditors represent the crisis as a Southern sovereign debt problem; on the other side commentators like the Financial Times' Martin Wolf argue it is a North South trade imbalance problem. Neither account engages with how this crisis is also (or even primarily) a banking crisis rooted in the design characteristics of the European financial system which is alarmingly dangerous and beyond management.

It is also very difficult to explain all this to non specialists who have never heard of arcane technical matters like rehypothecation or balance sheet interconnections. The dangers of the present system are therefore best understood by analogy with the problems which the British aviation industry encountered when it made the transition to jet aircraft.

In October 1963 a BAC 1-11 prototype in routine stall testing for airworthiness certification fell out of the sky and crashed disastrously. The problem was a "deep stall" which could not be recovered by the pilot using the standard drill of stick forward/ elevators down and add thrust. Deep stall was an unintended consequence of a change of design configuration when jet aircraft with T tails were introduced; in some stalls the turbulent air from the stalled wings could

spill up and prevent the elevators at the top of the tail from working.

At this point, the similarities are alarming. The banking equivalents of the T tail are two fold. First, there is rehypothecation or the serial reuse of collateral in a chain of transactions which means the European banking system has huge liquidity requirements as soon as things go wrong. Second, there is a web of interconnections between bank balance sheets caused by cross border lending which ties all the North European countries together in mutually assured destruction in the event of major insolvency.

In euro zone banking, as in the T tail jet, every stall does not end in disaster. But, if a plane or banking system with this configuration explores stall behaviour, then it will quickly and unpredictably deep stall. In the event of a chain of South European defaults, there is no political mandate for the injection of tens of trillions of euros of liquidity into the European financial system; nor any plan for dealing with bank insolvencies arising from cross border lending which would induce large scale bank failure inside and outside the Eurozone.

The analogy is hardly reassuring because, if European finance was an aircraft, then fear of flying would be entirely reasonable and few of us would consent to fly as passengers. There is however one massive difference between T tail jets in the 60s and European finance now which makes things even more alarming.

Aircraft which fall out of the sky can be re-engineered as the BAC 1-11 was. The problems with T tails could be fixed, and were fixed, because we had relevant engineering knowledge and the private interests of plane makers and airline operators coincided with the social interest of regulators and the flying public. European banking is unfixable because our technical knowledge is rudimentary and because the basic political condition about coincidence of private and social interest is not satisfied.

In banking the problem is that the private interests in the profitability of the financial system would obstruct or divert the necessary reforms. If the Eurozone is to be maintained, we can envisage a list of reforms to reduce cross border lending or to make it less dangerous (eg by promoting cross border bank mergers of low profit utility banking). But none of these fixes are at present within the realm of the politically possible. Maybe the crash has to happen before we can mobilise the political capacity to restrain finance.

An earlier version of this article appeared in the Guardian newspaper on 11 April 2012. It is based on CRESC Working Paper 110 "Deep Stall? the euro zone crisis, banking reform and politics" which can be downloaded from http://www.cresc.ac.uk/publications/

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How do we know when we don't know the notes?

Mark Banks, Byron Dueck and Jason Toynbee

Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent. **- Victor Hugo**

Being silent about music has never been much of a problem for social science – but it has often struggled to find ways to comprehend the sensuous fabric of music in convincingly social terms. Explicitly, trying to understand music as a social form raises the vexed issue of methods. This is partly because of the ubiquity and polyvalence of music. It penetrates all areas of the social world in multiple ways. Investigating it is therefore difficult. But there is a further problem in that many conventional ways of representing musical sounds and practices pose challenges to scholars outside musicological disciplines. Yet it is clear that to understand why music matters to people so profoundly we need a grasp both of the social, and the ways that music works as organised sound. But how is this possible?

On 17-18th May at the Curve Theatre in Leicester, an interdisciplinary group including sociologists, ethnomusicologists, political scientists, popular music scholars and psychologists convened to explore particular ways of finding out and articulating the complex relationships between music and the social. Around 25 participants, including Simon Frith, Jeremy Gilbert, Tina K. Ramnarine, Barry Shank and John Street, took part in an intensive workshop entitled Music, Methods and the Social.

