SCHOOL OF POLITICS, ECONOMICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Annual review 2013–14

CONTENTS

A year in the life of SPEIR 4
Teaching matters 6
Student achievements and opportunities 10
Research, policy and enterprise activities 18
Conferences, seminars and public engagement 27
Welcome to this year’s edition of the School’s Annual Review, which highlights the activities of students and staff over the last academic year. This is the fourth year of the School’s existence, bringing together the work of the Departments of Politics and International Relations and Economics, and aims to exploit synergies across the social sciences.

Increasingly our two departments are designing degree programmes that combine elements of both Economics and Politics. In one sense, this is a return towards our roots; 2014–15 will mark the 50th anniversary of the Economics and Politics and International Relations Departments, both of which had been part of a combined Department of Political Economy till then.

2013–14 was another full and exciting year. At the end of 2013, the final submission for the Research Excellence Framework was made – this is a process where the quality of all university research is judged through external peer review – after two years of preparation, and we await the results towards the end of 2014. Our undergraduate degree programmes were again heavily over-subscribed. In addition, the School accounts for approximately one third of all visiting students in the University. Through the work of Senior Tutor, Emma Mayhew, the School also leads the University in the provision of technology-enhanced learning, which is being rolled out across the University.

In a global economy, it is increasingly important that our students are exposed to different cultures and influences. In 2014, the School completed its agreement for a joint Economics degree programme with the Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology (NUIST) in China, where Professor Catriona McKinnon also holds a Visiting Professorship. Dr Simon Burke and Dr Andi Nygaard will teach in Nanjing in the coming year and three members of NUIST staff will be visiting Reading. The first tranche of Chinese students is expected in 2017-18, and domestic Reading students will also have the opportunity to study in China. This is a good example of the University’s internationalisation programme.

Employment placement activities are another important part of our degrees, led by the School’s Placements Officer, Vicki Wiles. All our undergraduates (and increasingly postgraduates) have the opportunity to undertake placements, which can vary from two weeks to a full year. The number of students undertaking placements has increased considerably, with approximately 40 students on accredited schemes last year. Vicki and some of our students write further about their experiences in this review. In addition, the School offers two new graduates the opportunity to undertake six-month internships, working with staff to obtain further insights into the world of academic research. An innovation for 2014 has been the introduction of six summer internships enabling second year undergraduates to work with staff over the summer, in order to improve their research and quantitative skills. A further innovation, planned for October 2014, is a Politics-organised sixth-form conference aimed at schools in the Reading area.

Our finalists had a particularly successful year. 75% of undergraduate students in Politics achieved First and 2:1 Class degrees and 65% in Economics. Although league tables should be treated with considerable caution, both departments improved their positions this year. The league tables also suggest that our Economics Department has amongst the best employment records in the country.

The School listens closely to its students – staff are not always right – and measures have been put in place to make our degree programmes even more relevant to ‘real world’ issues and the needs of students, whilst retaining their academic rigour. Innovations this year included: lunch-time ‘conversations’ in economics between staff and students, where key events from the previous
week are analysed; a lecture series organised by the Economics Society, where students choose the topics, based on staff research, and; Politics ‘breakfast club’ meetings, designed to engage students in curriculum development.

The School is also conscious that its curriculum needs to reflect the lessons of the Global Financial Crisis, and has taken the opportunity this year to re-think the structure of its BA Economics degree for 2015, integrating elements of international political economy, history, and less conventional approaches to economic theory.

Particular mention should also be made of the Model United Nations Society, run by our students. For the second year, the Society ran a major international conference in Reading, and our Politics students took part in the Model United Nations conference in Leuven, where they won six prizes. The novel Politics Radio Show is described later in this review.

The School takes the impact of its teaching and research seriously. Our staff have wide links across different government departments, so that we can both inform the policy process and learn from practitioners. As part of our Masters in Public Policy degree, the School runs a Policy in Practice seminar series, which brings in politicians, senior civil servants and other people involved in policy to address our students. The School’s long-standing links with the military are also expanding, and in October 2013, Reading hosted the inaugural Sandhurst Lecture presented by Major General Skeates CBE, Commandant of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

On the research front, three new research centres began during the year, all of which take an inter-disciplinary perspective – Reading Ethics and Political Economy is directed by Professor Catriona McKinnon and brings together moral and political philosophers working in the Departments of Philosophy and Politics and International Relations. Ways of War is led by Dr Patrick Porter with members from Politics, Economics, History, Modern Languages, Film, Theatre and Television, Classics, and Art History. Professor Uma Kambhampati heads The Centre for Developing Economies and Emerging Markets, which includes researchers from Economics, Politics, Geography, Agriculture and Henley Business School, who are working on issues of development.

