CRESC News

The Great British Class Survey

Niall Cunningham

In early-April this year, CRESC research drew worldwide attention and precipitated a vigorous debate on the role and nature of social class in Britain today. The cause of this attention was the publication of the preliminary findings of the Great British Class Survey (GBCS) in the British Sociological Association's (BSA) flagship journal, *Sociology*. The paper's online launch was designed to coincide with a special plenary session at the BSA's annual conference at which the key findings were disseminated. Beyond the Grand Hall of London's Connaught Rooms, the paper drew widespread media attention starting that day with BBC Breakfast and featuring on most major news programmes on radio and television in the UK throughout the day. Whilst beyond these shores the research team were fielding queries from across the globe, and the story had become the most read article on the *New York Times* website within two days. It also led to 7 million unique visitors to the BBC's online 'class calculator', enabling people to see how they fitted into the new class structure elaborated in the *Sociology* paper. In turn, the class calculator has become the most popular feature on the BBC News website this year. The attention was not just from the media; the research paper was made freely available by SAGE for a period after the launch and was downloaded almost 20,000 times in April alone, setting a new record for the publisher.

To date, the dominant model of social class has defined it only in relation to occupational and employment status, consisting of three broad categories: lower, middle and upper. This influential schema has formed the basis for the way in which social class has been understood not only by government in the form of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SeC), but also by most academics and the public at large. The GBCS was devised by CRESC's Mike Savage and Fiona Devine in collaboration with the BBC's Lab UK as a means of defining social class not simply in terms of economic capital but also in terms of social and cultural capitals, thereby drawing on the work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. This led to the development of a survey of unprecedented scope and scale.

In terms of scope, the GBCS asked fifty questions which probed a wide variety of themes covering the value of a respondent's property, savings and household income (economic capital), their cultural interests and activities (cultural capital), as well as the numbers, status and range of people that they know (social capital). Whilst in terms of scale, the initial survey was launched on 26 January 2011 and had been completed by over 161,400 respondents by July of that year, making it the largest of its kind. However, initial analysis of the data indicated that these people were not representative of the population at large, and so a nationally-representative face-to-face

survey of 1,026 individuals was commissioned by the BBC and conducted by the market research company GfK. These data were analysed using latent class analysis and weighted so that the two survey sources could be combined, with GBCS respondents equivalent to a single case in the GfK. This meant that the final model, which identified seven new social classes, was based on the representative GfK survey and not upon the skewed GBCS responses.

The first class identified is an elite (6% GfK, 22% GBCS) with high levels across all three capitals. Second, is an established middle class (25% GfK, 43% GBCS) with high economic capital, both high 'highbrow' and popular or 'emerging' cultural capital, and social networks of high status. The third class identified is a much smaller technical middle class (6% GfK, 10% GBCS), typified by high economic resources, medium levels of cultural capital and small social networks of high status. Fourth was a group of new affluent workers

(15% GfK, 17% GBCS) moderate in economic and social terms, but with medium highbrow and high emerging cultural tastes. Fifth are the emergent service workers (19% GfK, 17% GBCS) with relatively poor economic resources, moderate social contacts, high emerging and low highbrow cultural capital. These complex new definitions embody the 'fuzzy' and fragmented nature of the middle groups in the contemporary U.K. Sixth is a traditional working class (14% GfK, 2% GBCS) whose economic capital is confined largely to property, low cultural capital and small social networks of low status. The final group to emerge from the model is a precariat (15% GfK, <1% GBCS) with universally low scores across all three capitals. The identification of these clear polarities in British society resonates within wider debates on inequality in this country, and nowhere is this more evident than in analysing where these groups reside. We are fortunate to have postcode data enabling us to literally map with unprecedented spatial detail what the new class system looks like, and as the map shows, the elite are a predominantly south-eastern configuration that exemplifies the imbalances of wealth in this country.

