

Programmes in The Department of Social Sciences

Certificate in Regeneration
BSc (Hons) Criminology
BSc (Hons) Criminology and Sociology
BA (Hons) Politics
BSc (Hons) Sociology
MA Criminology and Criminal Justice
MSc International Development
MSc Homeland Security
Master of Public Administration (MPA)
MRes Social Sciences
Professional Doctorate in
Public Administration (DPA)

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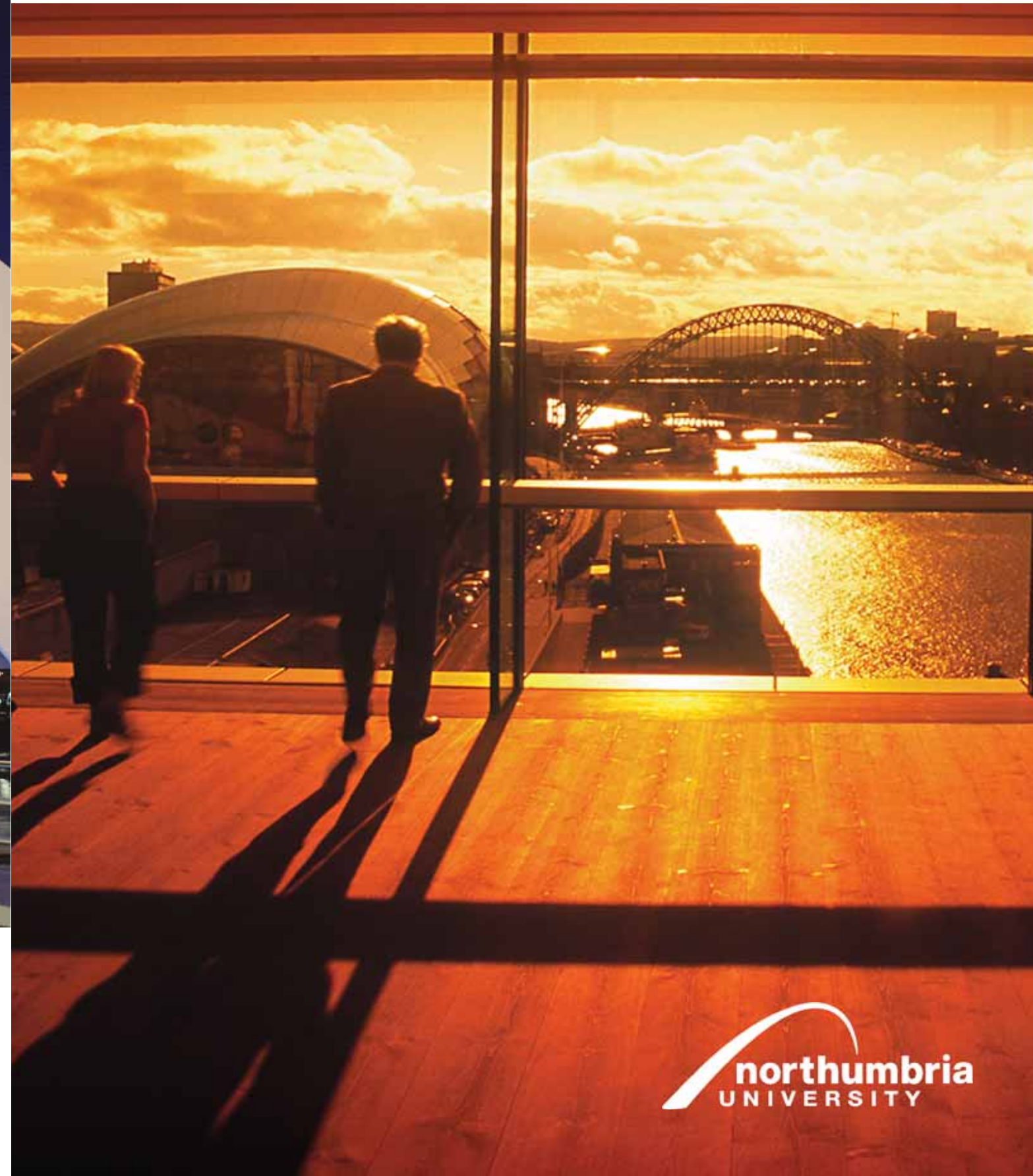
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SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES | Issue 2

showcasing excellence

The Department of Social Sciences



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Economies and Insecurities of Crime and Justice

3–6 July 2011

British Society of Criminology Annual Conference 2011

Keynote speakers:

Jackie Harvey Liz Kelly Mike Levi Ian Loader Jill Peay Stephen Shaw Loïc Wacquant

This conference encompasses the applied and theoretical nature of contemporary criminology. The key focus is on Economies and Insecurities of Crime and Justice.

- Economic crisis, public spending and the criminal justice sector
- Recessional climates and the landscapes of criminal enterprise
- The political economies of crime, crime control and criminal justice
- Social exclusion, consumer culture and criminal enterprise
- The academic and practitioner interface – global to North East
- Fear, insecurity and victimisation
- Global economies and local insecurities

Northumbria University City Campus East

For more information please visit
www.northumbria.ac.uk/bsconference



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Foreword

by Peter Francis,
Head of Department of Social Sciences

The Department of Social Sciences incorporates the disciplines of criminology, politics, public policy and sociology. It is home to 45 academic staff and incorporates the Centre for Public Policy, the Departments' applied research and enterprise centre. Knowledge exchange, high quality research and enterprise activity and the delivery of professional development including training are our key strengths and the Department works collaboratively with a variety of public, private and third sector services and organisations in the UK and overseas. The Department is proud of its research excellence and its reputation for making a difference to the region, nationally and internationally.

There is a vibrant research culture across the Department. Over one third of the Department's research was recognized as internationally excellent (3* and above) in the RAE 2008, and it is our strategic intention to increase this considerably for the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Fifteen new research active staff have been appointed to the Department since the last RAE and staff are engaged in a wide range of research and consultancy work at a local, regional, national and international level, including recent and ongoing research in Asia, Latin America, Africa, the USA, the UK, the EU and the Middle East.

Research and innovation is led by Professors Shaw, Hardill and Roulstone and can be grouped into five key areas; public policy, crime and justice, global policy, transnationalism, activism and development, and communities and inclusion. Colleagues have received funding from organisations including the UK research councils, UK and European government departments and institutions, regional and local government, international organisations and voluntary sector bodies.

The Centre for Public Policy (CPP) is the Department's applied research centre that was officially launched in September 2002 by the Rt. Hon Nick Raynsford, Minister of State for Local Government and the Regions. Since that time, CPP has acquired an international reputation both for providing high-quality research, evaluation and consultancy services, and for designing and delivering tailored professional development and training programmes to clients in countries as diverse as Vietnam, China, Libya, Nigeria, the USA and the wider EU. With a particular focus on understanding clients' requirements, CPP has extensive experience of drawing complex and nuanced information together to form clear and concise recommendations.

In addition to its core research, consultancy and evaluation services, CPP has also facilitated the establishment of knowledge exchange networks for the ESRC, served as an advisor and mentor to Local Authorities during times of transition and project managed the dissemination activities of major projects. Not only does CPP draw on the substantive expertise of staff

working across the Department's five research themes, it also possesses a deep well of methodological expertise, demonstrating a significant track record in furthering methodological debate and innovation.

The Department is entering a very exciting phase of development as our investment in staff positions us to be one of the leading universities in the country for professional and applied social and political research. This year the Department will be joined by a further four academic staff in criminology and international public services management. In July the Department will host the British Society of Criminology annual conference on the theme of The Economies and Insecurities of Crime and Justice. Colleagues will also be delivering various professional development training courses to senior public officials from China and Nigeria and we will continue to disseminate the findings of our research through a series of high profile lectures, seminars and workshops. I hope that you look forward to hearing more about the outstanding research activity of the Department.