Both staff and students were awarded important prizes in 2013–14. The School was delighted to learn that Birte Julia Gippert from Politics won the University’s PhD Student of the Year. Emma Mayhew was awarded a University Teaching Fellowship, and Alan Renwick the Students Union Faculty Teaching Excellence prize. We were lucky to have good weather again for the School’s annual graduation party, where we celebrated the achievements of our graduating students, and awarded prizes to our highest-performing undergraduates. Our staff were also successful in the University promotions round, where Drs Andreas Behnke, Ken Dark and Patrick Tomlin were all promoted to Associate Professorships.

We welcome a number of new members of staff to the School; Drs Costanza Biavaschi, Aurora Garcia, Antonia Fernandez, Jinke Li, Sarah Jewell, and Vicki Wiles. Drs Keith Hyams, Burak Kadercan and Pascal Mossay are moving onto posts at other universities. Professor Colin Gray is retiring after a highly distinguished academic career. As Head of School, I would particularly like to thank members of my administrative staff, who are leaving; Mary Boitz, Jackie Crump, Amy Harris and Jen Scheppers. They have all made my life so much easier. Professor Giovanni Razzu will be Acting Head of Economics until January 2015 and thanks go to Alan Renwick for being Acting Head of Politics during the summer 2014 term. Finally, this is my last year as Head of School and Professor Dominik Zaum now takes over. I would like to thank all staff and students for everything they have contributed over the last four years.

Professor Geoff Meen OBE
Head, School of Politics, Economics and International Relations
TEACHING MATTERS

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING COLLABORATION WITH NANJING UNIVERSITY OF INFORMATION SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY, (NUIST)

Education, like many other services, has gone global. The internationalisation of curriculum and student body is regarded as instrumental in educating world citizens in the 21st century. Economic forces and societal challenges are globally intertwined, and finding workable solutions to a range of local and global challenges requires new perspectives on old (and new) questions of resource management, economic growth, distribution of prosperity and many other problems. Internationalising education is a way to incentivise the emergence, and tolerance of different perspectives. No more so is this the case than in the adjustments to the growing influence and economic weight of China.

In February 2014 the Chinese Ministry of Education approved an application by the Department of Economics and the School of Economics and Management (NUIST) to teach jointly an undergraduate degree, where students study the first three years in Nanjing, before moving to Reading for their final year. Staff from the Department of Economics will participate in teaching the BSc Business Economics and Trade in each year of the degree by travelling to Nanjing.

Jointly the two partners will be responsible for the education of tomorrow’s workers and citizens of China. NUIST students will receive the same modern and rigorous economics education that domestic Reading students receive. Internationalisation is, however, not about bringing a particular view to the global arena, but a plurality of perspectives. Students in the Department of Economics will therefore – through work in tutorial groups, common assessments and social interaction with NUIST students – have their own studies enriched and learn valuable lessons about global markets. Reading-based students will also have opportunities to travel to China with staff, or complete elements of their studies in Nanjing, gaining first-hand experience of this economic super-power.

Associate Professor Christian Nygaard
UNIVERSITY TEACHING FELLOW AWARD

Emma Mayhew, School Senior Tutor and Director of Teaching and Learning in the Department of Politics, was awarded one of Reading’s five University Teaching Fellowships in June 2014. This is ‘a prestigious award conferred on an individual who has demonstrated individual excellence and contributed to the development of teaching and learning within the University’. Emma received the award in recognition of her work developing the student learning experience within the Department of Politics and International Relations, and across the wider University. We are delighted that our students can benefit from her expertise and commitment.

