

Culture and Society - Summary of responses and comments:

Three responses received:

1. Rosie Read (HSC)
2. Kate Welham and Holger Schutkowski (ApSci)
3. Rosie Read and Barry Richards (HSC and MS) after a meeting with colleagues from four Schools (ApSci, HSC, MS, ST). This does not follow the standard template so some of the sections below are blank.

(There was also a fourth response from Barry Richards (MS) but this was subsequently developed as part of the Read and Richards response).

Alternative name suggestions:

Author	Name suggestion/s	Comments
1. Read	Socio-cultural change, conflict and cohesion	J Parker (HSC) - There are dangers with trying to develop too focused a title for this research theme as this is likely to lead to exclusion of potentially interesting and important areas of research and research collaboration. For instance, adding 'change' or 'cohesion' introduces a particular idea that socially transformative research would be privileged above, say, methodological endeavour. Whilst there are problems with the use of the singular forms in 'culture and society', it perhaps allows for the emergence of greater productive diversity in developing what is likely to be a wide and changing brief. Inclusivity and broad coverage is important. It is within this context that exciting pockets of research can develop across the university. Let's not be too prescriptive at this stage of the game.
2. Welham and Schutkowski	Changing societies or Societies in transition	E Jenkins (ApSci) - the problem with the name remains. This is because I believe that societies are always in a state of flux and are never static so by definition a society is always in transition.
3. Read and Richards	Cultural and social change While still very broad (no doubt in some contexts unhelpfully so), it puts implicit emphasis on the historical context ('change' being a process in time), which is important for those studying contemporary life as well as for those actually doing historical research. It would encompass researchers of different philosophical orientation, and is hospitable to agendas of social engagement. (In response to E van Teijlingen's comment) - 'Change' came from the prominence of historical perspectives amongst those involved in the	E van Teijlingen (HSC) - What is the logic behind choosing the title or label 'Cultural and social change'? Are we, as social scientists, not interested in studying society in our scholarly activities rather than just focus on those elements that 'change'? Social change refers to a (significant) alteration over time in behavior patterns and cultural values and norms. Since some of our work, so I'm informed by my social work colleagues in HSC, centres around the study of the underserved and those without a voice, the study of a lack of change can be equally important. If we agree that this is the case than the label 'Culture and Society' makes more sense as it is more inclusive (and more appropriate). Following my argument to its logical

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	discussion. But in any event, are there many social situations that do not change today? As for 'sociology' while it's a term that can be used as broadly as you like, it is the name of a specific discipline which a number of those who'd like to be associated with this theme don't see as their home or may feel they don't know very well.	conclusion, why not stick to widely recognized label 'Sociology' for the study of Culture and Society?

Brief theme summary:

Author	Summary	Comments
1. Read	A rapidly globalising world generates profound economic and social instabilities, opportunities and inequalities. The truly global nature of corporate capital and investment, alongside the large scale migration of populations across the world in search of better opportunities, raises key problems and/or debates in the contemporary world. These developments have been linked to the rise of class and ethnicity-based conflicts and political and religious extremism, as well as the seemingly contradictory role of governments in seeking to encourage growth (via deregulation and privatisation) whilst also needing to guarantee some level of social and economic equality and protection for vulnerable sections of the population (however these may be defined). These problems raise important questions for how to create social cohesion, and specifically the responsibilities of governments, corporations, non-profit organisations and individuals in achieving this.	J Parker (HSC) - This makes a great statement for such an important area of research. The synergies with our developing 'vision' for the academic community 'Society and Social Welfare' are clear and this adds strength to the theme's growth and stature. This makes a very good starting point for debate and creating a robust yet broad-reaching theme that can bring neophyte and established researchers together in areas of social science and humanities research.
2. Welham and Schutkowski	In a fast changing world, with increasing uncertainty, it is important to understand how change comes about and how both individuals and societies adapt to change. The UN forecasts that by 2050 there will be 9 billion people on the planet. We therefore face critical questions about how we will sustain this population, not just in terms of our resources, but how we continue to make our lives rich and meaningful. Against this backdrop there are serious challenges around identity and how this develops in relation to shared interests in a competitive world. How is adaptation expressed in cultural terms? How can we describe and understand societal change, both in the past and the present? Coupled with this, the continued emergence of new technologies will give humans an amazing array of opportunities to both do and experience things in new ways, living increasingly	

