Hi Everyone,

Welcome to the first newsletter for the academic session 2013-2014. As many of you are aware, we are heading swiftly towards the deadline of the 29th November for the REF. Everyone is working extra hard to make sure that our submission is of the highest standard and on behalf of the School I would like to express my gratitude to our UoA coordinators for doing an excellent job in pulling together staff contributors to each unit. So a big ‘thank you’ to Jean Underwood (Psychology), James Hunter and Jason Pandya-Wood (Social Work and Social Policy), and Phil Banyard (education/Pedagogy) which is a cross university submission.

You will see from this newsletter that we have a number of new staff joining us. They were welcomed by Kathie Moore in an official induction event on the 30th September. You will meet some of these staff from Politics and IR in this edition of the newsletter and we are planning to meet those from Sociology in the February edition. I’m sure that you will join with me in welcoming them to the school.

We look forward to hearing more about their research activities throughout this academic session.
Oli Harrison recently presented a paper at the Manchester Workshops in Political Theory (4th September 2013). Matt Henn has recently been invited to a series of events to present findings from research that both he and Nick Foard have been working on. These include an invited paper at Istanbul Bilgi University (June), a key-note lecture at a special meeting of the Electoral Commission (London, June), and an invited talk to a large audience of “citizenship” professionals organised by the Institute for Public Policy Research North (Manchester, June). Imad El-Anis has been very active in working with several of our PhD students (Ashraf Hamed, Terfah Elfayez, Alex Baxter, and Sahra Joharchi) and presenting several joint papers at The 8th Pan-European Conference on International Relations (Warsaw, September), and the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Annual Conference (Dublin, June).

Following a research trip to Berlin, Joanna McKay contributed to a programme on the German federal election on Radio 5 Live on 22nd September, and also wrote a feature on the subject for the web-based ‘Huffington Post’. Matt Ashton has contributed to a significant number of press and radio programmes (regional, national and international) on topics as diverse as the UKIP scandal, the espionage trial of US soldier Bradley Manning, the Syria crisis, political funding of the police and crime commissioners, and the recent US government shutdown.

Rose Gann has been co-opted onto the Executive Committee of the Political Studies Association of the UK for 2013/14 with a brief to develop the Political Studies Association’s education and skill outputs in relation to undergraduate students. Liam McCarthy, Natasha Underhill and Ros Hague attended an ESRC funded workshop at Newcastle University on integrating understanding quantitative methods into an undergraduate international relations module in Politics. Matt Henn has joined the international Review Board for the “SAGE Cases in Methodology” series research practitioners.

Nick Foard has been invited by the National Development Centre for Online Youth Work in Finland to lead a seminar on technology and youth participation in April 2014. This will partly be based upon his research with Matt Henn and also on a general overview of the current situation in the UK regarding clicktivism and other forms of digital democracy among young people.

In September, Azrini Wahidin presented a paper on ‘Transitional Justice in Northern Ireland’ at the Critical Legal Conference Queen’s University, Belfast. Azrini is also due to present a further paper later on this month, entitled ‘From Footnote Soldiers to Frontline Soldiers’.

A selection of recent publications in Sociology include:


Social Work and Professional Practice hosted a staff Seminar on the theme of ‘Social Resilience in Action’ with Professor Natalie Bolzan and Dr Fran Gale from the University of Western Sydney. The seminar took place on Thursday 26th September from 5-7pm and was well attended by colleagues across the School.

Professor Natalie Bolzan is an inaugural professor in the Margaret Whitlam Chair of Social Work at the University of Western Sydney. She has published and presented internationally on promoting sustainable social resilience in challenging contexts, particularly in chronically disadvantaged communities. Natalie’s work includes a focus on developing innovative, participatory methodologies with marginalized young people and their communities. She is leader of the Social Transformative Using Research (STUR) Initiative concerned with research that contributes to social transformation through a focus on equity, access, social inclusion and participation.

Dr Fran Gale’s primary areas of research and publishing are in the areas of participatory democracy and civic connectedness, marginalized groups (particularly young people), spiritualities that express social justice and human rights. She has particularly worked with groups of young people from traumatised population groups such as Indigenous young people and asylum seeking young people. Fran unites political theory expertise with a strong social work practice base. She lectures in Social Work in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology, University of Western Sydney and is a member of the Social Transformative Using Research (STUR) Initiative.


