



North East Medical Sociology Group Seminar
Critical realism, Archer and 'internal conversations':
the role of structured agency in the sociology of health inequalities
Professor Graham Scambler, University College, London

Wed 2nd October 2013, 12pm-5pm
Bamburgh Suite, King's Building, Newcastle University

Programme

From 12.00	Buffet lunch and registration	
12.30	Introduction	Ms Marie Poole , University of Newcastle
12.40	Keynote address: Critical realism, Archer and 'internal conversations': the role of structured agency in the sociology of health inequalities	Professor Graham Scambler , University College, London Chair: Dr Suzanne Moffatt , Newcastle University
1.20 -1.45	Questions to speaker	
1.45-2.15	Paper session: Managing the tensions of essentialism: purity and impurity	Dr Robert Duschinsky and Sue Lampitt , Northumbria University Chair: Dr Mick Hill , Northumbria University
2.15-2.30	Questions to speaker	
2.30-3.00	Coffee/tea break	
3.00-3.30	Paper session: The apparatus of care: evidence-based activism in the Alzheimer's Disease movement	Dr Tiago Moreira , Durham University Chair: Dr Paul Crawshaw , Teesside University
3.30-3.45	Questions to speaker	
3.45-4.45	Why you should be Linked-In, blogging, Tweeting, Facebooking etc... a look at what new social media and academic networking websites can do for scholarship and your academic profile, and a chance to dip a toe in the water for social media virgins!	Panel: Professor Graham Scambler Dr Jean Adams , Institute of Health and Society, Newcastle University Dr Ewen Speed , School of Health and Human Sciences, University of Essex
4.45	Closing remarks	Professor Janet Shucksmith , Teesside University and Dr Sally Brown , Durham University
5.00	Close – informal networking	

Speaker Abstracts and Biographies

Professor Graham Scambler – Critical realism, Archer and 'internal conversations': the role of structured agency in the sociology of health inequalities

Professor Scambler's keynote presentation will offer a meta-reflective assessment of a trio of publications on the salience of Maggie Archer's theory of social morphogenesis in general, and her latest work on reflexivity and 'internal conversations' in particular, for a credible sociology of health inequalities. It suggests novel take-off points for future theory and methods and offers an elaboration of the concept of 'disconnected fatalism' as a pivotal social determinant of health with the potential for synthesising much of the published literature.

Professor Scambler's research interests span critical and social theory, health, sex work and sport. His current research includes: comparative study of stigma as a barrier to health interventions with sex workers; sexual trafficking; the impact of biological, psychological and social mechanisms on epilepsy-related quality of life; class and health inequality; the differential prestige attaching to medical diagnoses; and patient education and empowerment. These interests are reflected in his recent publications. In 2011 he produced a challenging commentary on health inequalities research ('Tackling health inequalities' and its pros, cons and contradictions: a commentary on Blackman et al. *Social Science and Medicine*, 72(12), 1975 – 1977). His latest book, 'Contemporary Theorists and Medical Sociology', was published by Routledge in 2012. He is founding co-editor of the international journal 'Social Theory and Health', has been involved in a variety of collaborations nationally and internationally and is a member of the standing committee of the International Consortium for Research and Action Against Health-Related Stigma.

Dr Robert Duschinsky and Dr Sue Lampitt – Managing the tensions of essentialism: purity and impurity

This paper proposes a new interpretation of Pierre Bourdieu, as a theorist of purity and impurity. Themes of purity and impurity are of significance to a variety of issues rising in research in medical sociology; however, it has been alleged that to date these themes have been 'under theorised' (Campkin 2006) since the classic work of Douglas and Kristeva. It has long been observed that purity/impurity discourses are only sometimes associated with 'matter out of place'. What is the pattern? Building from Bourdieu, and considering cases relevant to medical sociology, we will propose that purity and impurity are at stake when phenomena are assessed for their relative deviation from an imputed state of 'self-identity': qualitative homogeneity and correspondence with their essence. Purity and impurity do more than judge self-identity however. They can play a fundamental role in its performative construction; they are well adapted for smuggling assumptions into our discourses regarding the essence of particular phenomena and forms of subjectivity, simplifying a complex world into a stark contrast between the dangerous and the innocent, the valuable and the valueless, the necessary and the contingent, the originary and the prosthetic, the real and the apparent, and the unitary and the fragmented.

Dr Duschinsky is Senior Lecturer in Social Science for Social Work. He is currently conducting Department of Health-funded research on family interventions; and is supervising PhD students researching sexual exploitation as a safeguarding issue. He has recently convened a conference on the implications for identity politics of new classifications of gender and sexuality in DSM-5. Dr Sue Lampitt is Principal Lecturer in Social Work, and she is presently



researching early (pre-birth) interventions and the management of complex 'child in need' cases.

Dr Tiago Moreira - The Apparatus of Care: Evidence-based activism in the Alzheimer's Disease movement

This paper aims to contribute to the understanding of health activism in contemporary democracies by focusing on the development of modes of activism that focus on knowledge production and knowledge mobilisation in the governance of health issues. These forms of engagement were labelled 'evidence-based activism' to emphasise the interlocking of knowledge and politics, whereby knowledge is not simply a resource that patient and carer organisations mobilize to advance a cause; instead, organizations work to define the *epistemic infrastructure* that sustains the very mobilization around specific issues or causes of the organisation (Rabeharisoa, Moreira and Akrich, 2013). The dynamics of this mode of activism were explored through a case study. Drawing on documentary and interview data collected on the 'Putting care right' campaign developed by the Alzheimer's Society between 2007 and 2012, Dr Moreira describes how the politicisation of dementia care entailed an interrogation of the ability of social research techniques to capture the effect of care packages or technologies on the quality of life of persons living with dementia. He also examines how this problematisation of social research has in turn exposed areas of uncertainty in the form of activism and the 'cause' advanced by AD organisations. Finally there is a discussion of how evidence-based activism affects the capacity of patients' organisations to stabilise their frame and ensure alignment over sustained periods, and what this means for the politics of health in contemporary Europe.

Dr Moreira is Senior Lecturer in the School of Applied Social Sciences and a Fellow of the Wolfson Research Institute for Health and Wellbeing. His research has been concerned with exploring and understanding the role of knowledge and technology in contemporary health care, with particular attention to the collective production of health care standards (e.g. clinical guidelines, diagnostic categories), the social and political organisation of clinical trials and the use of technologies in clinical and domestic contexts. He is the author (with Catherine Will) of *Medical Proofs/Social Experiments: clinical trials in shifting contexts* (Ashgate 2010) and *The Transformation of Contemporary Health Care: The Market, the Laboratory and the Forum* (Routledge 2012). His three main areas of current research concern knowledge practices in health care priority setting or 'rationing', the role of patient organisations in the generation, mediation and use of knowledge and technology and aging, technology and society.

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Dr Ewen Speed

Dr Ewen Speed is Graduate Director (Research) and a senior lecturer in medical sociology the School of Health and Human Sciences at the University of Essex. His research covers the political economy of health care (particularly health care markets); interpretative policy analysis of health care and processes of consumerism and choice in health care among others. He is author of the 'Cost of Living' blogsite.



Dr Jean Adams

Dr Jean Adams is a social and behavioural epidemiologist with key research interests in socio-economic inequalities in health behaviours, and food policy. She is a senior lecturer in public health in the Institute of Health and Society at Newcastle University. She is Chair of the Communications Group for Fuse, the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health, a collaboration of the five North East universities, and edits the Fuse Open Science blog.