Last Summer, Emma made a suite of short screencast videos to help SPEIR students understand key issues, from ‘how to write a great essay’ and ‘understand marking criteria’ through to ‘the Student Charter’ and ‘sources of pastoral and academic support’. These highly visual and accessible screencasts have been viewed over 1,800 times by Reading students since their introduction. Emma has also used this technology to create detailed, individual video feedback for essays submitted on her Part Three UK Politics module. Students received a six to ten minute MP4 video file showing Emma discussing their essays in detail, with her cursor circling essay text as she talked. Follow on questionnaires have revealed overwhelming student support for this approach to providing feedback.

This work helped Emma to secure major University Teaching and Learning Enhancement Project Funding in May 2014. Emma is leading a small inter-faculty team on a two year project to enable staff and students across the university to engage with screen capture software and mediums like Prezi and Videoscribe to create visual and animated student learning and support resources. As part of this new ‘GRASS’ project watch out for Emma’s innovative two-minute animated module summaries appearing throughout the Summer.

SIXTH FORM CONFERENCE

In October 2014, the Politics Department will be holding a one-day conference for sixth form students and staff. The conference will contain some sessions designed to complement and expand upon material covered in the Politics A-level, and it will have other sessions that go beyond this to introduce elements of international relations that will be less familiar. The overall purpose of the conference is for students to experience a taste of university study. Sixth-form teachers, meanwhile, will have separate sessions with an opportunity to talk to people doing current research in the areas they teach. Our own undergraduates will also have the opportunity to participate, both by running discussions during sessions, and informally during break periods. This will give the sixth-formers a chance to find out more about undergraduate life, whilst giving the undergraduates valuable experience that can contribute to their transferable skills and be drawn upon in personal statements.

The day will consist of a number of talks and also smaller group discussions. The main event will be a simulation of an international crisis. Attendees will be separated into different groups where they will play representatives of various states trying to negotiate a settlement to an emergent issue. There will be a briefing session to prepare them for this exercise. This exercise enables us to share one of the more innovative methods of teaching and assessment that we have been developing in recent years.

For the Department, this is an opportunity to engage in widening participation beyond teaching our own students.

Dr Brian Feltham
STUDENTS’ UNION AWARD AND THE POLITICS RADIO SHOW

Dr Alan Renwick from the Department of Politics and International Relations won this year’s Reading University Students’ Union Lecturer Excellence Award for Outstanding Contribution to Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Science. Many of the student citations mentioned the radio show Alan has created this year on Junction11, Reading University’s student radio station. Here, Alan reflects on why he thinks the show is an exciting addition to the opportunities available to students in the School.

The Politics Show on Junction11 Radio

At the risk of oversimplifying, it is just about fair to say that there are three fundamental things that you need to do to succeed in a Politics degree. You need to study a lot. You need to engage with the world around you. And you need to relate your studies, and the real world, to each other: to see how rigorous analysis and theoretical understanding can help you make sense of what is happening in the world, and to see how evidence gleaned from the world around you helps you develop your own critical perspective on what scholars have written. The first and second of these are the (relatively) easy bits. It is the third that poses the greatest challenges. But the third is also the most important if we are going not just to repeat what others have said, but to generate our own ideas and insights. So we need to do everything we can to promote it further.

That was the basic goal I had in mind when I thought up the idea of a politics radio show. It can be frustrating in seminars that there is rarely time to chat about what is happening in politics and international affairs today and how we can best make sense of these developments. The radio show creates that space. Contributors review the week’s news. Often we also debate major current issues: the debates during our first year have ranged from the politics of the Winter Olympics and the World Cup, through whether prisoners should be able to vote, to the Boko Haram abductions in Nigeria and the rights and wrongs of a free press.

The Politics Show opens up other opportunities too. The students who take part are able to practise presenting and answering questions in a setting where you can’t hide – great preparation for job interviews in the future! We also interview prominent politicians: guests in our first year have included former cabinet ministers Harriet Harman and Lord Adonis, and European election candidates from all five main parties in our region. Lots of Reading academics have contributed insights into a variety of topics. The show encourages close cooperation among students from all years, and between students and staff. We have also had a really great time.

I am delighted that the show will be getting even better in 2014–15 as it is linked to a new module on the Media and Politics. Because students will be gaining credit for their appearances on the show, they will be able to devote more time to developing in-depth reports. They will work in teams to prepare segments for the show, and will have great freedom in the topics they choose to focus on. This will allow them to deepen their engagement with contemporary politics and also develop a range of really valuable practical skills.