The Division has continued recent successes in funding with funding from the European Commission (€1,068,000, 2013-2016) for the WORKAGE project, further funding from Camelot PLC for Professor Mark Griffiths and the International Gambling Research Unit, and additional funding in the process of being finalized from The Ministry of Justice for the Sexual Offences Crime and Misconduct Research Unit (SOCAMRU). Staff in the Division have recently had numerous papers accepted or published in a broad range of high quality peer-reviewed journals. These include The British Journal of Psychology, Developmental Science, The Journal of Interpersonal Violence, Archives of Sexual Behavior and Developmental Neuropsychology and The Journal of Gambling Studies. Members of the Division have also presented their work at scientific meetings in Denmark, Germany, Italy, Singapore as well as in the UK and the US. More locally, David Crundall, Christina Howard, Duncan Guest, Phil Banyard and Ben Oldfield represented Psychology at NTU at the Game City festival in Newton on Saturday 19th October. The team hosted a ‘Pop-Up Lab’ for members of the public to experience demonstrations and experiments designed to examine how computer gaming can develop perceptual and cognitive skills.

SOCAMRU are also collaborating with HMP Whatton in order to set up the Safer Living Foundation; a charity that will run Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) for prisoners being released into the community. The organisation have already raised around £16,000 with further funding in progress.
We are delighted to welcome to our team a number of new colleagues (Chris Baker-Beall, Jonathan Gorry, Ros Hague, Natalie Martin and Natasha Underhill), each of whom has a strong recent research track record and clear research ambitions. We are really looking forward to their contributing to developing our research strategy and plans.

**Dr Jonathan Gorry** is Principal Lecturer in Politics and International Relations. He earned his BA (Hons) from Staffordshire University and his MA and PhD in International Relations from Warwick University. Previous to NTU, Jonathan taught at Northampton, Warwick and Staffordshire Universities. His research interests lie in the politics of religion and religion in politics, notions of belief and unbelief, together with questions of teaching/learning in HE. He is author of the forthcoming single-authored book ‘*Cold War Christians and the Spectre of Nuclear Deterrence*’ (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Recent publications include: ‘Cultures of Learning and Learning Culture: Socratic and Confucian Approaches to Teaching and Learning’ in *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences* (2012) and two invited articles for *Religion Compass* (2011) exploring St. Augustine, the Ante-Nicene church and the ethics of political violence. He is currently researching the connections between ‘secularisation’ and securitisation (Routledge, 2015).

**Dr Natalie Martin** was a journalist for 20 years before taking the plunge and starting her PhD at Loughborough University in 2007, which was the continuation of an interest in academic study and Turkish politics. Since then, Natalie’s research has focused on the Turkey-EU accession process and she has previously sought to explain why the EU agreed to open accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005. Currently, Natalie is looking at why, and how, the Turkey EU accession process has returned to deadlock and what might happen next. This involves consideration of Turkish politics and foreign policy as well as that of the EU as an actor and its member states. It challenges existing approaches by drawing on both material and ideational factors to explain the process in context. It argues basically that normative actors still act geostrategically but are inclined to do so within a normative framework. This research is primarily empirical but is also theoretical and metatheoretical in that it seeks to justify a complex contextual approach to International Relations through the application of a Critical Realist epistemology.

**Dr Natasha Underhill** is a Lecturer in International Relations, and gained her PhD in International Relations at University College Cork in 2012. She has taught in higher education for over 6 years and is a member of a number of international academic associations including the International Studies Association and the PSAI. Natasha joined Nottingham Trent University in 2013, and teaches on the BA (Hons) International Relations and the MA International Relations, in areas including International Relations Theory, Foreign Policy, International Security, and the International Relations of the Middle East and South Asia. Her major research interests include the following, and she would be interested in supervising PhD students in any of these areas — international relations of the Middle East and South Asia, International Terrorism, State Failure, Insurgency and counter-insurgency, US Foreign Policy and Security Studies. She has published research on EU-China Relations, Terrorism and International Relations, and Teaching and Learning.
Dr Ros Hague is a Lecturer in Politics and International Relations. Her research interests fall into two areas, Feminism and Environmentalism. Her book, Autonomy and Identity: The Politics of Who We Are (Routledge 2011) looked at the political theory behind the concepts of autonomy and identity in order to develop a new, feminist, understanding which sees autonomy as a process by which we change and develop our identity. The book featured illustrative examples drawn from a wide range of contemporary issues including pornography, domestic violence and citizenship and it drew on thinkers from the canon of political thought. Ros continues to work on projects related to contemporary feminism and has expanded some of the themes developed in her book, namely the role of the imagination and attitudes to nature. This informs her second main area of research, an examination of the attitudes to nature found in people who live and work with nature and also in fictional representations of nature.

Life Beyond the REF: Politics and IR

The Division has been very busy over the summer and the early weeks of this academic year as we prepare for life beyond REF 2014. We have established a Divisional Research Committee which has been meeting regularly to craft a research strategy as well as the methods for achieving this. As well as developing a new and collective infrastructure to underpin our research activities, colleagues have been busy working on some very exciting and innovative individual and collective research activities. A selection of activities include the following.