This is just the start and what has the potential to be a fascinating programme of research. One of the first tasks going forward is to start analysing the additional 200,000 respondents who have completed the GBCS since April this year. Furthermore, extensive overlaps exist between the GBCS and other BBC surveys such as the Musicality and Personality tests, which we know have been undertaken by same respondents. This opens up the possibility of much wider collaborations across new disciplines and the development of exciting new research horizons.

More information:

Savage, M., Devine, F., Cunningham, N., Taylor, M., Li, Y., Hjellbrekke, J., Le Roux, B., Friedman, S. and Miles, A. (2013) 'A New Model of Social Class? Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey Experiment', Sociology, 47 (2) 219-250.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/0/21970879

Contact: niall.cunningham@manchester.ac.uk

www.cresc.ac.uk

Railway models

Mick Moran

CRESC's Great Train Robbery analyses the business models that underpin rail privatisation in the UK and criticises the political outcomes. The privatisers' vision of a transparent and democratically accountable set of privatised markets has turned into backstairs lobbying, manipulation of public debate by well resourced private interests and a blurring of the divide between the public and the private.

Some of the problems of the privatised rail system are well known. Franchisees – as in the catastrophic case of the East Coast Line – can walk away from the franchise without serious penalties when the ludicrously unreal projections that won the contract in the first place turned out to be fantasies. Less known, is the extent to which the train operators have been able to manipulate the licensing system so that they effectively pay dividends to shareholders from direct public subsidy; since 1997 on the West Coast Mainline, Virgin Trains paid out a total of £500 million in dividends and received a direct subsidy of £2.5 billion.

Worse still, the report highlights the large, hidden and indirect subsidies to train operating companies which have completely wrecked the balance sheet of the quasi-public Network Rail company that provides infrastructure. Train operating company profits are politically constructed through a hidden subsidy of low track access charges levied by Network Rail. These have fallen from £3.2 billion at the start of privatisation to £1.6 billion today, despite the increased demands on the infrastructure made by increased train and passenger numbers: in the age of privatisation the state is keeping the trains running.

The end result is a shocking and largely undiscussed increase in public liabilities. Network Rail (NR) is not only failing to recoup the real cost of operating the infrastructure but also spending an extra £5 billion a year on capital investment in improving the network. This is largely financed by issuing private bonds which are publicly guaranteed. Network Rail is unsustainably burdened with huge debts. The cost of servicing that debt is now greater than spending on track maintenance and the financial consequences for the taxpayer are considerable because repayment of £30 billion of principal is publicly guaranteed. Rail is going to need a bailout.

At the economic root of this lies a long standing problem about the business model of recovering costs by charging passengers:

rail cannot operate without some £10 billion of (direct and indirect) public subsidy because passenger income, even with some of the highest fares in Europe, cannot cover costs. Indeed the importance of passenger revenue has declined under privatisation: in the last ten years of British Rail passenger income averaged just over 64 per cent of total revenue whilst under privatisation's first ten years it averaged just over 55 per cent.

The predatory profits of the Train Operating Companies are a problem, but they are not the most serious part of the problem. Demonising dividends and value extraction by operators like Richard Branson is akin to the demonization of individual bankers after the financial crash: it fails to fix on the fundamental fault of the system which is the determination, under the privatised system, to operate a for profit rail network with not enough money in the fare box; and behind that, the business model of charging users which does not capture external benefits like increases in land and property values adjacent to new lines. For instance, London's new Crossrail will cost £16 billion and is projected to boost property values within one kilometre of the project by £5.5 billion.

Any attempt to reshape rail policy so as to capture these externalities – for instance via property taxation – will be politically

explosive. More insidiously, the whole well organised constellation of interests created by rail privatisation now operates a smoothly oiled lobby so that the Train Operating Companies now define an agenda of reform which suits them but is not in the public interest. The Association of Train Operating Companies spins a narrative of public service and represents malfunctioning of the system (like the West Coast franchising renewal fiasco) as a story of minor glitches in a fundamentally well-functioning machine. The first priority is to get the franchising system back on track. The problem of Network Rail's debt and the inadequacy of the business model do not figure in public discussion.