Palm trees, the credit crunch and international volunteering

During the recent credit crunch, there has been a massive upsurge in UK citizens seeking to volunteer overseas. Dr Matt Baillie Smith's research continues to look at ways of bringing development research back home.

With the challenges of poverty faced by individuals and communities in the global South, the sudden interest in volunteering there when faced with difficulties at home poses some uncomfortable questions. Dr Matt Baillie Smith addresses these questions in his research with Professor Nina Laurie from Newcastle University. This project

develops what has been for Matt, a key theme in his current academic career and previous role as a Non Government Organisation (NGO) practitioner, the importance of bringing development research back home.

As Matt explains, "For most people, development research is associated with time spent 'in the field' in poor countries of the global South. Whilst this is also something I do, my work also addresses the meanings and understandings of development in everyday life in the UK." This is not without difficulties. A student Matt once helped to gain an overseas volunteering placement expressed a frustration at being allocated a country in the Balkans, which can best be described as disappointment at the lack of palm trees. As Matt goes on to explain, "The global South is associated with powerful and seductive ideas of poverty, difference, heat, and adventure, and suggesting that development research and practice might sometimes include staying put, is not easy to sustain."

But the decision of the newly redundant and others to volunteer in the global South illustrates how understandings of the region can significantly shape behaviours. Development can become a site of escapism as well as one of career progression, with implications for individuals and communities in the global South and North. For Matt, "International volunteering may foster new types of citizenship, reinforce old

ones, or foster particular expressions of faith, as seen in an AHRC/ESRC funded project with colleagues at Newcastle and Edinburgh University which looked at young Christians volunteering in Latin America."

In more mundane ways, through events like Make Poverty History and Comic Relief, charity and disaster appeals, media reporting, school curricula or long haul holidays, development can also have important social, cultural, ethical and political implications for UK citizens. Connecting with ideas of progress, care, identity, colonialism, history, responsibility or solidarity, "for Matt development can shape consumption, forms of citizenship, voting, and even the language we use to make sense of the global context in which we live."

"Researching these themes can be both practical and conceptual" continues Matt, "from engaging with debates around cosmopolitanism, citizenship and neoliberalism, to working in partnership with NGOs such as the Catholic Aid agency CAFOD as they develop new ways of connecting their supporters in the UK with communities in the global South." Recent research with NGO activists in South India, with colleague Dr Katy Jenkins, revealed activists' desire for more informal global dialogue, demonstrating the need to bring UK citizens into development debates. As the birth-place of Fair Trade and the home of Traidcraft, Shared Interest, and others, the North East represents a place where development has been 'back home' for some time, and despite most people's assumptions, the ideal place from which to undertake development research.



Protesters at Make Poverty History demonstration.

The invisible men

How do men sell sex? How does place impact on the transaction? Why are male sex workers absent from policy debates on prostitution? These are the questions that intrigue Dr Mary Whowell.

Dr Mary Whowell's research into male sex work offers insight into an otherwise hidden world of selling sex.

"Men are more or less written out of sex work," she explains. "In public debates about sex work, men are almost always assumed to be the clients. Yet the male side of the industry is substantial. There are men who sell sex, and also men working in other areas of the industry, as receptionists, drivers, photographers and

cameramen. Much of my research has been focused on male sex work, as men working in the sex industry often remain invisible in debates about prostitution."

Mary joined the Department in September 2010 following her postdoctoral research in Canada, which was funded by a Commonwealth Scholarship. She did her PhD at Loughborough University in human geography.

"I began my academic life as a geographer," she says. "Place matters in the sale of sex and an understanding of the role of place in the sexual transaction is crucial for furthering debates on sex work."

In a paper published in the *Journal of Law and Society* and based on her PhD

research, Mary shows how male sex workers in Manchester's 'Gay Village' are able to maintain ambiguous identities through such unremarkable acts as walking, looking and being still, so creating the transient moments of recognition and acknowledgement between sex worker and client that allow solicitation to be enacted. "It's different to the girls," said one sex worker Mary interviewed, "The girls will stand there and start moving their hips and do all this girly stuff, but if guys are interested in picking up, then they'll just stop anyway really, or you'll just give them a nod or something." In this way the male sex worker can easily blend in to the urban crowd and, to the unaware, become invisible.

Male sex workers also exist within a politicised, feminist approach to prostitution policy that portrays men only as clients. "This is problematic", argues Mary, "not least because it could impact on levels of service provision accessible to men working in the industry. It also leads to male sex workers experiencing multiple invisibilities, in terms of policy, practice, research, media and within local and national regulatory frameworks."

Mary is currently writing up her Canadian research which examines the regulation of adult entertainment through licensing and municipal by-law in several Canadian cities. This piece of work is ongoing, and, through interviews, she explores the impact of by-laws and licensing on the day-to-day working lives of escorts, body-rub workers, exotic dancers, and those who manage adult businesses. It is an intriguing moment to be studying this field in Canada as, in a major victory for sex workers, the Crown Court in Ontario recently struck down three prostitution laws, finding them unconstitutional and a violation of Charter Rights. In her next project she intends to look at sex work in Newcastle.



Police sign in red light district, Manchester Greater Manchester



Whowell Village



A stencil of males kissing, found on Canal Street, Manchester

Doing justice bottom up

Dr Bankole Cole's research is at the forefront of ensuring transparency, fairness and race equality in criminal justice.

Since 1995, there has been a marked shift in public policy from an emphasis on reducing crime towards measures designed to reduce fear and boost public confidence in the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

The determination of the previous Labour Government to take on board the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry (1999) has fuelled the prioritisation of black and minority ethnic (BME) issues within this process of change. As Dr Bankole Cole notes, "The publication of Race and the

Criminal Justice System (s. 95) statistics since 1992 show that BMEs are disproportionately represented both as offenders and victims. Moreover, research evidence suggests that criminal justice decisions are sometimes influenced by racist stereotypes and prejudice and there is now a growing concern about discriminatory practice and unfair treatment of minority ethnic offenders post-sentence, for example, in prisons, young offenders institutions or whilst on community punishments."

In response there has been a considerable political move in the UK to address racial diversity issues in criminal justice. As a result of the enactment of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, all criminal justice agencies have a general duty to promote race equality. Policies were put in place to encourage criminal justice agencies to strive for transparency, fairness and accountability in the delivery of services, especially to BME people in order to ensure that discriminatory practices are eliminated.

It is within this context that Bankole has established a reputation for the evaluation of a number of initiatives introduced by criminal justice agencies, to ensure transparency and accountability by allowing representatives of communities to assess the fairness of decisions made.

"A key project I evaluated was the West Yorkshire Crown Prosecution Service's (CPS) Race-Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel. This was a panel set up to enable representatives of BME community groups to pass comments on CPS decisions of selected race-hate crimes," states Bankole. "The success of the evaluation resulted in the adoption and embedding of Scrutiny Panels in

the 42 CPS areas in the UK, not only for racially motivated crimes, but also for other hate crimes, including domestic violence."

Another project evaluated by Bankole was the West Yorkshire Police stop and search scrutiny panels that were based on a similar principle of community involvement and have since become a model for other UK police forces.

"Ensuring that the CJS is fair, effective and transparent, and that the problems of disproportionality and confidence are effectively tackled are the key features of the 'Justice for All' PSA 24." Bankole's latest evaluation was of the West Midland Local Criminal Justice Board's (LCJB) Step Forward Pilot Scheme, which is an attempt to address BME staff disproportionality within the local criminal justice agencies and eliminate discrimination by making the procedures and processes on the employment, progression and promotion of BME staff within the agencies much fairer and more transparent.