Jonathan Gorry, Rose Gann, Ros Hague, Liam Mccarthy, Natasha Underhill and Matt Henn, have submitted an application to the HEA for funding to conduct a study that examines ways to embed research methods into the curriculum. Matt Henn has led a Divisional collaborative application with the UK Political Studies Association to the Government’s Cabinet Office to run the regional “Rock Enrol” project which aims to increase levels of voting registration amongst young people at schools in the East Midlands.

Jonathan Gorry’s book “Cold War Christians and the Spectre of Nuclear Deterrence” has been published (31st October) by Palgrave Macmillan. Imad El-Anis has published two recent articles in The International Journal of Peace and Development Studies and The Journal of Conflict Transformation and Security. Matt Henn and Nick Foard have had an article published in the Journal of Youth Studies, and have submitted an invited chapter for an e-book following a workshop presentation that Matt delivered at the University Autonoma Barcelona in 2012. Matt and Nick have completed a commissioned article for Sociology Review which will be published in April 2014, and have two short essays which have been published by the ESRC. They are currently preparing an article for the Institute of Social and Economic Research (Essex University) on the topic of Compulsory Voting.

Contributed by Matt Henn
Dr. James Hunter (Sociology) has been awarded a two year KTP project with Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership which will be funded by the ESRC. This project will look to tackle the problems of shop theft by analysing the effectiveness of security measures in reducing shop loss, and will see the development of neighbourhood and offender profiles in order to develop risk profiles at the lower super output area for different retail outlets. These profiles will be used to inform crime reduction, planning and local economic development strategies within Nottingham. The eventual knowledge transfer outcome of the project will be the creation of a joint social enterprise company between NTU and NCDP which will provide advice to retail outlets and sell neighbourhood/offender profiles to other criminal justice agencies across other areas in England. The project, which will be starting in the New Year, will be carried out in conjunction with Professor Machi Tseloni (Loughborough) who will contribute to the work on evaluating the effectiveness of security measures, and Dr. Paul Hamilton (Sociology) who will be contributing to the development of the offender profiles.

Congratulations to Adam Barnard and colleagues who have secured funding for a KTP from Nottinghamshire County Council. A total of £170 000 has been awarded to the project that will allow for the successful graduate to develop and introduce an innovative model of service delivery to reduce expenditure, improve outcomes, understand behaviour change, and rethink public service delivery to meet young people and children’s needs. The role requires the post holder to become familiar with the role of childcare services within a local authority, effective outcomes for children and young people and an understanding of the complexities of these potential service users. The project outcome will be to develop a potentially commercial licence for effective programmes, assessments, interventions and evaluations that deliver excellent outcomes for children and young people.

“Evaluating the impact of an ageing population on the demand for policing, fire and rescue, and health services in Nottingham”

An increasingly ageing population presents a range of challenges to public service organisations in relation to the changing service demands they face, and how they adjust their delivery systems and interventions in response to the needs of the elderly. Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership have commissioned Dr. James Hunter from the School of Social Sciences, NTU, to identify the extent of the current, and future, impact of the ageing population in Nottingham upon the levels of service need faced by crime, healthcare and fire agencies and partnership organisations. The aim of this research project is to:

- Identify the changing nature, and spatial distribution of the elderly population, within different localities in Nottingham;
- Examine the relationship between the age demographics of neighbourhoods, and changes in crime/fear of crime levels, fire related incidents, and health outcomes;
- Statistically model the relationship between a range of independent factors (including age), and service sector demands, in order to generate neighbourhood risk levels that can inform future strategic decisions concerning the targeting of resources and initiatives.
- The research findings will be disseminated to a wide range of policy stakeholder organisations within the Nottingham area who can then employ the age demographic profiles to inform their policy decision-making beyond the policy sectors included within the initial research brief.
Congratulations to Maria Karanika-Murray and colleagues have been awarded an EU research grant worth €1.1m over a period of three years. The details of the project are as follows:

WORKAGE aims to support evidence-based policy innovation by demonstrating that targeted workplace interventions to improve job design and work organisation will facilitate enhanced engagement and retention of older workers. We know from long-established research and practice that factors such as job design and work organisation have a measurable impact on employee engagement, performance and well-being for all workers but its specific impact on older workers has not been sufficiently documented. Through longitudinal pilot interventions in two organisations WORKAGE will demonstrate how policies and programmes can be designed and implemented in ways that are specifically targeted at enhancing the labour market retention and engagement of workers aged over 50.

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**Funding Panel Reminder!**

The next Research Funding Panel meeting will be held on Tuesday 19th November.

If you would like to be considered, your Application Form and Research Plan must be sent to the SOC School Research Funding inbox and your Divisional Research Co-ordinator by Tuesday 12th November.

The Divisional Research Co-ordinators are Thom Baguley (Psychology), James Hunter (Sociology), Matt Henn (Politics & International Relations) and Graham Bowpitt (Social Work & Professional Practice).