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	interconnected lives. With all of the challenges facing society today, how can we use our understanding of both the past and present to support us going forward into the future?	
3. Read and Richards	No comment.	J Parker (HSC) - the two strands of social science and humanities research is particularly important and opens, more widely, the possibilities vis á vis RC funding, alongside, perhaps more importantly to many of us, potentially exciting and innovative lines of research. I remain a little concerned about creating themes that are too restrictive, however, as I think these will fall out of the broader 'theme' as groups cluster around certain areas; and, if there isn't a broad base to begin with, it may be the case that smaller clusters develop according to minority interests. If we have a broader more inclusive approach to start with we retain the potential for dialogue and support and, importantly, interdisciplinarity. However, if we constrain and focus we may leave smaller groups to flounder or develop on the 'margins', which, at its worst, may replicate some of the silos many are hoping to avoid. Having said all that, the two identified strands of history (broad and multi-disciplinarily relevant) and welfare (a contested term open to much interpretation) offer a great deal to many of us. They represent a useful starting place from which to develop this BU theme.

Scope of theme: what is included:

Author	Summary	Comments
1. Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-cultural change • Globalisation • Conflict • Equality and diversity • Governance • Cohesion • Security 	<p>C Hodges (MS) – media and communication, and consumerism.</p> <p>J Parker (HSC) - a defining feature of this theme could encompass some specific forms of methodology underpinning epistemology relevant to the social sciences and humanities.</p>
2. Welham and Schutkowski	<p>This theme is about identifying the determinants of societal change and their effect at the level of individuals and communities. It is likely to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation to change, cultural identity and acculturation • Self-expression, the role of the individual in society, and what 	

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	<p>it is to be human</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human interaction and response to the environment both past and present • Human interaction and response to technology both past and present • Migration • Transitions (e.g. Mesolithic-Neolithic, Romanisation, colonisation, industrial revolution, the postmodern world) • The connected society 	
3. Read and Richards	<p>Contributions to the debate about how to define a 'Culture & Society' theme had suggested that 'history' and 'welfare' were two important parameters, amongst others.</p> <p>There was also a view that we should try to include both social scientific and more humanities-based researchers.</p>	

Scope of theme: what is excluded:

Author	Summary	Comments
1. Read	<p>This theme embraces all strands of social science as well as humanities and the arts. Natural sciences, engineering and technology-based sciences may be outside of this theme in the first instance, but opportunities to collaborate with these disciplines will be taken up where advantageous. This may be potentially fruitful when considering digital technologies, green technologies and the theoretical crucible enabled by complex systems theories.</p>	<p>H Schutkowski (ApSci) - There is enormous and necessary potential for including a historic dimension to this. Identity, social inequality, conflict, access to resources are all issues that are both big and have a long time depth. Archaeology has the tools to detect and contextualise these for societies of the past and, by doing so, enrich the debate about some of the fundamental and universal themes of humanity. This may well require the application of scientific methods to archaeological materials and I would therefore prefer to not see the natural sciences excluded from the start.</p> <p>There is enough common ground to think really big.</p>
2. Welham and Schutkowski	No comment.	
3. Read and Richards	<p>In the discussion we were very aware of the need to introduce some limits to the theme, and of the possibility therefore that some 'potential members' might not fit into the final definition of it.</p>	

Which big societal questions are addressed by this theme?

Author	Summary	Comments
1. Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can equality, opportunity and social cohesion within and between different societies be understood and defined, ensured and promoted in the context of globalisation? What role, if any, should governments, multinational corporations, non-governmental organisations, faith organisations and individuals play in achieving this? • How are identities and notions of citizenship formed in societies characterised by cultural diversity, inequality and insecurity? What are the consequences for social cohesion, political organisation, solidarity, collective forms of responsibility and protection against insecurity? • How can contemporary conflicts in the world be better understood, and thereby addressed or prevented? How can the vast critical scholarship and expertise from the social sciences, arts and humanities be used to analyse and address contemporary conflicts in the world? 	A Ford (ApSci) - I think there is vast scope here for applying our in-house expertise in geospatial science to accomplish just such analysis. Pull this off and the impacts would be massive!
2. Welham and Schutkowski	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do societies interact and flourish in a changing environment? • Cultural adaptation and identity. • Living with environmental change. • Building sustainability in growth. • The cost of change, e.g. socio-economic and/or political change – social inequality, nutrition, health, longevity, acculturation, loss and formation of identity. • The impact of migration on societal organisation and coherence. 	
3. Read and Richards	No comment.	

How do these link to the priorities of the major funding bodies?