Privatisation was sold with the promise of a new political model: where backstairs manipulation of policy (for instance by Ministers) would be replaced by the transparency of open contractual competition and public regulation. Instead we have a world populated by well paid lobbyists and well networked business elites plus smoke and mirrors accounting which makes it impossible for normal citizens to penetrate what is going on. In this sense, rail privatisation has indeed proved a model; a model of how things are now done in the post-privatisation state in Britain.

michael.moran@manchester.ac.uk

Do Methods Frame Politics?

John Law

Methods shape the world. That's the argument of CRESC's 'Social Life of Methods' theme. But what does this mean in practice? The answer is: it depends on the method, and it depends on the context. But methods can be very powerful, in policy, in framing agendas, and in implementing them. Here's an example. It's a case to think with.

The last big outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the UK was in 2001. Confirmed in February, it was finally eradicated in September. How was it controlled? The answer was: by culling. Over six million farm animals were killed. Some had contracted the disease. Some were in close contact with infected animals. And some were culled preventatively – like a firebreak – round places that were infected.

The epidemic was a national emergency and a horror for many. But though there were dissidents, most policymakers and farmers agreed that culling was necessary. But apart from infected animals, which others should be killed? To answer this question the policymakers turned to epidemiology to simulate the effects of different culling strategies.

So what actually happened in 2001? The history is complicated, but let's talk about two epidemiological models. One, call it the official 'Ministry model', was based in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (now DEFRA). It had GIS data so it 'knew' the locations of the farms. It 'knew' the epidemiological differences between cows, sheep and pigs. It was very detailed, and therefore slow to run. But here's the bottom line. It was used to guide culling policy until March 23rd. 'Cull infected farms. Keep an eye
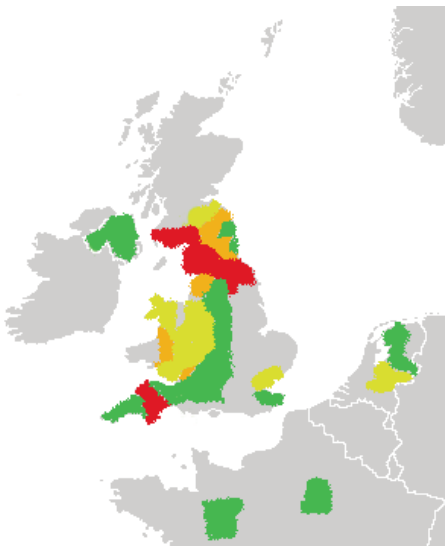
> **WHAT IS FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE?**
> People don't catch foot and mouth disease. But most farmed animals do. It's a viral infection that leads to a high fever followed by blistering and considerable suffering. It's also highly infectious, especially for pigs and cows. Mostly, left to their own devices the animals recover. Not all. But they lose weight, and dairy cattle produce less milk. This means that the disease is a scourge for agriculture. It also explains why the developed world tries to keep the disease out. But since it is common in the tropics, from time to time, there are foot and mouth break outs in the 'North'.

No entry, no access to the countryside

on adjacent premises. And do some preventative culling amongst sheep in Cumbria.' That was the core of the policy.

But then everything changed. Why? This was for many reasons: because the headline infection figures were still growing; because public opinion was restless; because the newspapers were complaining; because Prime Minister Tony Blair was anxious; because it looked as if the culling wasn't working; but also because a second epidemiological model from Imperial College, London, was making quite different predictions. These were dire: much, much worse than those from the Ministry. They said that the policy was not working at all. But the 'Imperial model' was different technically too. It didn't 'know' nearly as much as the 'Ministry model'. It worked with a 'generic' animal (it made no distinction between species). It didn't have GIS data so it didn't know where farms actually were. Instead it drew in very clever ways from statistical microphysics. But it was quicker because it was simpler.