So far as we are aware, this is the first module of its kind anywhere in the UK.

Associate Professor Alan Renwick
NEW MODULES

Crime and punishment: theoretical approaches
2013–14 saw the beginnings of a shake-up in the Department of Politics and International Relations’ political theory teaching for Part Three students. While old favourites (such as Feminist Political Theory, and War, Peace and International Ethics) remain available to students, two new modules (Crime and Punishment: Theoretical Approaches, and Toleration: Theory and Practice) were introduced this year, with further modules on Marx and Social Justice also planned.

Associate Professor Patrick Tomlin’s module on Crime and Punishment was extremely popular, with almost sixty students signing up in its first year. The course is a research-led module, exploring various philosophical puzzles about the criminal justice system. These include: whether and why we should punish people, and what justifies punishment; what principles should inform and constrain the content of the criminal law; the relationship between criminal law and morality; whether and why we should punish attempted murderers less than successful murderers; and whether we can ever punish for a crime before it is committed. Student feedback indicates the new module was very well-received. Dr Tomlin is looking forward to running the module again next year, and introducing another cohort to these fascinating (and very important) puzzles.

Toleration: theory and practice
Professor Catriona McKinnon introduced a new Part Three module this year, examining theories of toleration and case studies showing them at work. Designed as a text-focused reading group, this module enables students to explore key texts in contemporary debates in depth, and to discuss what difference the approaches they contain might make to the political and social realms. The module builds on Professor McKinnon’s longstanding expertise in toleration.

Topical economics: lectures, conversations and the Economics Society
Contemporary relevance is equally important in Economics. The students and staff of the Department of Economics have been very fortunate over the last two years in the growth of the Economics Society. Its resurgence began in 2012–13 under the leadership of Chris Daly, Samantha Crawley and Will Stevens, who saw it as a means of increasing communication between different cohorts of students, and between students and staff. This development continued in 2013–14 with the formation of an enthusiastic committee under the leadership of energetic president, James Cutlan, and the encouragement of Head of Department, Marina Della Giusta.

The Society began the Economics Lecture Series in October 2013. At the invitation of the Society, six members of staff gave talks on material related to their own research, with a focus on contemporary and often newsworthy topics. The idea was to be relevant and address issues of current interest from an economics perspective – or at least be entertaining! The audience was anyone interested in economics, with a provisional intention of providing students of economics with additional insight into the everyday relevance of the subject. So, if you wanted to know why you’ll never be able to afford to retire, Mark Guzman had the answer. For those who wondered why men earn more than women, Giovanni Razzu explained. Anyone interested in the costs and benefits of immigration could hear Andi Nygaard’s analysis, reviewing the subject away from the emotive exchanges of poorly informed public debate. But not all economic transactions are as easily discussed as these. Matters of trust and stigma arise in many situations and have an impact on outcomes and policy – Marina Della Giusta tackled what many find to be difficult issues in her talk. And if you found yourself wondering if things have ever been worse, you would have enjoyed Ken Dark’s illuminating final talk of the series, discussing the way things were, (or might have been), in distant times. An asteroid strike on the earth came into it somewhere.

Following advice from the Society, the Department of Economics also launched its ‘Conversations’ series of weekly lunchtime meetings, open to all students and staff to discuss topical issues from an economics perspective. Introduced briefly by one person, the sessions are an open-ended and informal opportunity for students and staff to meet and talk about their common areas of interest, economics. Each session focussed on a current news item. This year, we discussed the structure of the football industry, the floods, housing policy, energy pricing, and the break-up of UK banks. We had a particularly memorable conversation about the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) Green Budget, concerning the economic context of the budget and the appropriateness of policy options that were being suggested. This discussion was led by one of our eventual end-of-year prize-winners in economics, Ian Cho, who had attended the IFS briefing the previous week.

The Conversations also provided the background for the first running of the Peter Hart Essay Competition, another suggestion arising from discussions between the Society and the department. The late Professor Peter Hart was a long-standing and highly respected member of the Department of Economics whose memory it is a pleasure to record in the naming of this prize. It was won this year by Sergen Bachceci.