Amongst discussion of methods used to examine a variety of topics, including the socio-politics of timbre in Trinidadian Steel Orchestras, Manchester's 'sonic sociability', musical 'feeling and knowing' in Jamaica, Max Weber's music writings and the socially provocative aspects of Karen Carpenter's drumming, two key problematics emerged:

• The methods and objects/fields problem

How can we be sure we're dealing with the same socio-musical things even when we refer to them by the same name (e.g. genre, timbre, place, group, period, voice)? The uncertainty which this question seems to point up is compounded by the recognition that methods help to construct objects and fields of study. Yet, despite these problems our overarching sense at the end of the two days was that there was a strong will to find out about relations between the musical and the social. In other words there was a tentatively realist consensus, notwithstanding the plurality of methods and approaches we shared. The next problem, if we are going to pursue this line of inquiry, might be to assess whether and how different methods can posit the same socio-musical objects.

Barry Shank and Jason Toynbee – on methods and aural imaginaries

• The problem of music itself

In lay, post-Romantic discourse of the West music is ineffable. In academic discourse this is matched by (and perhaps is a corollary of) difficulties and avoidances in dealing with music and the social. To put it another way, understanding music as social also seems to involve understanding music as aesthetic, affective, embodied or pleasurable, yet we still seem to be quite a long way from achieving this latter understanding. One way into the problem of how the social and the aesthetic mutually constitute one another could be by attending more to how people listen and dance and how they create music together. What are the methodological implications of trying to find out what people do with music? What might this tell us about the ontology of music?

> *Over the course of the workshop it became clear that there was a real appetite among the mix of established and young scholars for tackling these big questions.*

Over the course of the workshop it became clear that there was a real appetite among the mix of established and young scholars for tackling these big questions. The relationship between music, methods and the social, it seems, is a subject whose time has come. In the coming months, then, we hope to develop a network and plan a second interdisciplinary workshop to take these ideas forward.

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Cycling: The Politics of Sustainable Transport

Francis Dodsworth

A growing body of work across CRESC is currently addressing the sustainability agenda (see http://www.cresc.ac.uk/our-impact/sustainability-is-cultural-too), which now figures in the ESRC's revised strategic priorities through their focus on the relationship between economic performance and sustainable growth, and changing behaviours.

Any serious attempt to improve quality of life and sustainability necessarily involves engagement with the cities in which the majority of people live, and which are the motors of the economy. It seems important, then, for CRESC's Urban Experiments researchers to explore the ways in which this agenda is currently in play in the urban environment. This means taking a critical look at 'sustainability', not just as something difficult to implement and which requires new technical and practical solutions, but as a site of contestation through which activists and reformers attempt to realise their rival visions of the ideal city.

We have begun to analyse this by looking at the politics of safer cycling in London and Amsterdam. This research forms part of a wider research project on 'city objects', being pursued across the Open University and the University of Amsterdam, summarised in CRESC Working Paper no.96. Some of the research developing from this collaboration was presented at a recent CRESC workshop on 'City Materialities', held 31 May – 1 June 2012.

It is a stated priority of Transport for London (TfL) to enhance quality of life for Londoners and to contribute to economic growth whilst reducing the contribution of transport to climate change. One of the means by which TfL have sought to achieve this is by encouraging more people to cycle in London. This has taken a variety of forms, ranging from campaigns promoting cycling to the Barclays Cycle Hire scheme and the creation of new Barclays Cycle Superhighways (improved cycle routes running from the suburbs into central London).