Bankole continues, "As a result of this review, the Ministry of Justice is currently working on setting up BME staff mentoring schemes in the 42 LCJBs."

According to Bankole, "So much progress has been made and there evidence of genuine financial and moral support by the previous New Labour Government. However, the need for evaluation should be given more priority as future developments depend on identification of areas for change and the sharing of good practice. Then again, there is more work to do on victims' participation and scrutiny of criminal justice decisions."

Bankole has established a reputation for the evaluation of a number of initiatives introduced by criminal justice agencies, to ensure transparency and accountability by allowing representatives of communities to assess the fairness of decisions made

Profile

Al Roulstone, Professor of Applied Social Science

Professor Al Roulstone outlines how disabled peoples' lives are being transformed by applied research, new legislation and modern social policies.



Professor Al Roulstone joined the Department of Social Sciences in September 2010 from De Montfort University. During an illustrious career, he has been involved in numerous research projects around adult health and social care, disability, social exclusion, transitions to work and adulthood, chronic illness, new technologies and social futures, older people, and disability law. Funders of his research include Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Department of Health, Disability Rights Commission (now EHRC), European Commission, Economic and Social Research Council, Regional Development

Al writes and researches on institutional and 'high street' discrimination and prejudice towards disabled people

Agencies, and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Al writes and researches on institutional and 'high street' discrimination and prejudice towards disabled people. "Disabled people's lives are slowly being transformed by key legislation and progressive social policies," Al explains.

"Disabled children and adults are now seen as a valued and normal feature of mainstream society in a way that seemed impossible only 30 years ago. Sensibilities are changing in a way that makes overt disablism (the practice of negative treatment of disabled people) seem outdated." However, the reasons for the continued 'categorical' discriminatory treatment of disabled people in the face of widespread social change is the subject of much of Al's research to date.

"Understanding how legislation, education and long-held beliefs interact is a part of the academic unravelling of disablism. From biblical messages of disfigurement equalling spiritual shame, through Martin Luther's association of disability to the 'fall of Adam' to Hitler's Racial Science Department's condemnation of some disabled people as 'useless eaters', attitudes cast a long shadow over contemporary life," says Al.

Al's work aims to connect these long held historical memories with contemporary social practices.

He continues, "Why some people are more accepting of disability and difference is at the heart of much of my work, as of course are explanations for continued extreme prejudice."

A key focus of this research is the growth and influence of disabled people's own activism and self-organisation.

"This more than any state-driven policy has helped galvanise public opinion in favour of greater access, human rights and inclusion of disabled people. Disabled people are also now at the centre of the research process."

Al's research is also about change, and he is currently working with disabled people's organisations, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Equality and Human Rights Commission in taking forward legislative developments and guidance on how best to respond to disablism hate crimes.

Al has also been active in advising the World Health Organisation's Disability and Rehabilitation staff on how best to construct policy and understanding of the education and employment sections of their World Report on Disability. This report will inform global policy on disability issues. As one famous philosopher once said the aim of research and scholarship is to both understand and change society.

Al is helping to bring the latest scholarship on disability to bear on more enabling policy and practice with disabled people.



United Nations?

Dr Kirsten Haack has been highly active in supporting and developing a community of scholars that examine the role and influence of international organisations such as the United Nations.

International organisations exist in a paradox. They are called upon for help where people struggle for their survival, be that in zones of conflict, natural disasters or chronic underdevelopment. Great hope is invested in organisations such as the United Nations (UN), to help make the world a better place by preventing war and maintaining peace, by supporting the provision of development aid, by monitoring and ensuring the adherence to human rights, and by implementing large-scale health campaigns. Yet, at the same time, the 'failure' of the UN continues to be raised as an apparent sign of its impotence and mismanagement. In the United States, the UN's largest financial contributor, the question of whether to

pay long overdue membership fees or indeed to withdraw from this universal organisation is an ongoing debate.

Dr Kirsten Haack's research into international organisations and in particular the UN comes from an intuitive belief that these organisations are a major achievement in enabling international cooperation in the pursuit of peace and security. Kirsten feels that they should not be taken for granted.

"Despite their growing number and their central place in international politics, international organisations are still not very well understood," she says. Kirsten's work analyses the role of organisational actors such as the UN Secretary-General in influencing

policies and creating 'discourses' (that is ways of thinking and doing). As she explains, "In my recent book on the United Nations Democracy Agenda, I analyse the way in which the UN Secretaries-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan have conceptualised democracy. I show that the Secretaries-General not only created a democracy policy, but also a democracy agenda that drew on the UN's main goals of peace, development and human rights. As a consequence democracy became a central goal in an organisation that continues to be populated by a large number of non-democratic states." Drawing on this case study, Kirsten has developed a model of discursive leadership and organisational learning. Recognising that scholars of International Politics continue to focus on states over international organisations, Kirsten has been highly active in supporting and developing a community of scholars that regard this state-centricity as a challenge for future research. Kirsten has worked with the UN Studies Association (UNSA), of which she is a founding member, on advancing the teaching and research of the UN. She has also established a new peer-reviewed, open access journal, the *Journal of International Organizations Studies (JIOS)* to further international organisation research. Published by the UN Studies Association in cooperation with the David M Kennedy Centre of International Studies at Brigham Young University. The Journal aims to bring together academics and practitioners in shaping International Organisation Studies as a field of study. The first issue of JIOS is available online at www.journal-iostudies.org



United Nations flags

Transnationalism, culture and society

Research provides crucial insights into the social and cultural relations between East Punjab and the UK. Dr Steve Taylor discusses different areas of his research over the past ten years.



East Punjab

Dr Steve Taylor has been conducting research on aspects of culture and society within East Punjab, North West India (which must be distinguished from West Punjab in Pakistan) for the past ten years, with a particular focus upon the nature and effects of Punjabi transnationalism (that is social and cultural relations between East Punjab and other countries around the world), predominantly the UK. "Much of my research is transnational," says Steve, "involving empirical field work in both the UK and India, and has been conducted in conjunction with colleagues from Panjab University, Chandigarh, India." Steve has been a Visiting Professor at Punjab during both 2004 and 2009, funded by the British Council and the Economic and Social Research Council.

In terms of religion, East Punjab is a Sikh majority state. Scholars have frequently noted a long history and deeply embedded cultural tradition of significant overseas migration from East Punjab, over a third of which has been to the UK. The starting point for Steve is that "It is a cliché, but also factual, to assert that Punjabis can now be found all over the globe and are the archetypal 'transnational community', dispersed

across the world, but retaining social and cultural links with the original sending society of East Punjab." Steve's research and publications have, to date, focused upon four main aspects of Eastern Punjabi transnationalism.

Firstly, the relationship between overseas out-migration, Punjabi transnationalism and development within Indian Punjab. As Steve explains, "The deeply embedded cultural tradition of overseas migration from Punjab to other parts of the world is often celebrated by researchers, academics and policy-makers because of the continuing links between those who have migrated and those who remain within India. For example, researchers often point to the significance of 'diaspora philanthropy', the way in which Punjabis abroad (for instance in the UK) frequently remit finance to East Punjab and invest within educational, sanitation or infrastructure improvement projects there, thus bolstering Indian development." For Steve, "this celebratory perspective can be questioned. My research demonstrates that the majority of overseas remittances to Punjab are utilised for the personal consumption of migrants themselves and that

overseas migration has strengthened traditional caste inequalities both within East Punjab and across international borders, which runs counter to many notions of development."