The Economics Society has a new committee in place for 2014–15 and we look forward to more fruitful discussions and initiatives in the year ahead.

Associate Professor Simon Burke
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

AWARDS

Our well-attended graduation awards ceremony, held in the grounds of the Museum of English Rural Life, was blessed with sunshine again this year. We were proud to celebrate the success of our high-achieving undergraduates.

In Economics, Annie Morton won the award for the highest marks achieved by a finalist, whilst Isobel Dench, Jack Wicks, Melissa Fletcher and James Moore received Academic Excellence prizes. The Head of Department prize for Exceptional Contribution and Academic Engagement went to Ian Cho. Outstanding Contribution to the Department awards were given to James Moore (his second prize), James Cutlan and Florence Kingett. Sergen Bahceci won the Peter Hart Essay prize, and Adam Pasierbek won an award for Academic Initiative.

In Politics and International Relations, prizes were awarded in memory of the Politics Department’s first head, Peter Campbell. The top finalist was Daniela Espro. An Academic Excellence prize and award for the highest mark in a dissertation were given to Jonathan Hulks. Further Academic Excellence awards were received by Sergen Bahceci (who also received a prize in Economics), Alice Romano, Alice Doran, Anna O’Mahoney and Max James. Outstanding Contribution to the Department prizes were given to Florian Marcus, Ermela Hoxha and Richard Manchester.

CONTINUING SUCCESSES OF OUR ALUMNI

Congratulations are due to two of our graduates, Peter Paine and Susan Njambi-Szlapka, who have recently been successful at the University of Oxford.

Peter graduated from Reading with a BA in Politics and International Relations in 2012, and has just completed an MSc in Russian and East European Studies at Oxford. Peter says: ‘My degree from Reading University provided me with a broad base of academic literacy that has proven invaluable to my Masters level research. Particularly towards the latter stages of my undergraduate course, I was encouraged to pursue my own academic interests. These interests, developed during my Masters degree, will ultimately form the basis for a future doctoral level research project.’ Peter will be working in London over the coming year, whilst he plans applications for a PhD.

Susan also graduated in 2012 with the Reading BA in Politics and International Relations. Since then she has worked in Africa with Germany’s Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). She has focused during this time on three projects relating to the Millennium Development Goals, where she researched and wrote about women’s involvement in participatory budgeting. She has just secured one of Oxford’s prestigious scholarships to study for an MSc in Evidence Based Social Policy and Policy Evaluation. This is a terrific achievement and we wish her all the very best for her future studies.
MODEL UNITED NATIONS MODULE – LEUVEN CONFERENCE

It was a pleasure to lead the successful University of Reading delegation at the International Model United Nations Conference in Leuven, Belgium. For those unaware of Model United Nations (MUN), it is an activity that is gaining popularity each year. A typical Model United Nations session involves the simulation of one of the organs of the United Nations, such as the Security Council, the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), the Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC), or Disarmament and Security (DISEC). Each Committee has its specific focus upon a wide range of topics. Delegates are tasked with representing the foreign policy of a particular nation in regards to a particular topic. For example, a delegate could be tasked to represent the United States on the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in conventional combat, or have the glorious task of representing the infamous diplomatic rhetoric of North Korea on nuclear disarmament.

No matter the topic or country, a delegate is put in a position that is usually unfamiliar. Delegates have to prepare thorough background reading on the topic at hand and their country’s position on the issue. This often forces individuals to see part of a debate that they may otherwise not have considered. It also uses the delegate’s knowledge and understanding of International Relations to apply and practice theoretical concepts of sovereignty, balance of power and gauging how international institutions really work in a world of self-interested state actors.

Reading’s Model United Nations module prepares students for just that. Students take lectures designed to understand the institutions and mechanisms of the United Nations. They also learn about its history and formulation and, most importantly, its functions. Students also develop their understanding of the rules of procedure, as to how a Model United Nations debate actually works.

On the surface, it is quite daunting; there are many rules, often pedantic, to absorb in order to participate in the debate. Nevertheless, the learning curve is generous, and students were able to participate in debate internally at the University. The simulation that took place at the University was on the hypothetical use of chemical weapons, initially by an unknown actor, in the Syrian conflict during the month of November. Here students were able to learn the rules of procedure and understand what is expected from them as delegates. Moreover, it gave students ample preparation for the demands of the conference in Belgium.