Nonetheless, although the promotion of cycling is widely accepted as of great benefit, there remains a degree of contestation around the form that London's cycling infrastructure might ultimately take. It is clear that one of the principal barriers to wider uptake of cycling in London is concern about safety in a busy city that has no great tradition of mass cycling. TfL have sought to ameliorate these concerns with the introduction of the 'cycle superhighways', the provision of maps of cycling routes that avoid major roads, and information and guidance about best practice for cycling safety. However, there is a tension between attempts to improve safety through behavioural change or raising awareness and the desire of some safety campaigners for greater infrastructural investment in cycling, specifically the physical separation of cyclists from the rest of the traffic. This has, if anything, become more urgent as the initial success of the campaign to promote cycling has led to a significant increase of cyclists in London, making the problems that exist around cycling safety more visible and more urgent.

The lobbying group the London Cycling Campaign (LCC) sought to use the recent London Mayoral elections (3 May 2012) as a chance to promote their scheme for the transformation of London's cycling infrastructure. Entitled 'Love London, Go Dutch', the LCC specifically draw on the model of Amsterdam as an ideal form of cycling infrastructure where cyclists are well separated from the traffic and in which consequently cycling is one of the most popular forms of transport in the city. The LCC's campaign focused particularly on highlighting dangerous junctions in London and the extent to which they were responsible for a significant number of serious injuries and cyclist fatalities. The campaign was highly successful, with the staging of the first hustings for cyclists leading to all the major London mayoral candidates endorsing the LCC's campaign, and most recently a commitment by TfL to improve 50 dangerous junctions in London by the end of 2013.

The success of the 'Love London, Go Dutch' campaign led us to ask questions about how policies can move in this way, how the Dutch cycling model was politically and physically transplanted from one context to another. Our investigation of this subject is at an early stage, but already research by colleagues at the University of Amsterdam (led by Olga Sezneva, with Christoph Stich and Lukas Franta) suggests that although the image of Amsterdam as a cycling culture defined by the physical separation of cyclists from the traffic is one the city itself identifies with, their also points to specific historical and social reasons for the popularity of cycling in Amsterdam and its cultural significance for the Dutch people, which has little to do with sustainable living or a cosmopolitan vision for the city. How far the LCC can effectively transform London's cycling culture into something approaching its Dutch equivalent by abstracting its structure from its social and historical context, or what specific London cycling culture will develop around this Amsterdam-inspired infrastructure remains to be seen.

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Pasts and Futures of Local Food

Michelle Bastian

On the outer edges of Liverpool ONE, a 42 acre regeneration area of the city centre, there is a Tesco Superstore. This is unremarkable in itself – you can't go very far in Liverpool without running into one. However, if you venture just around the corner, you'll find a set of plaques that reproduce an 18th Century map of the area. The description states that this area was once "Mr Seel's Garden". Drawing the contemporary viewer into a lost past, the description explains: "you are standing on what was the garden, represented by an asterisk".

You are not all that stands on what was the garden, however, as the Tesco itself is also directly on top of the garden site. Yet, even while you might catch yourself becoming a little nostalgic – imagining a kindly Mr Seel handing you a freshly cut cabbage – the description lets you know that "Thomas Seel was an eighteenth century merchant. He made money out of the dreadful slave trade, but used some of it to pay for Liverpool's first infirmary".

The uncanny juxtaposition of current and historic food systems, made visible by this map, has been commented on by a number of Liverpool local food activists. The vivid experience it produces, draws together multiple elements – food, maps, history, time, power, cruelty, memory, intertwined local and global communities – to paint a complex picture of the changing nature of communities and the systems that connect them together.

Designed to respond to the productive knots and tangles woven together by this complex site 'Memories of Mr Seel's Garden: Past and future food systems in Liverpool' is a new AHRC-funded project coming out of CRESC's Topologies of Social Change. It explores one of the key emerging issues within the theme, Infrastructural Promises, which members of the theme will be discussing at the upcoming CRESC conference Promises: Crises and Socio-Cultural Change. The project itself involves collaborative work between a broad range of HEI and non-HEI partners with a shared interest in time, food and community engagement. Working with community organisations within Liverpool's fledgling local food movement, we are currently exploring how engaging local communities with the changing infrastructures of food production might contribute to current grass-roots efforts within Liverpool to raise awareness around current food issues.