Things were pretty tense in the Whitehall corridors of power in March 2001. There was lots of political pressure. The Prime Minister was impatient. But the 'Ministry model' people were saying: 'the epidemic is on the turn. Just wait for another week or two and you'll see the headline numbers starting to fall.' The 'Imperial model' people, who had Oxford links to Tony Blair, were saying 'no: we need to ramp up the culling. If you don't do this the epidemic will rage out of control.'

What happened? The answer is: the 'Imperial model' carried the day. All animals on premises next to an infected farm were to be slaughtered. Not just watched for symptoms. This was the so-called 'contiguous cull' and it started on March 23rd.

Who was correct? There's quite a strong case for saying that the Ministry was right, though the argument will never be settled. But what's important in the present context is that each of these models was being shaped by science, and by social and political events. But at the same time they were also shaping policy realities too. And the difference mattered. It was a question of life and death. A lot of animals died because reality was framed by the 'Imperial model' in a particular

Foot and Mouth outbreaks in 2001

way. They wouldn't have died if the 'Ministry model' policy had not been stopped.

We can't get away from this kind of dilemma. There's no such thing as a method without a social context or social effects. This means that it won't do to criticise methods just because they are social creatures and political actors. They always are. But if we can understand how this works in different contexts then it will become possible to debate the merits of different methods, and the social and political ways in which they frame the world. As in the foot and mouth epidemic in 2001. That's the focus of CRESC's 'Social Life of Methods' theme.

Contact: john.law@open.ac.uk

Infrastructures of Social Change

Hannah Knox

In March 2013 a new research theme was inaugurated in CRESC entitled Infrastructures of Social Change. Far from being an entirely new theme, this cluster of research builds on several years of collaborative work developing methods and theories for understanding the interplay between technology, knowledge and materiality in processes of social change.

A reorientation around the topic of infrastructures was prompted in part by an awareness that several researchers in the cluster had taken infrastructures as particularly powerful sites for exploring this intersection between technology, knowledge and materiality. Penny Harvey and Hannah Knox, for example, who are convening the new research cluster, have recently completed a research monograph which interrogates social and political transformations in Peru through an analysis of road construction. Others involved in the theme have also found infrastructural projects an important site from which to observe the complex intersections of people and things through which socio-cultural change takes place. Damian O'Doherty has been studying organisational change through an ethnographic study of an airport; Gillian Evans has been analysing social transformation in East London from the perspective of the Olympics and its legacy program, and Madeleine Reeves has analysed post-soviet politics from the perspective of material practices through which national borders are made and lived.

Recently we have been asking ourselves, what is it about infrastructures that makes them such appropriate sites from which to observe the complex dynamics of contemporary social change?

Place

Firstly, we suggest that infrastructures should be of particular interest because of the way in which they refuse to be easily demarcated as either local or global entities. Infrastructure projects are resolutely sited, material processes of social transformation, but they are also projects which are sustained by a set of specific relationships that reach far beyond the ostensible location of the material infrastructure itself. Roads, airports, borders and regeneration projects all involve a specific set of more or less extended relationships, from financial and trading relations that cross continents, to friendships and conflicts that take place in the corridors of organisations or across the dinner tables of family gatherings. The necessity of taking into account relationships at different scales, means that infrastructures provoke a new kind of spatial analysis of social change which does not rely on our usual conceptions of the containers or boundaries of social relations:

organisations, cities, regions, nation states. Instead they require us to develop a new vocabulary to explain the spatialising dynamics of infrastructural arrangements.

Political Subjectivity

Secondly, prompted in part by the infrastructural dynamics of recent events such as the Occupy Movement, we have become fascinated by the way in which infrastructures seem to offer an alternative way of understanding contemporary political relationships. CRESC researcher, Adolfo Estalella, for example, has been following the M15 movement in Madrid, observing how this impromptu social gathering provoked the rapid creation of an ad hoc urban infrastructure of water, electricity, libraries, kitchens and nurseries with their own specific social and political dynamics. Such activist infrastructures provide new forms of connectivity and new modes of social differentiation, shedding light both on the contours of emerging political relationships, and on the possibilities and limits of more embedded infrastructural systems.