To have the opportunity to attend a Model United Nations conference in Belgium, regarded as the heart of Europe, is an incredible opportunity for any student of International Relations.

‘To have the opportunity to attend a Model United Nations conference in Belgium, regarded as the heart of Europe, is an incredible opportunity for any student of International Relations.’

Bradley Cole (BA War, Peace and International Relations)
ANNUAL ECONOMETRIC GAME IN AMSTERDAM

Four of our students represented the University of Reading at the annual Econometric Game in Amsterdam in April 2014. PhD student Subham Kailthya led the team, composed of fellow PhD Despoina Kentrou and third-year undergraduates Annie Morton and James Moore, across the channel to pit their wits against universities from around the world. The Econometric Game has grown out of humble beginnings, as a Dutch venture, into a global enterprise with Harvard and Seoul Universities represented alongside the best from Europe, including Oxford and Cambridge from the UK. Game rules require that a team must be of, at most, two PhD students, with the remaining two spots taken usually by Masters students, probationary research students, or undergraduates.

Participating teams are set a case and are required to present their response to it by the end of the first day. The case was on ‘Poverty Analysis with incomplete consumption data’. There were two objectives: (a) to forecast consumption based on available socio-economic variables of household members from the core questionnaire of the Indonesian National Socioeconomic Survey; and (b) to estimate measures of poverty given a pre-defined poverty line. The broader theme of the objective was to address the problem of trying to generate reliable estimates for vital data-sets using fewer resources when data collection can be prohibitively costly.

Team Reading worked furiously on the case, estimating the structural relationship using ordinary least squares methods, and used the derived coefficient estimates to predict future consumption. The current and the predicted consumption data was used to estimate two widely used measures of poverty: the headcount ratio and the poverty gap.

The competition was fierce and only a handful of teams made it to the final. Sadly Reading was eliminated at this stage, but the eliminated teams took the opportunity to enjoy some sightseeing with their fellow competitors. All the team, and particularly our undergraduates Annie and James, reported that they found the whole experience hugely enriching as they were able to meet fellow students from all around the world and experience a wonderful city in Amsterdam.

Dr James Reade

STUDY ABROAD

by Amy McWilliams
(BA Politics and International Relations)

My application for studying abroad at the University of Ottawa, Canada, was submitted as soon as I discovered I could spend part of my second year in this beautiful city. As I was only away for one semester, I wanted to make the most of my time studying away from Reading. I felt at home instantly, as I was surrounded by a fantastic group of people from all over the world. I was also able to study a range of topics that I otherwise would not have been able to learn about if I had not studied abroad. This enabled me to widen my political knowledge of certain countries and learn new skills and techniques that will help me with the rest of my degree.

The University of Ottawa gave me the opportunity to incorporate knowledge of politics from my home country, Northern Ireland, with class material taught to me in Canada. In our spare time, friends and I walked and skated on the world’s largest outdoor ice rink, the frozen Rideau Canal, experiencing some of Canada’s unique and delicious foods, poutine and maple syrup, as well as taking a trip to New York City when we had time off from University. Studying abroad was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I had an incredible time living in a completely different country and climate. I loved every minute of my time at the University of Ottawa and have truly made friends for life. I would recommend for anyone to do the same because the memories made are extremely special.

VICE-CHANCELLOR’S CHINA SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

by Piers Waldron
(BA Politics and International Relations)

After a successful application to the newly founded Vice-Chancellor’s China Scheme in March this year, I was awarded the fully funded Scholarship to study Chinese Government, and the increasing Chinese impact upon the world economy, at China’s oldest university: Peking University. The scholarship provided a unique opportunity to further develop my intellectual and academic understanding of the Chinese political system in all of its diversity, as well as to view first hand China’s transition from great power to socialist superpower, in the heart of Beijing.

At the international summer school program, I was thrilled to find myself studying international relations from a Chinese perspective. My course aimed at providing us with a Chinese view on topics including Taiwan, Tibet, US relations, especially over the issue of containment, and the political effects of China’s awakening and rise to prominence.
The school had a truly diverse mix of international students, from institutions such as Yale, Stanford, Oxford, University of North Carolina and a combination of European universities, with American and Dutch students dominating my classes by way of nationality. This provided a combination of views, opinions, and starkly different perspectives.