The second area of Steve's research focuses upon the pursuit of 'home' and 'belonging' amongst the Eastern Punjabi transnational community. Steve is interested in how this long tradition of overseas migration impacted upon feelings of 'home', 'belonging' and 'security' amongst those who migrated away from East Punjab, and those who were born in a different country to India, but who retain transnational links with East Punjab. Steve comments, "With Eastern Punjabi overseas migration being seen as one of the longest running migratory movements in recent history, and the Eastern Punjabi diaspora viewed as the archetypal transnational community, both of the above areas of research are useful for analysing different patterns of migration and transnational communities around the world."

A third research project which Steve is working on is a detailed study of one UK Eastern Punjabi community, and the caste relations within it. Although the majority of overseas migration from East Punjab has been undertaken by the dominant and wealthy castes from this region, a tradition has also built up of lower caste ('dalit' or 'untouchable') migration to the UK. Steve's research investigates the extent to which Eastern Punjabi migrants, and British-born Punjabis, may replicate the Indian caste system within the UK, as well as the social and religious movements which have emerged to combat a form of oppression and discrimination which has only just (2010) been recognised within UK equality legislation.

A final area of research examines the relationship between Punjabi overseas migration and an increase in the employment of 'bonded', or slave labour within agricultural jobs left vacant by those who migrate.

Profile

Keith Shaw, Professor of Urban and Regional Policy

Over the last 25 years, Professor Keith Shaw's research has made a real difference to the lives of people living and working in the North East of England, and he has championed the power of applied social science research to effect change within public and community contexts.



Keith Shaw is Professor of Urban and Regional Policy. Over the last 25 years he has researched and published on urban regeneration, local and regional governance, and the community and voluntary sectors. Keith has extensive experience of working for governmental and non-governmental organisations in relation to project and programme evaluations, voluntary and community sector involvement, neighbourhood governance and local partnership working. Keith's work has also involved engagement with regional organisations. He is currently a Management Board Member of the Institute of Local Governance for the North East and a member of the Academic Advisory Panel for the North East.

"Much of my work has been concerned with the key issue of urban and regional power and how it should be understood," says Keith. His research, 'Who Runs

the North East?' was a pioneering study of regional structures and processes of governance, which attracted considerable academic and media attention. In highlighting the democratic deficit in decision-making, and the lack of balanced representation, the research influenced the recruitment strategies of regional agencies, including Government Office for the North East, who responded to the report by announcing a widening of women's representation on Learning and Skills Councils. His interest in urban power is also reflected in the development of a research studentship which is examining the role of T. Dan Smith (former leader of the City Council) in the making of modern Newcastle.

A key feature of Keith's research has been its applied nature. It has influenced public policy and provided an opportunity for communities and voluntary organisations to have a voice in the process of policy-making. One illustration of this was his research on the Newcastle City Council's 'Going for Growth' regeneration plan. At the time Keith was working on behalf of community groups, in the East and West End of Newcastle, whose homes were earmarked for demolition as part of the City Council's strategy. The report built upon his extensive knowledge of regeneration in the city, his strong links with local community groups and his ability to tell an important story in a clear and accessible way. When

published, the report received extensive coverage in the local and national media, energised local MPs and led to Keith being invited to give evidence to the Council's Scrutiny Committee. Going for Growth, as a strategy, never got off the ground and was abolished by the new Liberal administration in 2005. Keith's report was widely seen as halting the strategy in its tracks and giving local people the evidence (and the confidence) to resist council plans.

Keith has also been extensively involved in working as a researcher for the UK Government, including evaluating Housing Action Trusts and the New Deal for Communities (NDC) Programme, and for the EU Commission, including the recent cross-national programme on Developing Organisational Approaches to Tackling Social Exclusion. His research on the NDC programme resulted in a jointly authored article, *On the Side of the Angels: community involvement in the governance of neighbourhood renewal*, which received a prestigious national award for making an original contribution to understanding how active citizens can be supported in their role as community decision-makers.

Keith's most recent research work focuses on the implications of the Coalition Government's changes in sub-national governance for the North East of England and on how regional organisations can develop their resilience when faced with external 'shocks'. As he explains, "The term

Keith has extensive experience of working for non-governmental organisations in relation to project and programme evaluations, voluntary and community sector involvement, neighbourhood governance and local partnership working

'resilience' is increasingly being utilised within the study of public policy to depict how individuals, communities and organisations can adapt, cope, and 'bounce back' when faced with external 'shocks' such as climate change, economic recession and cuts in public expenditure."

As part of this emerging research agenda, Keith is leading a research project that aims to examine the contribution that the growing literature on 'resilience' can make to our understanding of how local authorities in the North East of England should address the challenge of climate change. The project will also examine whether the barriers to developing organisational resilience can be overcome by local authorities being ambitious in the use of existing powers, exercising creativity and innovation, challenging the status quo, managing risk, developing strong and visionary political leadership, and engaging and empowering civic society.

Regional engagement through strategic partnerships

The Institute for Local Governance

The Institute for Local Governance (ILG) is a pioneering research and knowledge exchange venture designed to maximise the benefits of collaboration between all the region's universities, local authorities, police forces, fire and rescue services, health organisations and other public sector partners. Northumbria is represented on the Committee by Professor Keith Shaw.

The ILG fosters a critical mass of shared academic and practitioner expertise to assist decision-makers in addressing the challenges of the economic downturn by rethinking service delivery. The ILG also works with partners to attract research funding from research councils, charitable institutions, central government and international bodies and to contribute to developing an evidence base and policy analysis to facilitate the region's engagement in national policy debates and advocacy.

The ILG model involves teams of university researchers (including staff at Northumbria), practitioners and sometimes elected members coming together to develop and execute research themes and disseminate research findings on a partnership basis.

The current programme includes work across the North East on the impact of the recession on waste recycling, evaluating personalisation of adult services, examining the decline of traditional apprenticeships, assessing the long-term impact of regeneration programmes, reviewing the efficacy of children's services projects, and exploring key public health issues.

The Department of Social Sciences is also involved in supporting ILG training programmes in areas such as criminal justice and crime reduction.



Offender 'risk', health and wellbeing

The health and social care of offenders, while not an obvious vote winner, is never far from the top of the political agenda. Dr Wendy Dyer explains how her research aims to address the concerns surrounding prison healthcare.

For a number of dogged individuals, academics and practitioners, the health and social care of offenders has never been anything less than a crucial topic for research and development on the grounds of human rights and the ethical care and treatment of some of the most vulnerable and excluded in our society.

As Dr Wendy Dyer explains, "The renewed political focus recognises the impact health and social care issues have on a variety of contemporary concerns around the identification and control of 'risk', including reducing reoffending and the management of dangerous offenders, and ultimately is one of the responses to demands for public protection."

Wendy's research focuses on mentally disordered offenders. "My recent and current research projects include working with Health and Social Care in Criminal Justice and the North East Offender Health Commissioning Unit to explore healthcare delivery in police stations, and the development of criminal justice and liaison services following the publication of the Bradley Report (2009) and the Department of Health's response in 'Improving Health Supporting Justice'."

Wendy is currently directing two projects delivered with colleagues in the Department's Centre for Public Policy in four of the North East's prisons, including a review of the management of coronary heart disease (a priority area identified by National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), and mapping the

clinical pathway from prison healthcare to community healthcare (identified as a particularly 'risky' transition).

The proportion of prisoners with mental health needs has been estimated at 90 per cent. A project that Wendy is about to begin will measure the impact of mental health first aid training in prisons across County Durham.

Wendy is also involved in multi-regional research partnerships and along with colleagues from Leeds University and NHS Provider Trusts has recently been awarded funding from the National Institute for Health Research programme to undertake a two-year project, which aims to identify one or more screening instruments for the risk of self-harm that can be routinely applied to adult offender populations, so that appropriate care pathways and interventions can be implemented and the incidence of self-harm reduced.