Author	Summary	Comments
1. Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESRC: Strategic Plan 2009-2014. This theme overlaps with four (of seven) of key priority areas for this research council's funding during this period. These are: Global Economic Performance, Policy and Management, Health and Wellbeing, Security, Conflict and Justice and Social Diversity and Populations Dynamics 	M Maltby (ApSci) - AHRC "Connected Communities" programme: there is a lot within that which is extremely relevant to our discussions.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCUK: (1) The AHRC is leading a cross-council research programme entitled 'Connected Communities', aimed at creating better understanding of the key societal and economic challenges facing communities, as well as effective forms of intervention. (2) 'Global Uncertainties' programme, supported by a range of research councils, including AHRC and ESRC. • EU: (1) Key theme of Framework 7 is 'Social and Economic Concerns', incorporating a number of foci relevant to this theme, such as regional development, employment issues, safety, security and social and economic issues. (2) Youth in Action Programme, European Commission, aimed at promoting sense of European citizenship and solidarity amongst young people in EU. 	
2. Welham and Schutkowski	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHRC (Science and Culture) • ERSC (Vibrant and Fair Society, Influencing behaviour and Informing interventions) • NERC (Living With Environmental Change) • Other Research Councils and Funding Bodies share a generic interest in this theme: EPSRC, Leverhulme Trust, British Academy, Royal Society, Wellcome Trust. 	
3. Read and Richards	No comment.	

How does this theme interlink with the other BU themes currently under consideration:

Author	Summary	Comments
1. Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing • Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth • Learning and Public Engagement • Green Economy and Sustainability 	<p>J Parker (HSC) – Links with Ageing</p> <p>M Maltby (ApSci) - There are some very interesting ideas being developed above and I agree that there is potentially a lot more communality than perhaps some of us initially thought within this research theme.</p>
2. Welham and Schutkowski	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing: Indirect outcomes of change: Attitudes towards treatment and care of the infirm over time; Environmental change and disease; Epidemiological transitions; Patterns of disease and economic development • Environmental change and biodiversity: Host/pathogen interrelationships, land use patterns, subsistence modes, the 	E Jenkins (ApSci) - from an Archaeological perspective there is much potential for collaboration with the Environmental Change and Biodiversity group because Social change and Environmental change are often interlinked.

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	cultivation of nature, the exploitation of nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green economy and sustainability: the irrelevance of sustainability in the past, the self-regulation of ecosystem services • Ageing: old age in the past, age identity, age roles • Learning and public engagement: to be developed • Entrepreneurship and economic growth: to be developed 	
3. Read and Richards	There will inevitably be major areas of overlap between several themes, given that all are broadly defined. Dialogue between themes in the development phase would help to clarify boundaries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative and Digital Economies • Leisure and Tourism • Health and Wellbeing 	

Further comments from interested academics, groups and/or Schools:

- D Osselton, K McGhee and WJ Liang (ApSci) - There are a few areas where we have research interests that would fit in with the outlined scope: socio-cultural change, conflict, equality and diversity and security. For example drug misuse is a headline topic of huge political concern in our society because of its impact on crime, policing and health. Each of these incurs a significant financial burden to society. Since 1997 over 130 new psychoactive substances have been reported to the European Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. We are actively involved in projects relating to drug abuse from genotyping drug users and drug decedents through to analysing controlled drug seizures from night clubs and pop festivals. We can therefore offer extensive support and experience in the area of drug analysis as well as an extensive national and international collaboration list. Interest in our work has recently been expressed by the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs and we believe that there could be significant scope for funding opportunities from within Europe and the USA. From an international perspective members of the team are actively involved in assisting with resolving the aftermath of human rights conflict (Bosnia, Iraq) and would be well placed to co-operate / co-ordinate research in these areas.
- C Hodges (MS) - There is also considerable interest in this research theme from colleagues from Latin America Research Group (LARG) an informal research group based in the Media School. Our work explores recent trends in Latin American communication research, as well as the influence of socio-cultural and political processes on Media and Communications practice within the region. We also seek to explore a rich and diverse range of research methodologies. Our current projects include: The transformative potential of Peruvian Marketing discourse (Janice Denegri – Knott and colleagues); Transforming promotional cultures in Latin American urban society (Janice Denegri-Knott and Carrie Hodges); Corporate media as Political Opposition (Cheryl Martens and colleagues); Beyond Borders: The impact of Latin American thinkers on participatory communication (Carrie Hodges and colleagues); The influence of history and culture upon Advertising creativity in Argentina (Cliff Van Wyk).