As well as my classes, I used the opportunity to explore all that I could in Beijing. I visited the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, Yuanming and Haidian gardens, the Lama temple, the temple of Heaven and many more. The Great Wall was a special moment for myself, as I felt a connection with its history instantly. Furthermore, the views from the Great Wall are simply breathtaking. I found the Yuanming gardens particularly beautiful with its lakes, grounds and stone ruins. Peking University, attended by Mao, was enlightening and I learnt significantly more than I believed I would. I am incredibly grateful to the scholarship for the opportunities it provided to explore arguably the most interesting of the emerging economies.

Piers Waldron is one of six recipients of a scholarship to attend summer school in Beijing. You can read more about Piers’ experiences on his blog at http://piersww.tumblr.com

WORK PLACEMENT REVIEW

by Vicki Wiles (Placement Officer)

This year more students than ever before have chosen to take part in work placements as part of their degree studies, for which they receive academic credit. These placements have helped the students to extend their academic knowledge, applying it in a practical way in a diverse range of placement settings.

40 students in the School have taken part in placements this year, including one year and six month internships, work experience for our stand-alone module, and two-week placements for the British Government and Politics module. Students have also completed placements as part of their MA in Public Policy. The feedback from the organisations has been excellent. Placement hosts have praised students’ ‘can do’ approach, their eagerness to learn, and their contribution. This placement success has led to further opportunities as a number of students have been invited back to their placement organisations to do summer internships.

Placement-based learning counts towards students’ final degree result and will certainly help when it comes to making decisions about future career paths. Many students have also taken part in volunteering and summer internships that do not count towards their final degree, but will certainly enhance their employability skills.

In the Christmas and Easter holidays, over 30 students took the mini placement option within the British Government and Politics Module. A wide range of interesting placements took place in MPs offices, both constituency and at the Houses of Parliament, with Conservative, Labour and the Liberal Democrat MPs. Students also shadowed councillors, spent time in local schools, and in councils, charities, pressure groups and internships with political lobbyists. Several students took advantage of existing local links that the Politics and International Relations Department has with MPs and councillors in the Reading area. New links were also developed with local placement settings, for example Labour South East Regional Office in Reading hosted its first British Government and Politics student this year.

Essene Tighe took part in a placement as part of the stand-alone placement module, volunteering for Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) in rural India. Several students took the placement option as part of the MA in Public Policy, working for councils locally and in London.

We look forward to welcoming back our year-out placement students for their final year of study in 2014–15. They are returning from The Department of Work and Pensions and Champions Life Academy. In addition, Chris Bodger is returning to Reading after combining study abroad with a six-month work placement at Rolls Royce.

We wish luck to all those students taking part in summer internships and beginning their year-long placements this summer. In particular, we have 11 students starting their year-out placements; three students will be working as part of the Government Economic Service placement scheme at the Home Office, The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and The Office for National Statistics. Two students will be working at UBS, one student at Lloyds Bank, one student at Grant Thornton and three students are going into the high tech sector with IBM, Fujitsu and Bottomline Technologies. Another student is going into the retail sector on the trainee management programme with Majestic Wines. We are delighted with the diversity of excellent placements and sectors that these students have achieved and look forward to sharing their experiences in next year’s Annual Review.

The testimonials included in this year’s review document the work experience opportunities students have taken part in over the last year.
STUDY ABROAD AND WORK PLACEMENT
by Chris Bodger (BSc Economics with Year Abroad)

My year out from Reading wasn’t the typical one. It involved a semester studying in the USA and six months working for one of the most prestigious car companies in the world. I guess you could say I was lucky; things just fell into place and the result was an unforgettable year, which I’ll always look back on with fond memories.

To start at the beginning, Study Abroad wasn’t even on my radar until the second year. Then, things moved quickly and I was able to secure a place at Ole Miss, the University of Mississippi. Set in the picturesque town of Oxford, Ole Miss is pretty special in many ways. All the international students stayed together, a few minutes off campus, so a lot of socialising between the various nationalities goes on. The locals are really friendly and the British accent always helps! The majority of the US students are keen to talk and it’s a great chance to find out about their lifestyle and University life versus how things happen back in the UK. Football games are something else; even if the actual sport never really grabbed me, the atmosphere and experience that goes with it is incredible. Imagine a whole university turning up to watch with a massive pre-game party to kick things off, and that’s pretty much how things go down.