Wendy also plays a central coordinating role, along with colleagues from the North East Public Health Observatory, Care Services Improvement Partnership and local prisons, in the regional research and development network, the 'Prison and Offender Research in Social Care and Health' (PORSCH).

"PORSCH has attracted funding from a variety of sources including the Government Office for the North East, and aims to support inclusive and high-quality research and development in order to build research capacity and improve the health of offenders and in turn the communities in which they live."

Wendy is currently organising the network's thirteenth workshop which will share details of a project commissioned by North East Offender Health to develop diversion pathways in the region for offenders with multiple needs, including mental health and learning disability problems.



Man in prison cell

Pounding the beat of policing research

Dr Mike Rowe's research challenges many orthodoxies about the role of police and their impact on communities.



Police tape crime scene

Dr Mike Rowe's research and writing about policing has addressed a broad range of issues, from police recruitment and training through to responding to domestic violence and issues in public order. At the heart of many of these diverse issues, is a fascination with the discrepancies between popular and political assumptions and the realities of contemporary policing. Recent political debates, for example, have centred on the thorny question of police numbers. In a time of public sector cutbacks that threaten to reduce police funding by a quarter there has been a continued insistence that this will not lead to a reduction in 'frontline' policing. The much-venerated 'bobby on the beat'

will continue to be a familiar presence in the community, we are assured.

Mike's research suggests that the link between officer numbers and crime reduction is tenuous, at best. "It is true," he explains, "that during the last decade or so the number of officers has steadily increased and that many types of crime have fallen during this period, but to suggest that the former caused the latter stretches the evidence. Not only did crime rates begin to fall before officer numbers were increased, but also crime rates have fallen in societies that have not seen greater numbers of police."

It is also often assumed that the public demand for policing is consistent, that we are reassured by a visible police presence on the streets and that this is a valuable police role even if it does not reduce crime. Again, Mike's research suggests that this is not always the case and that many communities either do not notice or do not place great value on the visible presence of officers on their streets. "There is a central tension in the debate about police numbers," Mike notes, "politically there is a strong pressure to deliver officers on the beat, however, dedicating officers to patrol work removes them from other styles of policing, based on, for example, intelligence-led approaches, that offer a more effective way of detecting and preventing crime. The development of a mixed economy of policing, with different combinations of

civilian staff and officers and greater partnership with local authority wardens and the private sector, can be understood as a way of more efficiently delivering the range of roles performed by police." Political debates about police and policing Mike notes, "have failed to consider public perceptions of these diverse arrangements."

Another aspect of Mike's work has been the exploration of racism and diversity in policing. Mike's work has examined ways of increasing the recruitment of minorities to the police service and the effectiveness of training police staff in cultural diversity. Although there has been an increase in the recruitment of minorities, he argues, progress has been glacially slow. The previous Labour Government, Mike points out, introduced finely detailed recruitment targets and monitored the performance of individual forces on an annual basis. Recruitment campaigns and policy-reviews have had only a very limited impact on a problem that remains stubbornly intractable.

Mike explains that there is a paradox at the heart of the recruitment agenda, "on the one hand the recruitment of a more diverse workforce has been something of a litmus test for services, as an increase in minority ethnic staff is seen as an indicator of successful modernisation and an indication that perceptions of racism within the police are out-dated. On the other hand, recruitment of minorities is seen as a key way to tackle identified problems within the ranks, and this poses problems for minority ethnic officers who might be regarded as 'flag flyers' and agents of change. Inadvertently perhaps, this reinforces a sense that they are marked as 'different' from the mainstream of officers and this might explain why retaining minority ethnic officers has been a particular problem."

Dr Mike Rowe's research and writing about policing has addressed a broad range of issues, from police recruitment and training through to responding to domestic violence and issues in public order

Communities and inclusion

Research that dares to mix those two old sparing partners, religion and politics! Dr Rachel Chapman is fascinated by the connections between faith and politics, which poses many questions.

"What, in democratic terms, is going on when a local vicar sits on a neighbourhood board?" asks Dr Rachael Chapman, in a paper co-authored with Professor Vivien Lowndes of Nottingham University.

"Or when the chairman of a mosque joins a police advisory body, or the Sikh chair of an inter-faith forum becomes a member of a local strategic partnership? How should we interpret an Anglican bishop's claim to represent 'people of faith', of all religions, within his city?" says Rachael, a senior lecturer in politics.

Rachael is interested in the basis on which people of faith can make legitimate claims to be representative of a community or communities. It is a topical subject given that successive governments have been committed to working more closely with faith groups since the early 1990s.

"It opened up a whole new area of political enquiry," she says. "I wanted to ask who their constituencies are and what do they expect of their faith representatives, what their mandate is and how, if at all, are they accountable."

Fascinated by the connections between faith and politics, Rachael has embarked on a programme of research activities to investigate the implications and controversies surrounding the increased involvement of faith in the public realm. To this end, she has explored Hindu and Christian inter-faith dialogue, faith-based social action (the findings of which informed the Government's Face to Face and Side by Side framework strategies) and the role and contribution of faith groups to civil renewal (with Professor Lowndes).

She is currently leading a research project funded by the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency to investigate effective partnership-working between local government and faith groups. Together with Dr. Adam Dinham at Goldsmiths University, Rachael met with academics in India with a view to develop a collaborative research agenda on faith, politics and society.

Rachael has several publications on the subject, and in a recent paper *Accountable, Authorised or Authentic? What do "Faith Representatives" offer Urban Governance?* Rachael and Professor Vivien Lowndes argue that despite limitations, faith representatives can complement traditional electoral representation, both through bringing new voices to the partnership table, and through raising expectations about the quality and density of interactions between representatives and the represented.

Rachael embarked on a programme of research activities to investigate the implications and controversies surrounding the increased involvement of faith in the public realm

"The potential strengths of faith representation lie in providing a mechanism for expressing new forms of 'deep values' politics that are not easily captured by traditional left/right distinctions and party programmes," says Rachael. "Greater understanding of these contributions and the role of authenticity as a non-electoral source of legitimacy may over time, lead faith activists, statutory partners and citizens alike, to feel more at ease with the involvement and influence of non-elected representatives."



Community and inclusion

Smuggling, smoking, health and wellbeing

Interdisciplinary research by Dr Rob Hornsby offers insight into the contraband cigarette market and its negative impact on the nation's health.

Since the abolition of European intra-Community trading frontiers, cigarette smuggling has grown rapidly, particularly within the United Kingdom.

"Cigarette smuggling costs the UK Treasury approximately £1.5 billion per year in evaded excise duties and is facilitated by organised criminal entrepreneurs willing to exploit a large consumer demand for contraband cigarettes," says Dr Rob Hornsby, whose current research examines the contraband cigarette market and its impact upon public health.

"This contraband market constitutes a rapidly shifting composition of production and supply factors, with counterfeit and 'cheap white' cigarettes (legitimately produced cigarettes manufactured specifically for the smuggled market) now constituting

an approximate 80 per cent share of all contraband seizures within the UK."

The research has also highlighted the role of 'Big Tobacco' (a small number of large cigarette manufacturers) in the complicit supply of their own products to smuggled markets across the globe. "Yet regardless of the legal status afforded to some agents of the tobacco trade and the demonization of others," says Rob, "this is a product that not only kills over 100,000 people in the UK each year, but has also created new opportunities for commodity-hopping criminals focused on exploiting consumer demands."

Rob's research is part of a study which scrutinizes the smuggling trade and examines how organised crime undermines current public health initiatives to reduce smoking. The collaborative research venture is funded by the National Prevention Research Initiative (Medical Research Council) and involves colleagues at Durham University, Newcastle University and the North East Public Health Observatory.