In particular, it seeks to complicate the notion that apparently superseded infrastructural systems have nothing left to offer us in the present. Instead we are exploring how more locally based systems might provide insights into how to develop more sustainable systems in the future. In our first phase, volunteer and academic researchers used a combination of research methodologies – oral history, archive research and site identification/documentation – to build up a multi-layered picture of the changing nature of food systems in Liverpool. The data gathered from these activities is currently being made available to the wider community on our web page and is also feeding into a creative strand that will involve a suite of event-based engagement activities, including verbatim theatre. These outputs aim to disseminate the results of the research work itself, while also raising awareness of local food issues and the project partners themselves. The overall process itself is also supporting philosophical research into the interconnections between social understandings of time and community, archaeological research into methods of engaging communities with the historical environment and research into the pragmatic and affective aspects of archive use.

This project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of the cross-council Connected Communities theme. As a Pilot Demonstrator Project, it aims to showcase the distinctive approach of the theme and is highly collaborative, involving co-design processes with community partners and cross-disciplinary research. To find out more please go to: www.mrseelsgarden.org

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Trajectories of Participation and Inequality

Sustainable travel, the life course, and mobility biographies

Stewart Muir, Andrew Miles and Niamh Moore

On 12 July, the EPSRC-funded Stepchange project hosted a trans-disciplinary workshop at the Open University (London campus) exploring the promise of life course and biographical approaches to the study of sustainable mobilities. Discussion drew on data emerging from the first wave of the project's unique longitudinal panel study on travel and transport behaviour and was energised by workshop participants' shared desire to move beyond transport studies practitioners' (paradoxically) static approach to mobility practices.

Although it is widely accepted that more sustainable urban environments will require more sustainable travel practices and transport infrastructures, Transport Studies models that try to simulate such environments tend to assume that transport behaviours are relatively fixed; this in turn structures their assumptions about how transport-focused interventions will affect individual practices. In fact, there is little real understanding of how or why (or how quickly) transport behaviours change and little evidence of how to effectively enable more sustainable travel. One of the main aims of Stepchange has been to address this evidence gap by exploring change and continuity in individual mobilities and to situate it in the context of geographic location, generation, background, social relationships, life history and daily life.

Much of the empirical data for this work comes from Strand 1 of the project, a four year qualitative panel study of 240 households spread between eight areas in Leeds and Manchester. Wave 1 of the panel has covered, amongst other things, life history and memories of travel and it is the material coming out of this wave that has led to us to explore the intersection of biography with sustainability and mobility. As it happens, the concept of the 'mobility biography' is also emerging within the field of transport studies as a way of getting to grips with change. For one of the chief proponents of this 'mobility biography' approach, Martin

Lanzendorf, transport studies research commonly relies on cross-sectional data and static models of behaviour and thus fails to appreciate the effects of long term decisions or life events on travel behaviour. In contrast, a mobility biography approach suggest that by examining individual trajectories one can explore the intersection of life events – such as having children, changing job, or moving house – with changes to seemingly habitual transport behaviours.

One of the key problematics of the mobility biography workshop was how to exploit the full potential of such a life course approach and how to bring it into conversation with an emerging literature around sustainability, biography and everyday life. One of the motivating concerns of the workshop was the recognition that although the emergent mobility biographies paradigm appears to overcome some of the problematic temporal frames of conventional transport research, it does not draw on the extensive work on narrative and life stories in the broader social sciences and humanities. This absence is evident in the way that existing mobilities biography research tends to adopt a realist approach to biographical accounts and to conceptualise causality as a linear process in which an event in the past (such as having children) leads to a change in behaviour (buying a car) that can be recalled and recounted in the present. As such, research in this area often goes to considerable effort to address concerns about the reliability of memory. In contrast, for many life-course and biography researchers, the value of a biographical approach lies in understanding how subjective accounts of the past are a resource for better appreciating the ways in which people make meaning of (and justify) their lives. Moreover, the framing of existing work in terms of individual biographies tends to underplay the recursive relations between individual actions, social relationships, and the physical environment.