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**Alternative Futures IV Conference 2014**

Following on from the success of the previous three years, the Alternative Futures Conference will be returning once again on **Wednesday February 26th, 2014**.

This event is designed to provide staff and postgraduate research students with an opportunity to present a paper they might wish to try out before considering it for submission to a peer reviewed journal, or presentation at an external conference.

Whilst there is no specific overarching theme for the conference, we are primarily seeking papers that will further advance the continuing development of the research groups whose work will contribute to the School’s research activities post REF2014. These are: Criminology and youth justice; Politics and international relations; Psychology; Sociology; Social inequalities and social interventions.

If you would like to present a paper at the Alternative Futures Conference 2014, please submit a **300 word abstract** to either James Hunter (james.hunter@ntu.ac.uk) or Oli Harrison (oliver.harrison@ntu.ac.uk) by **Friday November 8th, 2013**. Proposals for a specific panel at the conference are equally welcome, but please remember to submit an abstract for each of the presenters who will make up your panel.

If you have any questions about any aspect of the conference, or would like an informal discussion about a potential paper, please do not hesitate to get in contact with James or Oli.
Welcome to NTU, Azrini. We hope you are settling in well. Can you start off by telling us about your research background?

For the last twenty years my research background has been researching hard to reach groups, those who are socially excluded and those with high complex needs. In particular, I’m known internationally for my work on older offenders. In terms of other types of research that I’ve been involved in, I’ve researched young people who come into contact with the law, prisoners with learning disabilities and I’ve looked at lifers and long term inmates, both in this country, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the USA.

Can you tell us about any research that you are working on at the minute?

You’ve come at a very timely moment, because I’m actually working on two bids. My background is not only in criminology and sociology, but also Gerontology, so I have also written about the performativity of the body. Therefore this research on LGBT’s allows all of those intersections to meet. The other project that I’m involved in and that I’ve secured funding for, is with the Crime, Drug Partnership with Dr James Hunter. and it is looking at young people’s involvement in crime related activities at three locations in Nottingham, so that’s very exciting. In terms of research that I’m currently involved in and which is coming to an end after working on it for a number of years is looking at former paramilitary women. The book is entitled: Ex-combatants, gender and peace in Northern Ireland. Women, political protest and the prison experience.

That sounds fascinating and a particularly under researched area. How do you see NTU contributing to the development of your research?

I think I’m very lucky that NTU is a vibrant place to work and has a young enthusiastic team. It has many strengths, including the variety of research that colleagues are working on; from identity and the body, to people who come into contact with the criminal justice system as well as work on human rights, transitional justice and life course issues. So, it compliments and strengthens my body of work, which I hope can be taken in different directions. I am hoping to utilise the links that NTU have already built with that prison locally to continue that research on older offenders further.

Are there any aspects of research that you find the most rewarding?

That’s a good question. I mean I love all of it. I like that fact that I’m learning something new every day. I suppose it’s like being an archaeologist, you just never know what you are going to unearth and that is my drive, that’s my passion. Especially with the older offenders and the work with young people and placing it in a human rights context, it’s going to affect change and we’ve seen that in the latest report on older offenders when I gave special evidence to the Justice Select Committee at the House of Commons.

Is there a piece of research that you are particularly proud of and why?

It has to be the work on older prisoners, because that has led to a call that I have championed for many, many years, and that is to have a national strategy for
both male and female older prisoners. Also for the prison service to lower the age that someone is classed as older from 60 to 50 years, to take into account the accelerated ageing process that occurs within prison. So yes, I would say that I am particularly proud of that research, and kind of fond of that piece of work that has been developing for the last, I hate to say it, but the last 18 years! It was my first major piece of research and I was very lucky in my academic career that I’ve had great teachers, Pat Carlen, Maureen Cain, Loraine Gelsthorpe from Criminology, and Judith Phillips and Simon Biggs from Gerontology, who have mentored me and drew on those intersections. They taught me how to examine the experiences of imprisonment in relation to age.

**What do you think are the three most important aspects to carry out a great research project?**

First you have to be immersed in the data and immersed in the literature. Actually, I think the most important thing is that you have a genuine interest and genuine concern for the participants that you want to study. Moreover, there is a genuine pursuit and furthering of knowledge. Thirdly, I think it’s looking at ways of making change. This approach reminds me of what C. Wright Mills said ‘the purpose of research or sociological inquiry is to make private troubles, public issues’ and that really is something that follows through in all the work that I do; the political is very much the personal. That’s what gets me up in the morning.

**Thank you for time, Azrini. We wish you luck with your research endeavours and look forward to research updates of your work in later issues!**

Professor Neil Abell, Director of International Programmes from Florida State University at an invitation from Professor Wahidin, visited the School of Social Sciences for two days in October, to explore options for facilitating student exchanges and to lay the groundwork for staff exchanges and collaborative research partnerships. The purpose of these opportunities are to allow students to get hands on experience living and learning in new environments and acknowledge the importance of identifying global issues in a local context and enhance the quality of the learning experience that NTU offers.