The team includes experts in Health Anthropology, Public Health Policy and Management and Epidemiology and draws on Rob's experience as an organised crime researcher. He has worked closely with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, regional police forces and European law enforcement agencies. Rob explains, "I have interviewed law enforcement personnel with direct involvement in the investigation and prosecution of organised criminals involved with smuggling activities. The study has also involved the participation of smugglers themselves."

Rob presented the project's interim findings at the 14th World Conference

on Tobacco or Health in Mumbai, India in 2009, and a report, *Contraband and Counterfeit Tobacco: Exploring an Economic Disincentive to the Denormalization of Tobacco*, has now been submitted to the Medical Research Council.

Rob's broader research interests lie within professional and organised criminality, youth crime, violence, gun crime, ethnographic research and crime associated with the political economy. He is a member of the European Cross-Border Crime Colloquium and an academic associate of FUSE, the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health.

His current research focuses on other areas of the smuggling trade, including the market in pirated CDs/DVDs and the illicit alcohol trade.

Rob's research is part of a study which scrutinizes the smuggling trade and examines how organised crime undermines current public health initiatives to reduce smoking

PhD Studentships

The Department of Social Sciences has always had a strong and lively community of PhD students supervised by expert staff. Recently it demonstrated its commitment to doctoral study by recruiting high-calibre students to four fully funded PhD studentships.



The aim is to recruit excellent PhD students researching in areas that mean they will make highly original contributions to academic knowledge and social policies in the future.

In order to develop the postgraduate research culture and community the Department have offered a number of PhD studentships in areas at the cutting edge of contemporary social science. "This really is a fabulous investment in the future of the Department and of social science research" says Dr Steve Taylor, Postgraduate Research Tutor within the Department. "Each studentship pays the tuition fees, all research costs and a stipend, something that is increasingly rare within UK universities. Our aim is to recruit excellent PhD students researching in areas that mean they will make highly original contributions to academic knowledge and social policies in the future. In the first round of studentships, we were really overwhelmed by the volume and quality of applications we received both nationally and from around the world" says Steve.

Alex Hall, who obtained a first class honours degree from Northumbria University and a masters from the University of Manchester is examining the phenomenon of 'Honour' (and related 'Honour Crime') amongst the western Punjabi community of Newcastle Upon Tyne, a community which has received virtually no academic attention to date.

Naomi Griffin, who obtained a first class honours degree from Durham University, is exploring understandings and experiences of activism, with a particular focus upon gendered activism, an issue which is currently very high on the political, policy and news agendas.

Simon Heald, who has first class academic qualifications combined with a vocational background in various aspects of artistic and community development work is working on a particularly methodologically innovative project on graffiti and the urban landscape.

Sue Regan, who has a first class honours degree, a masters with Distinction and years of employment experience within local government and the voluntary sector, is studying for a PhD examining the relationship between gender and community development, again highly topical in the light of the current UK government's emphasis upon the importance and emergence of the 'Big Society'.

"It is clear that, during 2010, we have recruited some really first class students to work on issues and questions which are going to be right at the top of the academic, policy and media agenda over the next few years. We will be appointing to further PhD studentships in 2011 in other areas at the cutting edge of social science, reflecting the exciting range of research interests amongst the Social Sciences staff group who will be supervising these projects," says Steve.



Concrete blocks containing 1 million cigarettes

As green as they come

Dr Tanya Wyatt's career experience informs cutting-edge research into green crime, highlighting new issues and global concerns.



Lynx skin at market in Moscow

Attending a highly regarded police academy and working in Ukraine to prevent the trafficking of women, are not typical elements in the work histories of university academics and these are just two of the varied experiences that Tanya brings to the Department.

After finishing her undergraduate studies with a BA (Hons) in Biology, Tanya decided to become a police officer rather than the forensic scientist she had planned on. Her career started at Alameda County Sheriff's Office law enforcement academy, on a seven-month, 40-hour a week training course filled with firearms, defensive tactics, pursuit driving, and penal codes. Tanya worked as a correctional officer in a maximum-security jail supervising administratively segregated inmates. Later, she was chosen to be a

classification deputy who interviews and assigns housing for all the inmates based in part upon their gang affiliations.

Tanya then moved to Michigan and continued her career in law enforcement as a patrol officer in a small town near Ann Arbor. "This gave me insight into two very different police agencies, the first a large one thousand plus person County Sheriff's Office in a major metropolitan area with multiple assignments and rotations, and the second a small 14 officer department where often only two people were working."

During this time, she attended Eastern Michigan University and earned her Master's in Criminology. Tanya's Master's dissertation examined how to combat the growing global trafficking of women for the sex industry.

This prepared her well for her next move, because upon completing her postgraduate work, Tanya set off to the Ukraine as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer."

The first three months in the country were filled with Russian language classes four hours a day, six days a week whilst living with a Ukrainian family who spoke no English. After the initial training was finished, I was assigned to work in Chernivtsi, in South West Ukraine near the Romanian border, at a non-governmental organisation working to prevent the trafficking of women."

Tanya shared with the Ukrainian staff the possible services that could be offered to victims and helped them win four grants. One of these grants expanded the services of the centre into the villages of the region where staff showed women how to protect themselves from being trafficked. Another of the grants established the very first women's shelter in the region.

In studying the trafficking of women for several years, Tanya came across another form of trafficking, wildlife. The illegal wildlife trade though rarely appears in any criminological journal and feeling passionate about the environment and conservation, Tanya devoted her PhD studies to this topic.

"Using the Russian I had learned in the Peace Corps, and combining my biology and criminology experience, my thesis explored the trafficking of fur and falcons from Far East Russia. These are just two of the multitude of illegal wildlife trades that take place. There is also trafficking in ivory, pets, traditional medicines, timber, orchids, and cacti, to name just a portion of what occurs. This happens despite the international convention to regulate and monitor wildlife trade known as the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered

The International Police Organisation, Interpol, has estimated that the ongoing illegal trade is worth between \$6 and \$20 billion

Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)." While CITES is regarded as being a success and a showpiece for international cooperation with 175 member countries, the International Police Organisation, Interpol, has

estimated that the ongoing illegal trade is worth between \$6 and \$20 billion. This makes it one of the most profitable black markets in the world. In 2007, Tanya travelled to Moscow and far East Russia to interview experts about wildlife trafficking. Her research showed that the illegal fur and falcon trades have very different methods of perpetration and that to combat the huge variation of wildlife trafficking that occurs around the globe further research needs to be done. Curbing the illegal trade is essential if nearly extinct species are to survive.

Tanya has continued to explore the illegal wildlife trade in Far East Russia with her most current research examining the illegal timber trade. "I am interested in all forms of eco-crime and I have recently expanded my research to the illegal charcoal manufacturing and trade in Cambodia and connections between wildlife and drug trafficking."

Tanya hopes at Northumbria she can raise the profile of green criminology and inspire students to study crimes against the environment.

"Green crimes range from wildlife trafficking to water, air, and soil pollution, from toxic waste dumping on the shores of developing nations to the patenting of indigenous medicines by pharmaceutical companies, from genetically modified foods and industrial agriculture to overfishing and mountaintop removal mining. Very few of these actions are legally deemed crimes by governments around the world, but the harm that these practices cause to the environment, to animals, and to people makes them 'crimes' nonetheless and that the severity of the destruction demands that these eco-crimes be thoroughly studied and addressed by policy-makers."



Bear skins at market in Moscow

Creativity in prison

Would you want a cushion in your home that had been made by a convicted drug smuggler? Could you bring yourself to listen to music played by someone who had committed a violent act? Do you think that people who have broken the law should be allowed to take part in creative and artistic activities? Would you change your mind if we could prove that it would stop them from reoffending? Charlotte Bilby's research explores the delivery and impact of arts and crafts within prison.

