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national  
**everyday cultures**  
programme

# newsletter

no. 1, January 2000

## Greetings

*We are very pleased to start our communications with you in the new year – and the millennium – with our first NECP Newsletter .*

*We want to thank all of you who expressed an interest in being involved in the programme, and in particular to those who attended our regional briefing meetings. We learned a lot from our exchanges with you.*

*In this newsletter we will update you about the development of the programme and the policies regarding the formation of the NECP Research Network of Associate Lecturers.*

**With best wishes**

*Tony*      *Elizabeth*

**Prof Tony Bennett** Director, NECP

**Dr Elizabeth B Silva**, Research Director, NECP

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## The regional briefing meetings

In October and November six NECP regional briefing meetings were organized in Oxford, Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, London and Newcastle. Associate Lecturers were invited to these meetings on the basis of research experience and relevant interests. The meetings were well attended. The agenda covered basic information about the development of the programme and a discussion about research interests.

The current stage of the programme as reported in this Newsletter reflects those discussions.

## The NECP structure

The **National Everyday Cultures Programme** is based in Sociology at the Open University. It is part of the Open University's Strategic Research Initiative and a key programme within the Pavis Centre for Social and Cultural Research.

The **Associate Lecturers Network** has been developed from the Open University's Associate Lecturers with expertise in the social sciences and humanities. It currently involves over 200 researchers in 13 regions in the UK.

The management structure of the programme is centred around a **Steering Committee** composed of staff at Walton Hall and Associate Lecturers. This committee is concerned with policy development and practical co-ordination.

Members of the Steering Committee are: Dr Dina Abbott, Prof Tony Bennett, Ms Jessica Evans, Mr Peter Hamilton, Dr David Hesmondhalgh, Dr Peter Redman, Dr Elizabeth Silva, Prof Ken Thompson, Dr Kath Woodward.

The NECP network involves two other committees with a specific role in extending the scope of the programme.

The **Research Collaboration Committee** allows researchers from other universities to connect with full-time staff at the Open University and with Associate Lecturers. Senior academics from a number of UK universities are members of this Committee:

Cardiff University of Wales, Goldsmiths College (University of London), Lancaster University, London School of Economics and Political Sciences, Nottingham Trent University, The

University of Manchester, University College Dublin, University of Cambridge, University of Derby, University of East London, University of Edinburgh, University of Leicester, University of Stirling, University of Ulster at Coleraine.

The **External Advisory Committee** has a role similar to that of the Research Collaboration Committee in bringing in senior staff in key institutions concerned with cultural policies in the UK. The committee currently includes representatives from The British Film Institute, The Arts Council of England, The Scottish Arts Council, The Arts Council of Northern Ireland, The Arts Council of Wales and The Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

## Researching Everyday Cultures

The National Everyday Cultures Programme takes its bearings from the late Raymond Williams' observation that culture is ordinary, a part of the fabric of meanings and activities informing and organizing everyday life. It shares his conviction that it is precisely because of its ordinariness that culture is so extraordinarily important, affecting all aspects of contemporary economic, social and political life.

This broad definition of culture has been the starting point for the programme. Discussions of research interests in the Associate Lecturers' network were based on this general principle. The areas of interest listed include:

- Culture and consumption: sport, home, clothing, music, leisure.
- Ethnicity: defined both 'within' and 'outside' of the diaspora.
- Gendered concerns: masculinities, sexualities
- Identities: performance, power and hierarchy
- Inclusion and exclusion: reasons, significance and issues cutting across.
- Ethics, morality (diverse moral voices) and religion.
- Social Movements: migration, generation, environment, politics, and in relation to identities and quality of life.
- Transitions: youth, motherhood, along the lifecourse and in between cultures (spacial and social).
- Visual representations: visual material to produce representation and to be analysed as representation.

These interests emphasize the two central concerns within the National Everyday Cultures Programme:

- (1) The exploration of the role of culture in organizing relationships of social class, gender, ethnicity, region, nation, age and sexuality.
- (2) Bringing research findings on everyday cultural practices to bear on the development of social, cultural and media policy.

### Participation of Associate Lecturers

The participation of Associate Lecturers within the NECP will vary in accordance with the nature of the project, the individual's particular skills and experience and the funding source requirements.