Although his schedule was packed a few of us: James Hunter, David Elliott, Mike Sutton, Azrini Wahidin, Claire de Motte managed to take him to the Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem. Many thanks for coming out on a cold evening. He thoroughly enjoyed talking to staff and many thanks goes out to the Social Work team for beginning the process of module mapping and to Becky Heath for assisting Azrini in organising meetings with staff.

Go to [http://csw.fsu.edu/faculty/neil-abell/](http://csw.fsu.edu/faculty/neil-abell/) to see details of Professor’s Abell’s research profile.
Welcome to our new Postgraduate Research Students!

We would like to welcome two new postgraduate research students who have recently joined the School. Each has secured bursaries from our very competitive School bursary schemes, and we look forward to working with them and to finding out more about their exciting new research projects!

Sarah Buglass is a recent postgraduate who has been awarded a Psychology PhD Bursary. Sarah achieved a degree in Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence and Psychology from the University of Nottingham in 2003, and a PGCE in Secondary ICT from Kings College London in 2004. A successful career as a secondary school teacher and Head of ICT ensued, during which time Sarah developed a keen interest in adolescent technology use and online behaviour. Following the birth of her two sons, Oliver (4) and Jacob (2), Sarah decided to enter the realms of academia once again in order to pursue her research interests. Sarah enrolled on the MSc in Psychology at NTU in 2012. Graduating with a Distinction, Sarah produced a final project that explored the impact of technology use on the psychological wellbeing of adolescents. Sarah’s PhD studies complement her Master’s research, by focussing on the potential risks to wellbeing encountered when using social networking technologies. With approximately 80% of the UK’s adolescent population professing to author a social networking profile, young people are frequently using such mediums as a means of developing their social relationships and identity. It has been suggested that the advantages of using social networking sites (SNS) largely outweigh the potential risks. However, recent media reports in the UK warning of the perils of young people interacting with SNS have heightened concerns amongst adult observers and policy makers as to the apparent safety of SNS platform use. Sarah’s PhD will seek to investigate such concerns by exploring the relationship between social network site use and an individual’s susceptibility to online vulnerability through the use of longitudinal social network analysis and graph visualisation techniques.

Georgina Gous is a postgraduate student who has recently been awarded the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship. Georgina achieved a First Class Honours degree in Psychology (BSc) in 2009 at Loughborough University. As someone who has always had a great interest in the application of Psychology to the real world environment, Georgina has been determined to pursue a career path in psychological research. Georgina’s main areas of interest are within the field of Forensic Psychology and this has largely driven her choices when carrying out further academic study. In 2011, Georgina began an MSc in Investigative and Forensic Psychology at the University of Liverpool. Graduating with a Distinction, Georgina specialised in the application of Forensic Psychology at the courtroom stage of the criminal process. Her MSc project explored the effects of leading questions and witness preparation on eyewitness accuracy and confidence. Before completion of her MSc, Georgina volunteered at a number of schools and greatly enjoyed helping other individuals achieve their potential. She also tutored a number of undergraduate students throughout her Masters course and beyond and hopes to continue teaching once she has completed her PhD. Georgina’s PhD will investigate a fairly new area of interest in Psychology; that of Earwitness memory. Earwitness memory has received less attention from the research literature in past years and as such, there remain a number of unknowns about witness memory for auditory information. Specifically, the PhD will focus on the influence of certain voice characteristics on voice recognition accuracy and confidence. Since this is a new avenue of research, it is hoped that this will lead to the advance in the understanding of memory processes and factors that affect voice recognition accuracy. Of equal importance is the inclusion of any age and gender effects in voice recognition accuracy as at present, these have not been adequately addressed. It is anticipated that this piece of research could have practical benefits for police officials by aiding to assist in the development of earwitness lineups. Information may also help the courts to establish what is, and what is not, admissible in the courtroom.