Charlotte Bilby is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology who joined the Department in September 2010 from the University of Leicester. For the past nine years Charlotte has worked on evaluation and research projects for central government departments including the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Department of Health and Northern Ireland Office. "Most of this work," as she explains, "focused on the effectiveness of cognitive behavioural programmes to reduce reoffending and I led a piece of work investigating offenders' views of the Offender Management Model." More recently her research has started to explore creativity in prisons.

As she explains, "I am currently working with academic and practitioner colleagues on the links between affect

and creative and spiritual activities in prisons. I am particularly interested in the role that creative and spiritual initiatives might have on prisoners' lives and behaviour."

"In prisons and probation workshops offenders are painting and drawing, making pottery and music, writing and performing stories, poems and plays. They are being creative. Most of this activity is not strictly about changing an offender's behaviour or teaching them new vocational skills (although writing a story or a song might help with literacy). It is about ensuring that prisons fulfil their duty to punish and rehabilitate prisoners with decency and humanity." However, for Charlotte, "When people take part in a creative, or spiritual, activity they feel 'affect'. Affect is a sense of belonging to a community, or a pride in something which they have made themselves. Australian researchers found that graffiti artists reported having the same sort of response when spray painting, committing the act of vandalism. If affect plays a role in offending behaviour, could it also play a part in reducing reoffending?"

There is work to suggest that artistic interventions have a positive impact on broken communities and people's general health and wellbeing, but there is little academic literature to support the notion that taking part in something creative while in prison will reduce an offender's likelihood of breaking the law in the future.

The research that Charlotte is involved in will start to change that. As she

explains, "Research of this type is not just about increasing academic knowledge, it is important for artists and practitioners in the Criminal Justice System (CJS), funders of initiatives and government policy makers. The research will show the impact that creative activities have on offenders' behaviour, psychological wellbeing and sense of identity while they are in prison and the impact that it might have after release. The research will help artistic voluntary and charitable organisations, working in the CJS, to gather information to evidence the positive and negative outcomes of their work."

The public interest in arts in prison has grown quickly over the last two years. There have been negative stories in the press about comedy groups in prisons and paper sculptures made by child killers being put on display in public buildings. Prisons now have to make sure that creative activities are acceptable to the public, and a new law says that offenders cannot make money from any memoir they have written. At the same time two government ministries have helped set up a large, umbrella organisation that promotes arts in the CJS, prisoners have embroidered cushions for English Heritage's refurbishment of Dover Castle and *The Times* newspaper supported a prison arts organisation as a Christmas charity.

As Charlotte notes, "All of this public and government interest demonstrates that research to inform these ideas, stories, activities and evaluations is important."

Civil society and philanthropy

What comes to mind when you think about philanthropy? For many, it is associated with well-meaning, though often ineffective, acts of do-gooderism by wealthy Victorians. For others, it is about the pioneering efforts of Joseph Rowntree and Scottish-born Andrew Carnegie to advance the role of philanthropy in addressing the root causes of society's most pressing problems.

Dr Siobhan Daly's research places the study of 'new' philanthropy in the broader context of unprecedented changes in civil society.

Following the creation of the welfare state, many people saw philanthropy as an idea best left in the past. However, phenomenal increases in personal wealth in past decades led to the emergence of a new kind of philanthropist. Individuals such as Sir Peter Lampl, Sir Tom Hunter, the late Dame Anita Roddick and her husband

Gordon made the headlines for their philanthropic activities.

"The 'new' philanthropist," says Siobhan, "is often stereotyped as an individual, normally of self-made wealth, who seeks a hands-on role in his or her giving, rather than just giving money away."

"At the same time, there has been an increase in the variety of ways in which people can engage in philanthropy, from traditional philanthropic foundations and community foundations to venture philanthropy and micro-finance."

Philanthropy has caught the attention of policymakers too, as governments seek to identify alternative sources of finance in policy areas such as arts, culture and higher education, to alleviate pressures on public budgets.

Siobhan's work on philanthropy builds on her broader research interest in civil society. "Through my research, I explore how the activities of philanthropic individuals and institutions are shaping and, indeed, being shaped by actors and institutions in civil society," she explains.

Siobhan's research on civil society is extensive. She produced the scoping report for the Carnegie UK Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland, and is a member of the Irish Civil Society Research Network.

As part of a European-wide project at the Centre for Civil Society, London School of Economics, she examined how foundations in Europe articulate their roles and visions in the context of

fluctuating relationships between state and civil society.

A small research grant from the British Academy allowed her to build upon this work and focus on the role of community foundations in growing locally-oriented giving throughout the UK. The first community foundation was formed in the USA in the early twentieth century, and Siobhan's research, published in *Voluntas* in 2008, examined how the US community foundation model has been adapted to the UK.

"Community foundations in the UK provide important services for donors who wish to give to local communities" says Siobhan, "they act as intermediaries between donors and community organisations and groups in need of funding. Unlike their counterparts in the US however, my research found that most community foundations in the UK have not given priority to the development of community leadership roles."

Siobhan is currently analysing how the changing landscape for philanthropy, the sheer variety of ways in which donors can approach their giving, is altering the nature of relationships between donors and recipients. "This research will explore areas in which philanthropists are playing new and innovative roles, as well as profiling the activities of different types of donors" says Siobhan, "in this regard I have a particular interest in enhancing our understanding of women as donors in this 'new' age of philanthropy."

Community foundations in the UK provide important services for donors who wish to give to local communities



A cushion made by a prisoner

Profile

Irene Hardill, Professor of Public Policy

Professor Irene Hardill's recent research has sought to understand people's pathways to voluntary work, and how digital inclusion promotes social inclusion for older people. In addition to contributing to knowledge she has a commitment to social science, demonstrating its relevance to the economy and society.



Professor Irene Hardill joined the Department in September 2010 from Nottingham Trent University. Her research focuses on the themes of work, volunteering and demography. She is also undertaking research into knowledge exchange. Her research has been supported by the Leverhulme Trust, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), AgeUK (formerly Age Concern England and Help the Aged), the English Regions Network, the Canadian High Commission, and the French Government.

Irene has produced over 100 publications, including five books, and her work has featured in five ESRC publications for its academic and wider impact, including the recent booklet focusing on Wellbeing in the series 'Making the Case for the Social

Sciences' published jointly by the ESRC and the Academy of Social Sciences.

"Over the years my research has explored the changing world of work through the many meanings of work, paid and unpaid in the home and in the community," explains Irene.