Gathering together researchers with an interest in transport and mobility, sustainability, biography and the life course, the London workshop drew on the resources of the interpretative social sciences to begin to develop a much richer account of mobility biographies as multiple, sometimes contradictory or non-linear 'trajectories'. Understanding the often complex ways in which lives and mobility practices intersect is an essential foundation for the Stepchange project's broader aim of developing new approaches to modelling that will ultimately lead to improving transport policy.

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Welcome to Audrey Laurin-Lamothe

Audrey Laurin-Lamothe is a PhD student in sociology at the Université du Québec à Montréal (Canada). Her doctoral research, entitled The Canadian Overclass. Nature and Function of Economic Elites in the Era of Advanced Capitalism, examines how the financialization impacts on social classes, the relation between elite and masses, and socio-economic inequalities. Her research has also focused on the subjective involvement of workers in terms of a critical approach to management and the material and normative transformations of present-day capitalism. Moreover, she has analysed the relationship between corporate and popular culture of ice hockey in a book that she edited in 2011, Le Canadien de Montréal. Une légende repensée (Presses de l'Université de Montréal).

Depicting Social Change: Experiments in Photography and Social Science

Hannah Knox

On the 23rd and 24th May, CRESC held a workshop which brought together photographers and social scientists to explore the way in which photography offers a means of depicting social change. The workshop was organised around presentations by five photographers with plenty of time for discussion about the issues that they raised. First up was Martin Newth, who kicked off proceedings with a presentation of a series of photographs with the aim of exploring what he called the 'philosophy of photography'. All of the photographs he presented worked to unpack the temporal qualities of photography, by exploring the physical and social processes through which the photographic effect was produced. In one project Martin had constructed a camera obscura in a marquee in a park and had observed the interactions between passers by and the moving image of the camera. In another project he had turned a series of world war two concrete 'pill boxes' into cameras, tacking photographic paper onto the wall of the structure to capture the view from within. In both these projects, the transformation of a structure into a camera had the effect of drawing out the interplay between different temporalities (historical, material, photochemical, experiential) in very unusual ways.

Martin's presentation was followed on with a session of 'lightening talks'. All of the workshop participants had been asked to bring a photo that they would like to talk to for five minutes. Everyone was timed meticulously and we rattled through the presentations which included photographs as wide ranging as Muybridge's images of a horse in motion, ethnographic photos of a door, a building, and a falling tree, a photogrammetric image of a house, a newspaper image of a chair being thrown through the air and photos from some of the photographer's own archives. The photographs generated lots of questions, particularly around the similarities and differences in intention between documentary, ethnographic and art photography.

Day two saw more presentations by each of the photographers. Damian Sutton who is both a photographer and philosopher of photography, began with a presentation that provided a bridge between the social scientists and the photographers, by bringing Thrift's notion of non-representational theory to bear on the move from analogue to digital photography and some of the aesthetic practices that this has provoked (such as the current craze for the Instagram app). Paul St George presentated a wonderful art-work that he had produced which involved concocting a fabulous story of a 19th Century project to build a tunnel under the atlantic ocean. He had imagined how the tunnel would be kitted out with a series of mirrors and connected to a contraption which would allow viewers in London to see their counterparts in New York. The art work reconstructed this project with two modules – one on the South Bank in London and another in New York. Viewers looking into each of the modules could see the people looking into the other module and would wave and try to communicate with one another. The effect was to recreate the wonder of distant visual communication in a world that is saturated with real-time digital imagery.

A change of focus was provided by Maria Gruzdeva with a series of images that recounted an epic journey that she had undertaken around the borders of Russia. Madeleine Reeves acted as a discussant for this paper. During the questions some of the overlaps and tensions between the artistic ambitions of Maria's project and the desire of the social scientists for explanation came to the fore. These potentially very political photographs (of border guards, industrial complexes, military histories etc.) prompted different questions from the photographers (who tended to me more interested in technique and affect) and the ethnographers in the room who wanted to know the story behind the images.