The current possibilities for participation include:

- Being employed as a *contract researcher*, *research fellow* or *research assistant* on a project where the principal applicant is a member of the Open University full-time staff or of one of the universities on the Research Collaboration Committee.
- Being the *principal applicant* for a project submitted for external funding through the NECP at the Open University, *leading to employment as a research fellow or senior research fellow*.
- Being the *leading researcher* in a NECP seed-funded project.

**Recognition** of the work of Associate Lecturers will be proportionate to involvement, as in any other research context: from *authorship* to *co-authorship* of final outcomes where the involvement is major, to *acknowledgement* of other forms of assistance, such as *listing as members* of research teams.

With regard to an Associate Lecturer being the *leading researcher* in a seed-funded project, we will be setting in place a process for inviting ALs to submit proposals for seed-funding.

The links of an Associate Lecturer with the NECP would not end if their contract with the Open University expires. Associate Lecturers within the NECP will be resourced for their participation in research. This is separate from the teaching contract with the Open University.

### COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE NETWORK

We have a database listing basic information about the Associate Lecturers including postal and e-mail addresses and research interests. We would like to make this information available to Associate Lecturers, upon request. But we need those in our database to agree that we may pass on this information.

**PLEASE, COMPLETE THE ENCLOSED SHEET AND RETURN IT IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED asap.**

*Thanks*

### NECP Research Fund

The National Everyday Cultures Programme has a budget of £110,000 for research development over 3 years up to July 2002. The financial resources for Associate Lecturers involvement in the Programme will come from this fund.

Funding has been allocated to payment of ALs for participation in the Steering Committee (expenses and an advisory fee) and for participation in the inaugural symposium. The bulk of the research fund will be used to resource AL participation in seed-funded projects.

The key strategy for the seed funding process is to prepare the way for applications for external funding. The aim is to finance pilot projects that could substantiate a full-weight proposal to other major research funding agencies. However, other projects, which could generate their own outcomes, may also be funded.

The Steering Committee will decide about funding policies, allocation of money to projects and which projects to endorse and support as part of the NECP.

We have planned the bidding process for the research development fund to have two phases. In the first phase Associate Lecturers wishing to bid for seed funding will fill in an application form to present a general outline of the proposed research and general costs. These will go through a selection process and a number of Associate Lecturers will then be invited to present a detailed proposal for the second phase.

### **The following timetable for the Seed Funding Process is envisaged:**

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**February:**

Invitation for bids (brief proposals) - first phase

**March:**

Invitations to submit extended proposals (there will be a two-month period deadline for submission)

**May:**

Extended proposals submission deadline

**June:**

Decisions on awards and allocation of funding

**August:**

Starting date for seed-funded projects

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Application forms and procedures for bidding for research project development will be issued upon request following the invitations to bid in February 2000.

Associate lecturers may develop research projects as leaders of a team, as a single applicant or as a member of a team led by another Associate Lecturer or by another academic member of the NECP research network.

Any Associate Lecturers' involvement in NECP activities will be funded. Payment will be based on the appropriate research payment scales, and will have no connection with their current employment contract.

*Current rates of payment for particular activities are:*

### **NECP POLICIES AND RATES OF PAYMENT FOR ACTIVITIES BY ASSOCIATE LECTURERS**

#### **Payment Rates**

Associate Lecturers who attend meetings in connection with specific research projects will be paid £90.46 per day, plus travel expenses. The mileage rate payable is 23.5p per mile. This is equivalent to the second class public transport rate and is the rate used for costing research grant applications.

#### **Mechanism for Arranging Payments**

Research group convenors are requested to take responsibility for giving Pam Walker (Programme Administrator) the following information prior to attendance payments:

#### **Attendance at Meetings**

- a) Dates of any research meetings which ALs will be attending
- b) Names of ALs attending who qualify for payment
- c) If possible, date of birth and National Insurance Number of ALs who qualify for payment (if this can be easily obtained, say at the first meeting).

#### **Travel Expenses**

Expenses claim forms (Form ALC) can be collected by research convenors from ALs on the day of the meeting and passed to Pam Walker. Otherwise ALs are advised to send their forms directly to Pam as soon as possible after the date of the meeting. Travel expenses claim forms have to be submitted with the claims for attendance. Payment for attendance cannot be arranged until the AL has sent in his/her travel expenses claim.