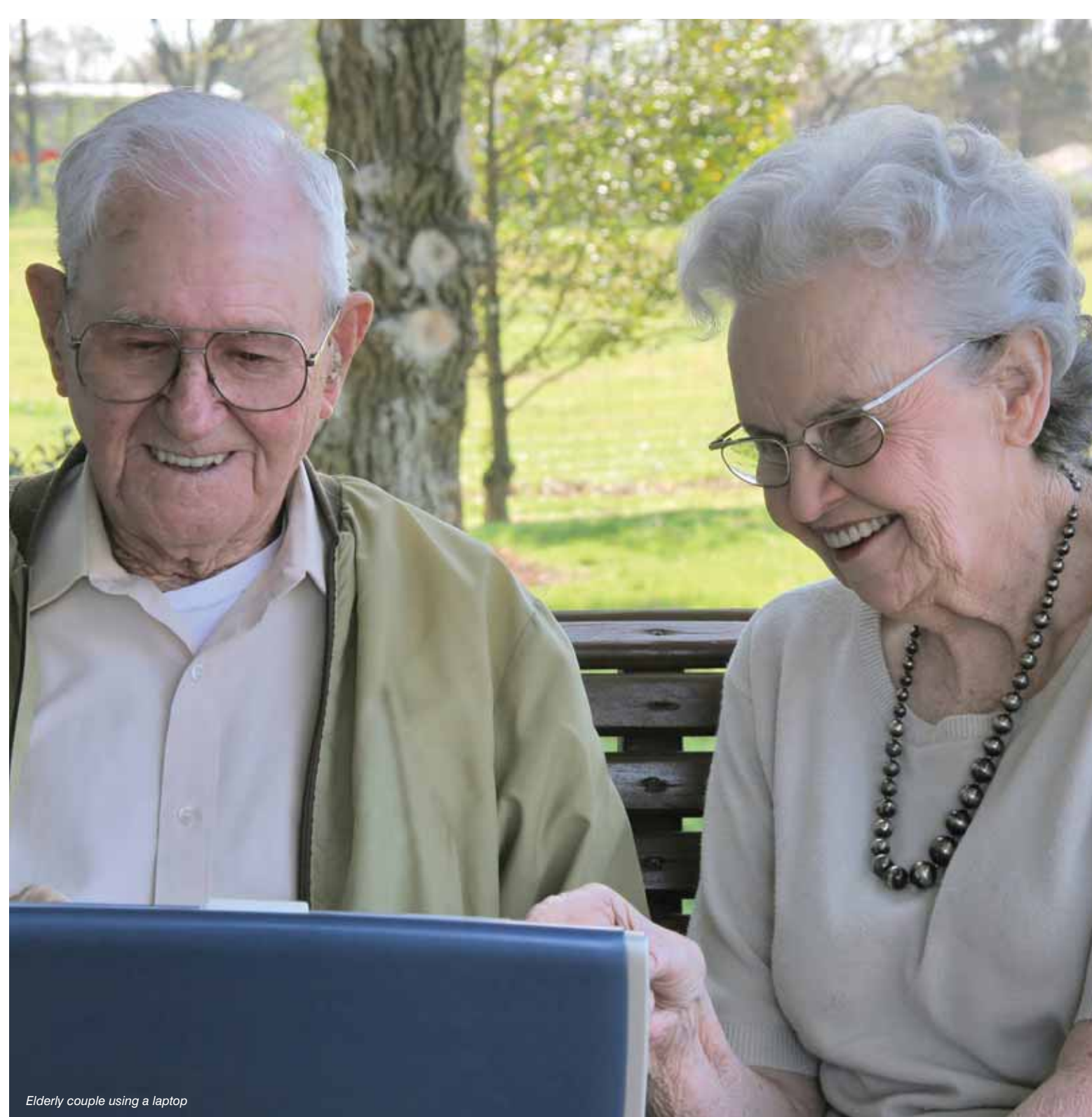
"My analysis of paid work has included the study of gender and careers, work and the life course, mobility and work, identity and work as well as how people juggle paid and unpaid work." Irene continues to theorise paid and unpaid work, currently focusing on the challenges of managing unpaid volunteers. This will appear in a Policy Press book in 2011. She is also a co-convenor of an ESRC seminar series on the mixed economy of welfare.

Irene's demography and ageing research centres on working with older people (aged 50+) to understand the challenges of sustaining the use of digital technologies. She is currently part of a research team investigating Sustaining IT use by older people to promote autonomy and independence (Sus-IT) funded from the New Dynamics of Ageing Research Programme led by Professor Leela Damadoran of Loughborough University. Irene leads a work package on 'facilitating participation'. "I am charged with creating an engaged community of older people who will actively participate in exploring problems and solutions

related to sustaining and enhancing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) use."

The context of this research is important for the wellbeing of older people, as Irene explains, "Western economies in particular are becoming increasingly reliant on electronic structures and services, the success of which depends on citizens being conversant with conducting their day-to-day activities using digital resources, including accessing public services. Using digital technologies (ICTs) enables people to access an ever-increasing range of information, goods, services, entertainment/leisure, educational and social networking opportunities. For older people, such benefits mean that ICTs can become powerful assistive technologies, helping them to maintain their independence, social connectedness and sense of worth in the face of declining health or limited capabilities, but also offer new and empowering opportunities to improve their quality of life."

Older people not only represent a growing proportion of society, they are also the fastest growing group of internet users. Yet as people age, they face changes in health, capability and /or social circumstances which may mean they lose the capacity to use these tools. Moreover, as Irene notes, "Such changes may be compounded



Elderly couple using a laptop

by the trend for continual enhancement and development of ICTs, often leading, for example, to increased complexity. As a result it has been predicted that significant numbers of older people will in future move from being 'digitally engaged' to becoming 'digitally unengaged', with consequent reductions in their quality of life and independence."

Irene's current work on understanding knowledge exchange, user engagement and demonstrating and delivering impact forms part of the ESRC/SFC Engaging Scottish Local Authorities

Scheme, 2009–2011. She has been commissioned to undertake the process and impact review of the Scheme.

Research that aims to engage with research users and have an impact is not new, but the policy context in which UK social science is embedded has changed in recent years as governments have placed increasing emphasis on the need to provide evidence of the economic and social returns from its investment in research. Social scientists may be asked to demonstrate both the scholarly and

practical impact of research they are planning in order to secure funding. Such 'engaged' research which is of benefit to research users, may involve working interactively, undertaking Knowledge Exchange (KE). Such 'engaged' research can demonstrate the wider value of social science to our economy and society. The ESRC/SFC project involves Scottish universities and local government managers and front line professionals, and groups affected by or involved with local government, working together to co-produce knowledge.

Learning in partnership

The Department of Social Sciences is engaged in a number of unique learning partnerships regionally, nationally and internationally.



From prison experiences for students to professional development for government workers in Vietnam, the learning partnerships developed by the Department have impacts far beyond the University.

"Few experiences in life are more profound than being in a prison for the first time," says Louise Ridley, a senior lecturer in criminology, "but this is now an opportunity we can offer our single and joint honours criminology students. It's an experience that can have a major effect on their learning."

Louise developed the volunteer work experience programme because she was aware that students can leave university with the best theoretical understanding of the Criminal Justice System, but very little in the way of practical experience. "We know experience is something employers always look for," she says, "so I was keen to make sure our students had the opportunity to demonstrate this. Just as importantly, however, there is enormous

pedagogical benefit in the way that students can draw on practical examples from the real world to enhance their understanding of the issues raised in the classroom."

Since inaugurating the programme with prisons in the North East, a number of other partners have come on board. Students can now volunteer with NEPACS (who run prison visitor centres), with the National Offender Management Service in the North East, with regional Youth Offending Teams, and with the Local Youth Justice Board and the Primary Care Trust for Durham and Darlington. What's more, this year, for the first time, instead of volunteering and working in their own time, some students are now able to take a work experience module as part of their programme of study.

The Department's commitment to enhancing learning, employability and skills goes far beyond the development of undergraduates however. Seema Patel is the Director for Employer Engagement in the Department.

"We have a track record of working with employers and employees to deliver robust, well recognised professional programmes which enhance skills," she says. "These aren't only undergraduate

or postgraduate programmes, we also deliver distance learning courses, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities, and short courses in the areas of regeneration, public services and criminology."

But it's not just professionals in the North East who benefit from the Department's programmes. Over the last three years, a number of short training programmes have been delivered to public sector professionals from overseas. These have included courses on governmental and ministerial responsibilities to government officers from Vietnam, courses on corruption to the police service in Nigeria, and courses on the UK complaints system, HR practices and public administration to Chinese government officers.

"The economic footprint of such courses is excellent for our region," adds Seema Patel. "In 2011 we will continue to ensure our courses reflect the issues and challenges professionals face both regionally and across the world. Employers and employees come here because they know that they are getting expert teaching, relevant content, and the development of skills and knowledge that can immediately be applied back in the workplace."

From prison experiences for students to professional development for government workers in Vietnam, the learning partnerships developed by the Department have impacts far beyond the University



Current BSc Criminology student at HM Prison Durham