Rosie Kitson-Boyce is one of the recent post-graduates to receive a Vice-Chancellor PhD bursary. Rosie achieved a BA in Criminology (2:1) followed by an MSc in Psychology (Commendation), here at Nottingham Trent University. Throughout the MSc Rosie steered her personal options towards a Forensic nature studying both ‘the recovered memory controversy of childhood sex abuse memories recalled in adulthood and current perspectives surrounding the issue’ in a specialist essay and ‘the public’s attitude towards sex offenders and their risk of re-offence’ for a research project. During this time Rosie also volunteered one day a week at HMP Wharton, enabling her to gain invaluable experience working with sex offenders, which lead to her attaining a Psychology Assistant post at the prison a year and a half later. After 3 years working in the Prison Service Rosie returned to Nottingham Trent University to complete an MSc in Forensic Psychology (Commendation). During this time she was approached by HMP Wharton to carry out a qualitative analysis of facilitator burn out when working on the Deaf Sex Offender Treatment Programme, which she completed as part of her research project. In line with her previous experience Rosie’s PhD will evaluate psychological and risk-related changes in sex offenders, relating to re-offending over time, as they engage with Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA). COSAs are now growing in both success and public confidence (Wilson et al, 2007), with there now being up to 10 Circles projects at various stages of development in England and Wales (Bates et al, 2012). For the first time ever COSAs will be established within a prison setting by the Safer Living Foundation, a steering group consisting of representatives from Wharton prison, NTU and other agencies such as the police and probation, which Rosie will evaluate as part of her PhD. In particular Rosie’s research will focus on elderly (55+) and Intellectually Disabled high risk sex offenders and their experiences of making the transition from prison to the community with the help and support of the volunteers who make up the circle.
Introducing the School's New Research Assistant!

Matthew recently joined the Department of Social Sciences as a Research Assistant. He comes from an interdisciplinary background broadly covering social psychology sociology, social policy and marketing, and has worked on specific projects for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Professional Associations Research Network and Callcredit Information Group on social and organisational barriers to employment, diversity issues within the workplace, social media use for organisations and the marketing of ethical and identity specific products. These projects covered a range of qualitative and quantitative methods and various data collection methods from face-to-face and telephone interviewing to archival sources and database documents, surveys, focus groups and online data and have been published in government, professional body and industry journals.

Matthew has an MSc Social Research Methods and is also currently on the cusp of completing his PhD in the Department of Psychology, under the directorships of Dr Sarah Seymour-Smith here at NTU and Professor Brendan Gough formally NTU now at Leeds Metropolitan University.

His thesis consists of four separate but interrelated empirical studies exploring how ‘metrosexuality’ as a modern masculine identity is constructed and negotiated by self-identified ‘metrosexuals’ and ‘non-metrosexuals’. Various modes of computer-mediated electronic ‘talk’ from online social media sources were examined using discursive psychology and membership categorization analytical methods. He has published several papers from this research in The Journal of Gender Studies, Gender and Language, The Journal of Men’s Studies and Psychology & Marketing.

Matthew is also actively involved with the Journal of Gender Studies, International Journal of Marketing Studies, Palgrave Macmillan, Nova and Blackwell/Wiley Publishers. His current research interests are, but not exclusively, men and masculinities; new, mediated and cyberspace identities; gender and sexuality in the media and marketing; decision making in health and protection services; conversation and social interaction.

Matthew would like to invite colleagues across the department to pop into CHR3311 to discuss research projects that he may be able to assist with.

A Message from Lianne Kerlin

Lianne has been in touch with us to let us know how she is getting on—it sounds like she is really enjoying her new job at the BBC and not missing us at all. She tells us……..

“I've been meaning to email for ages now, but my internet at home isn't connected and I've been here there and everywhere on training. I'm currently in London. I'm absolutely loving it though, the training is great and there's opportunity for lots of it. I got to make a TV show last week!”

She is also really interested in who her successor is, so we will be sending her a copy of this newsletter, so that she can be introduced to Matthew!
Dr Fran Gale and Prof Natalie Bolzan shared with us work they carried out with marginalised groups in Australia. They were both visiting from the ‘Community and Social Work’ team at the School of Social Sciences at the University of Western Sydney, Australia. Their presentation examined the concept of resilience, currently a buzz word in many areas within the Social Sciences. Gale and Bolzan outlined five common approaches to building stronger, resilient communities - identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each. They then introduced a sixth, novel perspective that attempted to compensate for the deficits in the other approaches.

The first, community capacity building, emphasises identifying and removing barriers to developing technical and administrative skills of a community. The idea, we were told, is to enhance the ability to take responsibility and control in a community. As an approach to building resilience, Gale and Bolzan suggested however that it is rather weak on addressing power inequalities and struggles, and it may not best meet the needs of the community it should be serving. For example, government-sponsored community capacity building may primarily be serving the needs of government.

The second perspective — a social inclusion/exclusion approach — seeks to enable active inclusion in community life, via issues such as equality, human rights, participation, integration and cohesion. Gale and Bolzan, however, pointed out that there are implicit assumptions that inclusion is always a good thing and this dynamic may also create unnecessary and divisive in-groups and out-groups. By selecting a ‘problem’ group worthy of attention, and of intervention, other ‘problems’ and groups are left alone.

The factors that lead to people being able to engage more fully with their community are also addressed by the perspective of community wellbeing. The emphasis here is more on the factors that contribute to happiness. Again this could be defined much more widely than having enough income to be comfortable, and be a much more holistic, ‘quality of life’ concept.