As with activism, we have also found art and design a very fruitful site from which to observe the link between infrastructure and political subjectivity. From Nick Thoburn's work on radical political media, to Hannah Knox's work on digital modelling, to collaborations with photographers like Martin Newth and artists like Helen Barff, art and design have offered a means of extending our engagement with the socio-material politics of infrastructural systems. We have found these projects have enabled us to extend a conversation that we started with Science and Technology Studies, helping us to ask not only what kind of relationships infrastructures put in place but also what makes a particular infrastructure manifest political relationships in a particular way and what alternative relational configurations might be thinkable and actionable.

Knowledge

Lastly, we suggest that infrastructures offer a particularly promising site from which to

interrogate contemporary forms of knowledge and expertise. Infrastructures seem particularly generative of new kinds of knowledge. As highly complex projects which aim to resolve political crises and yet which produce new vulnerabilities and dependencies, they constantly provoke new modes of technical and evaluative expertise which aim to demarcate and map the dynamics they set in play.

In a slightly different vein, another way in which infrastructures engage the question of knowledge derives from their seemingly invisible or unremarkable character. We have become particularly fascinated in how infrastructures, conceived as a necessarily distributed set of relationships, entail in their very definition an understanding that much of what makes an infrastructure hold together remains invisible, underneath or in-between. Infra-structure is the structure that holds other things together. Most of the work of holding together, however, remains out of sight: tubes and pipes become buried underground, commercial relationships become hidden behind contractual agreements, and social struggles become distilled in mission statements and strategic plans. We suggest that these invisibilities and elisions raise questions not just about how to trace what lies behind infrastructure, but also what role infrastructure plays in provoking some of the more affective, experiential or imaginative dimensions of social change.
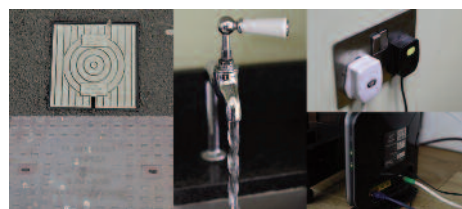
As we move into the new academic year, we are planning a number of events to develop our thinking in this area. A workshop on infrastructures and social change held in July is being followed up in two panels at the CRESC annual conference in September 2013, and in a collaboration with the V&A Museum for an exhibition that they are developing on Design and Political Activism. More details about our projects, a link to our twitter feed and an online repository of readings are all available on our webpage: www.cresc.ac.uk/our-research/infrastructures-of-social-change. Follow us on twitter: @cresc_theme4, or contact us via CRESC to find out more about our plans for exploring social change through infrastructure over the coming year.

This piece summarises a fuller exploration of infrastructures and social change which is forthcoming as a CRESC working paper.

Contact: Hannah.knox@manchester.ac.uk

Urban Ecologies:
A New Theme in Urban Experiments

Francis Dodsworth and Sophie Watson

If one takes a walk through the eastern part of central Paris, from the Place de la Bastille towards the Gare de Lyon, one comes across a collection of craft workshops nestling under the arches of a railway viaduct: the Viaduc des Arts. Ostensibly this is just another sign of the urban regeneration that has transformed this once working-class area in the last few decades. However, if one looks upwards there is something unusual about this particular viaduct. The first picture shows the view from the ground, from where a lot of greenery is clearly visible. If one ascends the steps at the side, one is confronted by a surprising scene, illustrated in the second picture: rather than a disused railway line there is a well-tended walkway filled with trees, shrubs and flowers, with benches positioned for the office workers and

pensioners of Paris to rest or enjoy their lunch. This is the Promenade Plantée, which stretches all the way to the eastern forest at Vincennes and which was opened in 1993 on a defunct railway line. Although it was the first such structure, there are now similar parks elsewhere in Europe and the United States and they are generally symptoms of wider moves to 'green' the city and to develop ecologically sustainable patterns of urban life. Our major cities are now filled with guerrilla gardeners, urban apiarists and rejuvenated allotment enthusiasts.