#### **Issue of Contracts**

If ALs (or any others) are to be involved with a project on a consultancy basis over several years and a higher rate of payment is felt to be appropriate, and/or are likely to receive any single payment of more than £500, it may be necessary to issue them with a contract. Convenors should let Pam Walker know if this might be the case so that the paperwork can be arranged, as appropriate.

## **Projects under development**

Six projects are currently underway within the Programme.

### ***National Everyday Cultures: The Social Relations of Everyday Cultural Practices***

Researchers: Tony Bennett, David Hesmondhalgh, Linda Janes, Norma Sherratt, Elizabeth Silva, Andrew Trigg, Kath Woodward

This project comprises a national statistical and ethnographic inquiry into everyday cultural practices, tastes and values in contemporary Britain. The range of cultural activities considered ranges across domestic leisure activities and cultures of work; radio, film and television preferences; musical tastes and music making; sport and outdoor activities; holidays; reading habits and preferences; and dance. In examining the social patterns of participation in these activities, particular attention is paid to the interrelations between class, gender, ethnicity and cultural choice for the analysis of the household and its role in class analysis. The project is also concerned with the role moving images play in the everyday culture and aims to develop 'cultural life chance' indicators that can assist the equity objectives of cultural policy.

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### ***Audio-visual Media Use, Leisure Practices and Diasporic Cultures***

Researcher: Ken Thompson

This project investigates the media practices of particular ethnic groups, focusing on their uses of mass media, such as television (satellite, cable and terrestrial), video and film, radio, newspapers and magazines. These are considered in relation to participation in other cultural activities, ranging from family to religious and community involvement. The research is primarily concerned to identify the cross-cultural and communal dynamics influencing how audio-visual and other media are used both to maintain cultures within different minority 'Asian-originating' diasporic communities, and to negotiate of their relationships with the majority 'British' culture. It also considers the role of inter-generational relations, focusing on mothers and daughters, in the creative adaptation of cultures to changing circumstances.

### ***Visual Sociology Project***

Researcher: Peter Hamilton

This is a sociological and ethnographic project designed to collect visual data about national, regional and local cultures of everyday life at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The visual data - initially that of still photography - is collected alongside ethnographic and survey data, resulting in a methodologically rich data set that will form the basis for the Programmes archival activities. Key themes for the project include the role of everyday cultural practices as markers of personal, local, community and national identities; their role in the creation and maintenance of workplace cultures; the roles of rites of passage in various spheres of social life; and the distinctive styles and décor of domestic life.

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### ***The Serious Amateur Photographer: Culture, Taste and Status***

Researcher: Jessica Evans

This research centres on amateur photography clubs but also involves a comparative element in which professional photographic practices are also investigated. Its aim is to find out what the determinants of amateur photography practice are, in particular its place within a classed and gendered habitus, and how this relates to the aesthetic and technical values placed upon photography. The central question is: how does amateur photography and its practices of evaluation manifest social, aesthetic and other knowledge competencies and skills? This involves consideration of how the practice of ordinary amateurs relates to the photographic industry as a whole (from camera manufacturing and marketing to specialist photography magazines) and its various distinctive sectors and styles (amateur, professional, fine art).

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### ***Technology and Home Life***

Researcher: Elizabeth Silva

This project is concerned with exploring theories of a 'virtual society' which presuppose that information technology (IT) is a central feature of everyday life in late modernity. A key concern is with the moralities of various uses of technologies in the home.

The investigation explores normative beliefs about the workings of households and the effects of the introduction and use of technologies. The study is centred on three key questions: (1) How far are ordinary people's normal lives embedded with technology (IT, in particular)? (2) Are those who do not have access to IT resisting it, or are they excluded? (3) How do access to and use of more traditional technologies in the home (e.g. cookers, fridges, microwave ovens and dishwashers) relate to access to and use of IT (e.g. computers, e-mail and the Internet)? The project comprises an ethnography of uses of technologies in households (accounting for the current diversity of home life in Britain) focusing on the roles of women, men and children.