The fourth perspective discussed was social capital. Gale and Bolzan pointed out that, apart from the concept having an economic ‘flavour’ to it by emphasising capital that can be acquired or lost, social capital does have other uses. It can help emphasise norms and networks that are vital to effective collective action. This approach, however, also seems to imply that all social relationships are necessarily consensual and harmonious. Along with its other influence in communitarianism, this concept is less effective in accounting for conflict and difference as it seems to value homogeneity of people’s experiences, rather than recognise or embrace diversity.

The fifth perspective, community resilience, offered an understanding of the capacity to respond and recover from crisis such as a natural disaster. By using this approach to conceptualising community developments, we were able to see how communities could adapt and transform to meet an imminent threat, although the community would often revert to its prior state after the threat had been averted. Gale and Bolzan saw this approach as being helpful in seeing how resilience can move beyond fixed states and that it can often be very flexible. However, they also argued that community resilience could not account for how communities might respond to ongoing difficulties, such as chronic climate change, poverty or globalisation.

The talk then went on to describe a sixth perspective that the presenters had developed – social resilience, as distinct from community resilience. Community resilience, in their view, tended to emphasise an adaptive response, whereby problems were judged as resolved by the extent to which the community can then return to a ‘normal’, prior state. With the community resilience framework, ‘normality’ and consensus were valued over diversity.

By contrast, a social resilience framework values the transformation of existing relations and norms. This involved focussing on the level of adaptability that could be invested in the human beings in the social and community structures, rather than investing in the structures themselves. In this way, interventions that ‘interrupted the discursive spaces’ of everyday life in a resilient and sustainable direction. Binaries of understanding were challenged (e.g. reified notions of ‘experts’ and ‘problem persons’ are dissolved) and multiple stakeholders were recognised.
Social Resilience in Action'

Byer and Glenn Williams

Through the creation of a shared, public space and the engagement of the media to tell the story of this transformation, an alternative discourse could then be played out in which the dominant discourse of young indigenous Australian males (i.e. in the Wollongong study) or homeless people (i.e. in the Armadale study) could be challenged and reconstructed. This talk showed how, with sensitive handling, people in situations of marginalisation and disempowerment could be given the time, space, and support to take risks to create opportunities to cultivate social resilience skills that could be activated in a range of settings and situations.

Gale and Bolzan reported on several studies they had done into the dynamics of social resilience and how transformative shifts could be created in people’s lives, where previously marginalisation and disempowerment existed. The participatory action research described was both a challenge and an opportunity to the researchers and the researched. The researchers chose to adopt a stance of interrupting the existing social space that perpetuated non-resilient climates, policies and practices. Two projects were outlined – one that involved working with indigenous Australian youth experiencing marginalisation in Armadale, WA, and another entailed enabling those who had experience of homelessness within Wollongong, NSW, to raise public awareness of the issues that homeless people faced. Discussion centred on the indigenous youth project which offered them a space in which to do ‘anything they wanted to’ with a modest pot of money. The young people, after challenging the actual extent of this freedom, decided to ‘makes dogs jump’; apparently a valued skill in working dogs in rural areas of Australia.

Gale and Bolzan reported a number of positive, transformative, outcomes of this project. Attitudes towards the indigenous youth amongst elderly white Australians in the community changed in a markedly positive direction – the youth were invited to the nursing homes with their dogs – an invitation entirely unlikely before the creation of this ‘interrupted space’ and its concomitant effects. These local effects rippled outwards as there was a great deal of positive media coverage of the youth and their dogs. Attitudes toward them by the local police also transformed, eventually, in a positive direction. The youth themselves became more confident, more mobile and positive towards wider mainstream norms and restrictions.

Overall, from a sociological theory perspective, this presentation was a classic example of the structure/agency debate. The transformative potential of the interruptions of discursive space that Gale and Bolzan initiated and studied are at the agential end of a structure–agency continuum, reminiscent of Anthony Giddens’ theory of structuration. One of the problems with this is that the relative efficacy of individual agents to transform the overarching structures that can be seen as dominating, determining or influencing a variety of life chances are largely impervious to individual influence – particularly amongst marginalized and powerless groups. One of the moments in the structure/agency debate in the 1990s that hold some promise of theorising transformative potential along the lines Gale and Bolzan suggest is Margaret Archer’s morphogenetic approach. Here, from a broadly critical realist position, Archer suggests that an explanation of why very familiar structures are reproduced by apparently ‘free’ individuals over and over again. Social structures of class, gender, race etc, are relatively intransient – but in each reproductive cycle spontaneous change can occur. The idea of interruptions to discursive space seems to reflect this idea quite nicely. From a community psychologist’s perspective, the talk offered a refreshing set of insights into how to conduct transformative research that can engage marginalised and stigmatised groups at a variety of levels. It also provided fruit for a promising debate into how best to involve a range of stakeholder groups, with such transformative effects, to enable a potentially vague concept of social resilience to be converted into a reality.
In September I was able to realise a long-cherished ambition to expand my knowledge of European social work via the Erasmus Programme. My interest in ageing, and some desk research on key universities where NTU has an established relationship, led me to Professor Xavier Lorrente Y Guerrero, who has developed an innovative social science study programme for older people (the PUGG). This forms part of his strong interest in active ageing. I also hoped to learn more from him about the social policy response to population ageing in Spain, with a view to joint research and publication, and to provide an international dimension to my teaching at NTU.