In order to better understand this important contemporary dynamic Urban Experiments is developing an interest in urban ecologies, a theme that was recently launched with a workshop on the subject held in Milton Keynes, 18-19 June 2013. Erik Swyngedouw (Geography / School of Environmental Development, Manchester), launched the discussions with presentations on the politics of ecology in the contemporary city and the dangers of fetishising 'ecology' and 'sustainability' as ways of convincing the disadvantaged to accept their exclusion from prosperity. Maria Kaika (Human Geography/ School of Environmental Development, Manchester), and Jonathan Metzger (KTH /Architecture and the Built Environment, Stockholm), offered different ways of re-conceptualising the planning process and the ends of planning in general, urging respectively renewed attempts at utopian thinking and new ways of integrating extended interests in the planning process. On the second day Tora Holmberg (Sociology, Upsalla) spoke about the 'Zoocity' and human-animal relations in an urban context; Simon Carter (Sociology, Open University) demonstrated the importance of early twentieth–century health movements in the construction of the concept of a 'healthy' urban environment and Maria Jose Zapata Campos (Managing Big Cities, Gothenburg Research Institute) gave a presentation on community recycling in Managua, particularly the relationship between organised planning and municipal policy and the reality of local self-organisation in the informal settlements that make up most of the cities of the global south.

This workshop drew attention to the ways in which environmentalism and new urban ecologies are transforming the modern city politically, economically, socially and materially. However, it would be wrong to see this as a novel development per se: cities have always been defined in part by their environment and ecology and a new project by Sophie Watson, being conducted within Urban Experiments, is fleshing out the important contemporary and historical role that water plays in the modern city, from the historical significance of drinking fountains and public baths to the washing of the streets of the city which is such a feature of urban life in much of southern Europe. Indeed, if we return to Paris, the third picture illustrates two aspects of urban ecologies drawn together. This picture illustrates the washing of the Paris streets as the water rushes past the stands of the Velib bicycle hire system. Velib is the largest cycle-sharing scheme in Europe and one of the many such projects that are springing up as far afield as New York and Wuhan, and which are represented in Britain by the Barclays Cycle Hire scheme. These systems aim to provide a means of urban transport that does not directly pollute the atmosphere; the distinctive feature in Paris being that there is also a similar scheme for the hire of electric cars, the Autolib, which can now be seen lined up waiting for hire, or indeed in use throughout the streets of the city.

This new theme from Urban Experiments seeks to draw together existing interests in the theme in terms of cycling and the politics of sustainable urban development, and new interests in water and the cultural and material transformation of the city through new ecologies.

Contact: f.m.dodsworth@open.ac.uk

The Future of the BBC World Service and the Decline of British 'Soft Power'?

Marie Gillespie and Alban Web

CReSC publishes ground-breaking research on the historic impact and cultural value of the BBC World Service over eight decades, and the very special role played by its diasporic broadcasters as news makers and diplomatic intermediaries. But what does the future hold for the World Service and its historic role as an agent of cultural diplomacy as it prepares to come under the licence fee in April 2014?

The BBC World Service, often referred to as the 'voice of Britain abroad', is very well known to over 183 million people around the globe who regularly tune in or log on to one of its 27 language services. But the British public, with the exception of intrepid travellers, digital media surfers, and insomniacs who listen to BBC Radio 4 in the dark hours of the night when World Service programmes are broadcast, know very little about it. This is a shame because from April 2014, British citizens will pay for its services, and changes in its governance, funding cuts and its absorption into the BBC's Global News Division pose significant threats as well as opportunities. How these shifts play out will matter greatly for how Britain is perceived around the world and for its ability to influence by attraction – its exercise of what Joseph Nye refers to as 'soft power'. It seems ironic that, at a time when rising powers of BRIC countries are investing in international broadcasting and public diplomacy initiatives to project their strategic narratives onto a world stage, European powers are disinvesting in these services.