The final presentation of the day was by Thomas Haywood. Thomas has long been interested in the relationship between images and words, and so, in this session he gave the group the opportunity to reflect on a set of images of an apparently paradisical scene which he showed us without any commentary other than a few elusive quotes. This proved a fascinating exercise. The lack of narrative drew some of us to ask – where were the photos taken (Ibiza), what was happening, who were the people and what were their relationships? At the same time, not knowing the answers to these questions allowed for interpretive possibilities which could not be answered by the asking of such prosaic questions – is this place paradise or is it hell? Does it evoke a sense of possibility or a sense of loss?

This highlighted what I thought was one of the most interesting aspects of the discussion over the two days as a whole – the relationship between explication and ambiguity. The power of the photography presented in the workshop often came from the capacity of photographs to elicit engagement through processes of obsfucation. Veils, blurs, altered colours, filters, framing, grainyness, and the imperceptable all proved hugely powerful in evoking a sense of the passing of time, and generating the space to see things differently and ask new questions. Counterposed to the social scientific desire to explicate, this raised for me the question of what possibilities might exist for a form of social scientific description which is not always about making things clear. Is there a potential to learn from photographers the power of the intangible, or does this take us outside the purview of a social science which in the last instance should always be about uncovering, unpacking and describing social processes with as much clarity as possible.

Follow-up

There was a good deal of enthusiasm for a follow-up event. The photographers were particularly interested to hear more about the work being done within CRESC (they said they already know about what they do and were more interested in hearing a bit more about what we might be doing with photography).

Two of the photographers (Thomas Haywood and Maria Gruzdeva) are going to present their work at the CRESC conference.

We do not currently have any plans for publication.

CRESC Annual Conference, 2013

In/vulnerabilities and Social Change: Precarious Lives and Experimental Knowledge

School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 4-6th September 2013

In a context of radical uncertainty about political, economic and ecological futures, the 2013 CRESC annual conference will explore **the relationship between vulnerability and invulnerability**. Lives and life chances are precarious for many. We may be entering a period of greater insecurity as people, jobs, money, knowledge and ideas, institutions, networks and systems all come under strain as a result of financial turmoil and widening inequalities.

The conference will explore the **vulnerabilities** of the majority and ask:

Where are those vulnerabilities, new and old?

Is vulnerability a newly defining feature of **certain categories of people**?

What are the consequences of **vulnerability-led policy** in finance, environment, health, security, technological and communications systems?

How has vulnerability been **(re)politicised** through social movements and direct action?

At the same time, the conference will explore the **in/vulnerabilities of elites and their ways of knowing**. Professional and elite knowledges sensitise themselves to specific phenomena by discounting other kinds of experience. Claiming expertise in key areas, expert knowledge becomes invulnerable by ignoring dissident and dissonant forms of knowledge. But, as the recent financial crisis has shown, elite expertise also becomes dangerously vulnerable when confronted by the unexpected. The conference will explore the power and the frailties of high-status and armour-plated intellectual and social knowledge systems. It will also consider how they efface, devalue or misrecognise many forms of lived experience. It will ask:

How are elite professional **invulnerabilities secured** in an uncertain age?

How do different kinds of in/vulnerabilities relate to forms of **strength or power**?

In times of crisis, which orthodoxies – or forms of knowledge – are **overturned**, and which become **entrenched**? And why?

What **other ways of knowing** might be imagined for recognising in/vulnerabilities and enacting social change?

Confirmed Keynote Speakers: **MATTIJS VAN DE PORT, University of Amsterdam, ANDREW HALDANE, Bank of England; KATE PICKETT, University of York, STEPHEN GRAHAM, Newcastle University, THOMAS HYLLAND ERIKSEN, University of Oslo, STEPHEN J. COLLIER, New School, New York.**

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