I arrived with no clear programme of work, so I was feeling rather ill-prepared. In the event my fears proved ill-founded; I was provided with a full programme and an extensive presentation, covering both the PUGG, and a great deal of context relating to population ageing.

The University for Older People (Programa Universitari de Gent Gran - PUGG) has been running for 6 years, and a meeting with its first graduates was arranged for me. I was able to run an informal focus group to enquire about their experience of the programme (see photo). This, and conversations in the course of two visits arranged for me to centres for old people in working class areas of Barcelona, provided me with very exiting insights into how the programme worked.

I also discovered that social policy and culture in Spain has led to a much greater emphasis on active ageing than in the UK, where population ageing is regarded much less positively. Each district of Barcelona has its own centre for retired people, offering a wide range of continuing education and leisure activities. These experiences, and the privilege of spending time in another university working with a highly-talented and committed staff member, has encouraged me to improve my Spanish, and pursue applied research into ageing in England (and possibly Spain), supporting the development of an “Age Friendly” Nottingham. I hope to maintain a working relationship with the University Ramon Llull and with the city of Barcelona.
Our key objective this term has been to identify and develop new research clusters that reflect the research interests and ambitions of our colleagues, especially those who have recently joined NTU. Each of these new research clusters includes a mix of early career and aspiring researchers, as well as more research-experienced colleagues who are able to offer mentoring and support to others; in addition, each has an identified cluster coordinator. It is intended that each cluster will contribute to the broader Divisional Research Strategy by coordinating a collective approach for supporting colleagues achieve further research excellence. Cluster coordinators have been tasked with leading on the drafting of “cluster statements” that will inform our developing Divisional research strategy and input to the new NTU-wide Schools’ Research Planning Framework. These cluster statements will articulate our research interest-expertise, action and dissemination plans, as well as our approach to increasing external grant capture and the achievement of research impact, and our ambitions to build upon our strong existing PhD research student base. They will also inform the development of research cluster webpages to support our new Divisional web presence at [http://www.ntu.ac.uk/apps/research/groups/22/home.aspx/group/148392/overview/politics_and_international_relations](http://www.ntu.ac.uk/apps/research/groups/22/home.aspx/group/148392/overview/politics_and_international_relations).

With this in mind, we held a very successful research event on 31st October which provided an opportunity for staff to co-create the following research clusters:

- Citizens, Parties and Political Action (CPPA)
- Middle East and North Africa (MENA)
- Politics, Innovation and Pedagogy (PIP)
- Ethics, Ecology, Identity (EEI)
- Security, Political Violence and Change (SPVC)

**Developing New Research “Clusters”**

### Research Seminar Series in Politics and International Relations 2013/14

We are delighted to have published our “Research Seminar Series in Politics and International Relations” for 2013/14. This programme of weekly research events is designed to develop and extend our Division-wide research culture, as well as to create the space for our research clusters to organise and mobilise our research efforts. It includes a four-weekly cycle of: discussant-led research films; postgraduate student seminar papers; staff seminar papers; and cluster-activity sessions (the latter includes strategy meetings and reading groups). To date, we have had papers delivered by both staff and postgraduate students, and topics include “The Special Tribunal for Lebanon and Its Concrete Effects on Lebanese Politics: Hegemony or Justice?” by Alex Baxter (PhD student), “Gorky Park to Gezi Park: Security and the Turkey-EU accession process” by Natalie Martin (staff member), and “Communicating Health Messages Through Different Channels To Prevent and Mitigate HIV and AIDS Impacts: Lessons From Malawi” by Judy Manda (PhD student).

The new series, launched at the start of this term, reflects and crystallises the vibrant research culture emerging within the division. Already it is proving a focal point for discussion, debate and the generation of fresh perspectives. Hosting papers from established academics and postgraduate students, screening films for discussion and initiating 3 parallel reading groups, the weekly sessions offer a varied and dynamic contribution to the life of the division.

Further papers this term will include a comparative discussion of terrorism and insurgency in the Middle East and South Asia and an external paper from Dr Bettina Renz of Nottingham University who will be speaking on military transformation in Russia. For further information please contact Dr Kevin Love in the Division of Politics and International Relations.
Next Issue: February 2014

If you wish to contribute to the next issue of the newsletter, then please contact Claire de Motte at claire.demotte@ntu.ac.uk

There’s Social Science in your apple

Organic? Food miles?

And you thought it was just fruit.