It could be argued that international broadcasters like BBC World Service, Deutsch Welle and France 24 are remnants of a bygone era – colonial relics and Cold War propaganda tools that have no place in a media-saturated, multi-polar world, but that would be to ignore a rich history of cultural encounters and translation activities that enabled the BBC to forge a unique brand of corporate cosmopolitanism. For the last 80 years, the World Service derived much of its intellectual, creative and diplomatic significance from the diasporic broadcasters who have been at the heart of the BBC's foreign language service. Yet, they have remained largely absent from the public understanding of the World Service.

Diasporas and Diplomacy: Cosmopolitan Contact Zones at the BBC World Service edited by Marie Gillespie and Alban Webb makes visible the role played by successive waves of exiled, refugee, dissident and migrant intellectuals and writers who have helped to establish and renew the BBC's reputation as one of the world's most credible and trusted international broadcasters.

Contributors to Voice a poetry magazine programme broadcast in 1941 on the BBC Eastern Service including Una Marston, Mulk Raj Anand, George Orwell and WH Auden.

CReSC's 'Reframing the Nation' research theme and its affiliate AHRC-funded 'Tuning In' project have produced the first interdisciplinary, empirically-researched and theoretically-informed analysis of the relationship between the diasporic engagements and diplomatic imperatives that have shaped the overseas operations of the BBC since its inception as the Empire Service in 1932. The book is based on a long-term strategic partnership between the BBC and CReSC at The Open University which has allowed for a wide-ranging, independent, and interdisciplinary study of the World Service using a range of innovative methods that straddle the divide between Arts and Humanities and Social Science research (see for example, the Witness Seminar series that contributed to archiving the corporate memory of its staff and projects exploring audience research methods at the BBC). The World Service not only offers a window on the world, and the journalistic and diplomatic challenges of communicating with it, but is in itself a unique cultural laboratory in which the shifting nature of diasporic identities and cosmopolitan practices can be studied with particular precision and clarity.

The research on which the book is based uses a postcolonial 'contact zone' perspective in order to locate transnational and diasporic subjects in their embodied interactions, activities, networks and spaces. In bringing together international scholars and CRESC researchers to work collaboratively it weaves a rich narrative seam across genres, for example, the evolution of World Music, global sports and drama for development as well as a range of more conceptually focussed themes including diasporic nationalism, religious transnationalism and the politics of translation. It moves from an examination of British expat audiences in the 1930s through to World War Two political satire and the problems of reporting Jewish persecution, to the historical role of the BBC in South Asia, the Middle East and Iran. It ends with an examination of the way new interactive online media are transforming audiences, creating digital diasporas, and the challenging established journalistic principles.

The study develops an analysis of cosmopolitan practices as expressed in the attitudes, working methods and cumulative experience of staff making the programmes, as shaped by corporate, journalistic and strategic interests. It is through such conjunctions that the complex diplomatic value of the World Service is derived: operating according to dialogic principles in which British voices, attitudes and government policy (national interests and values) become part of a wider narrative exchange with the BBC's many audiences. As such the cultural bridge to audiences engineered by successive generations of diasporic staff at the World Service is of paramount importance and remains the underlying currency of its continued success as an international broadcaster and as a diplomatic force. It would be a sad loss for Britain if the World Service were to lose its distinctive diasporic voice and its associated diplomatic cultural value.

Contact: a.j.webb@open.ac.uk

Welcome...
New faces and news from CRESC

Delyth Edwards

I am working as the ethnographer on the Understanding Everyday Participation: Articulating Cultural Values project. I am based at the University of Leicester, but working from the University of Manchester at present on our first case study areas of Cheetham Hill and Broughton. Presently, i have been conducting ethnographic walks in the two areas, noting and documenting both non/legitimate spaces and places of participatory interest. I will also be involved in the household interviews when they get underway.