### **Music and Dance in Everyday Culture**

Researcher: David Hesmondhalgh

Music is a major component of most people's everyday cultural life. But sociological work on musical consumption has tended to concentrate on the uses that subcultures have made of youth-associated popular music forms such as soul, punk and electronic dance music. This has led to a neglect of a great variety of experiences of music, including, for example: enthusiasm for 'middlebrow' music (such as certain types of country music, or light music); casual background listening, in the car and in the kitchen; amateur and proto-professional music-making; the collecting of musical recordings and memorabilia; and experiences of dancing outside the much-theorised environment of the 'rave'. The everyday musical practices of ethnic minority groups in the UK, especially those of older people, have also been marginalised. What, then, are the implications for our understanding of everyday culture of thinking about the full range of uses to which music is put? How can these uses be understood in relation to the institutions and technologies of musical production and dissemination? The study, which will be launched in late 2000, seeks to investigate these issues, with particular attention to the way that musical practices vary across class, gender and ethnic groups.

## **Inaugural Symposium**

An inaugural symposium to officially launch the **National Everyday Cultures Programme** will take place in the Berrill Lecture Theatre at The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes on Friday, 19 May 2000. It will be a one-day public event.

The **Rt Hon Chris Smith, MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport**, will be the keynote speaker at the event. Publicity on the web and by post is being organized.

## **Nation, Culture, People - Symposium**

### **DRAFT PROGRAMME**

10.30 - 11.00	Arrival, registration, coffee
11.00 - 11.50	<b>Culture and the Everyday:</b> <i>Elizabeth Silva</i> and <i>Tony Bennett</i>
11.50 - 12.40	<b>Relocating Britain:</b> <i>Gail Lewis</i> and <i>Patrick Wright</i>
12.40 - 14.00	Lunch
14.00 - 14.50	<b>Lifecourse and Lifestyles:</b> <i>Ann Phoenix</i> and <i>Andrew Blaikie</i>
14.50 - 15.40	<b>Home, Gender and the Everyday:</b> <i>David Morgan</i> and <i>Gill Dunne</i>
15.40 - 16.10	Tea
16.10 - 17.00	<b>Class, Culture and Place:</b> <i>Mike Savage</i> and <i>Doreen Massey</i>
17.10 - 17.50	<b>Cultural Policy and Everyday Life:</b> <i>Naseem Khan</i> and <i>Angela McRobbie</i>
17.50 - 18.10	Tea
18.10 - 19.00	<b>Keynote address:</b> <i>The Rt Hon Chris Smith, MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport</i>
19.00 -	Closing and drinks



Associate Lecturers are most welcome to attend the symposium. The NECP has allocated a special fund of up to £4,000 to cover travel and subsistence for members of the network. This will be done on a first come first served basis, per region. Preference for funding will be given to those who do not have access to funds from another institution. Individual Associate Lecturers may be able to access another development fund to enable them to attend. Travel expenses, but not time, will be paid. There will be no registration fee for members of the research network. Associate Lecturers will soon receive booking forms.

### **Working Papers**

To disseminate the work within the Programme we have created a working paper series: *The Pavis Papers in Social and Cultural Research*, edited by David Hesmondhalgh and Elizabeth Silva. The publications will include work-in-progress either in the form of articles or research reports. Papers should be between 5,000 and 12,000 words in length.

### **Other events**

The first meeting of the Research Collaboration Committee took place on 29 October 1999.

A workshop on 'Formations of Class, Culture and Gender' is planned for December 2000.

A seminar with members of the External Advisory Committee is to be planned, to address issues of 'Cultural Policies and the Everyday'.

### **General Information**

We have created a logo for the NECP, which is printed at the heading of this Newsletter. We have also published a leaflet, which will be sent to you shortly with the publicity material for the inaugural event.

Further issues of the Newsletter giving updates on developments, will be sent whenever this is regarded as necessary.

Our web site is being tested internally and should be fully operational for external search and links later this year.

Whenever possible we would like to communicate by email. Please, keep us up to date with any changes to your address, both e-mail and postal, and with academic titles.

### **Contacting the NECP**

The National Everyday Cultures Programme has its own email address:

Socsci-necp@open.ac.uk

The managers of this address are Pamela Walker and Karen Ho.

### **Postal address:**

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