Heather Whitaker

Heather Whitaker joined CRESC as a research secretary in March 2013 after completing her MA in Economic and Social History at the

University of Manchester. She previously attained her BA (Hons) in Economics and Policy.

Oriol Barranco

Oriol Barranco is a postdoctoral researcher at Universitat Autonoma of Barcelona, Catalonia (Spain). His research has been on transformations of labour process, labour consent and resistance in the workplace, labour trajectories, social movements, and social networks. He is a Visiting Researcher at CRESC from June 15, 2013 through September 14, 2013. He is sponsored by Andrew Miles.

Mark Taylor

Mark is working on the Understanding Everyday Participation: Articulating Cultural

Value project with Andrew Miles and colleagues at the universities of Leicester, Exeter, and Warwick. In particular, Mark is involved in analysing existing secondary datasets, such as Taking Part, investigating the ways in which "nonparticipation" is constructed and what it represents, and mapping both official and vernacular resources in a series of different places in Britain: at the moment, the Manchester city-region.

Yannis Kallianos

I completed my PhD in Social Anthropology at St Andrews University in 2012. My thesis focused on the December 2008 revolt in Greece and explored radical political practices in Athens in relation to everyday life, transformation of public space and social imaginaries of subversion. My main research interests concern radical politics and the formation of political communities; social conflict and political violence; and the way people make sense of social change in relation to the city and the use of public space.

Currently, I am interested in addressing processes of crisis and political legitimacy in Greece based on an exploration of the everyday politics of social conflict in local communities that oppose the construction of waste landfills in their territory.

Yannis is the research Associate in Infrastructures of Social Change whilst Hannah Knox takes maternity leave.

Power and Social Framing:
the CRESC 2014 Conference

What is social and cultural change? How are the public agendas for framing change set? What do they conceal? How do they reproduce inequalities? And how might they be contested? These are the core questions for the 2014 CRESC Conference.

'Epochal' theorising will not do. Structures are real, but the extent to which they reflect simple patterns is limited. Instead we need to ask well-theorised and ambitious questions about particular institutions, networks and practices and their changing intersections with power and inequalities. In the final CRESC conference we are seeking theoretically informed and empirically-grounded contributions that explore change, power and inequality, ask how these are framed, and explore how dominant framings might be contested. We invite well-theorised empirical submissions in any area including the following:

• Finance and the economy

What kinds of mechanisms sustain the power of business elites? How do these work? How can we reveal the undisclosed that sustains financial and business power? And how can we reframe issues in ways that allow public discussion of alternatives?

• National culture and 'soft power'

Technical change, privatisation and transnationalism are changing the character of national 'soft power', but what mechanisms are at work in this transformation? How do they harden inequalities, nationalisms and racisms? And where are the possible sites of resistance?

• Cities

Cultures and social divisions grow out of the power-saturated material realities of the city, but how do these processes work? What tools do we need to understand the interrelations between urban cultures and materials? And how might we open up spaces to alternatives?

• Infrastructures

Infrastructures reflect state decentralisation and fragmentation, but what are the material politics in play? How does power circulate between political, business and cultural elites, experts, and diverse publics? How might we explore and reframe the shifting character of political power?

• Participation

The idea of 'participation' includes some and excludes others, so how and where are boundaries drawn, and who or what is being counted in or out? How do policy models frame their questions in ways that obscure exclusion and inequality? What assumptions do they depend on and how might alternatives be articulated?

• Class

Social stratification has an important cultural dimension, so what tools do we need to understand this? How do cultural distinctions re-articulate and obscure power and class inequalities? And how do processes of cultural stratification operate in the life course and between generations?

For further details please visit:
http://www.cresc.ac.uk/events/cresc-2014-annual-conference-power-and-social-framing