It was genuinely one of the best experiences I’ve ever had. Highlights for me include travelling the west coast and the ridiculous number of new people I met there. Your semester will fly by and before you know it you’ll be back in the UK. Enjoy every moment and remember to have fun!

After returning from the US, I spent Christmas at home and started my placement in January, working for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars in Sales Channel Development. Located in West Sussex, just a few minutes from the world famous Goodwood estate, home of the Festival of Speed and Revival, the Rolls-Royce factory is where every Phantom, Ghost and Wraith is produced.

My role was within Dealer Development, supporting the dealer network. This encompassed a variety of tasks, from dealer reporting to contractual paperwork. Dealer Development oversees the complete global network, covering day-to-day support, alongside the process of appointing new dealers and identifying new markets to expand into. The work was varied and interesting; a good level of attention to detail and a strong process-driven workflow are key, but my manager was very accommodating and everyone made me feel welcome and helped out if I had any questions.

The office I worked in was on the other side of the production line from the entrance so every day I walked past customers’ cars as they were being assembled. It’s a very special process seeing a Roll-Royce being produced and it really brings some context to the work you do when you see the finished product leaving the line. Working with a great team, in what must be one of the most idyllic parts of the country, really made it a pleasure and honour to have been able to spend time at RRMC. My six months flew by, leaving some great memories and wrapping up a pretty awesome year for me.
SANDWICH YEAR AT THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (DWP)
by Chris Tucker
(BSc Economics and Econometrics, with working year)

I was keen to do a summer placement between my second and third years and wanted to use some of my econometric as well as my economic skills and knowledge. After approaching my personal tutor for advice I decided to apply to the Government Economic Service for a 12 month sandwich year placement. After a successful application and interview I managed to secure a year-long placement at the Department for Work and Pensions.

I joined the Universal Credit Delivery Analysis team, but until my first day I had only heard the term Universal Credit (UC) – I had no idea what it was. My first few weeks were spent getting up to speed with UC and the benefit system, and getting my head around civil service life.

My main area of work was on a cost modelling survey which aimed to forecast how much Housing Benefit would cost to administer as an element of Universal Credit. This gave me the opportunity to interact with local authority representatives, which forced me to learn to present data to an audience with no analytical background, a skill I had previously little experience with. One of my other projects involved estimating the costs of providing services to support people with complicated circumstances (such as the homeless, ex-convicts and people who require 24 hour care) to claim Universal Credit. I was also given the responsibility of starting my own project from scratch, investigating the number of calls, and reasons why people contact the UC telephony services.

Over the year I was able to get involved with many other interesting events. I set up and ran a DWP placement students’ five a-side football league, organised a charity football tournament for teams of DWP staff, and helped organise a charity table-tennis event for my directorate, which was very well received by all.

One of my highlights was being given the opportunity to teach various areas of economics to classes of analysts and policy colleagues with no economics background.

Throughout the year, the support of my line manager, team members and other placement students was the key to my enjoyment of the placement, enabling me to get the most out of it. I would definitely encourage other students to apply for a placement and would hugely recommend the Government Economic Service as a great place to spend a year. The development opportunities, the chance to actually use economics in work, and the great student community, make the Department for Work and Pensions a fantastic place to work! My placement year has given me an insight into what I want to do after graduating and I will definitely be applying to the Government Economic Service Fast Stream. However I am very much looking forward to my final year of university life!

WORK PLACEMENT WITH A LOCAL MP
by Oliver Johnson
(BA War, Peace and International Relations)

I decided to go on a placement back in my home town, working in my MP’s office. It was an exciting time because my MP, David Heath of Frome and Somerton was stepping down and a new Liberal Democrat candidate, Sarah Yong, was selected to hopefully replace him in the general election. I exploited this opportunity and chose to research why and how people become politicians. It was a very interesting and insightful experience to have, as I learnt so much about the candidate and campaign process, as well as the inner workings of an MP’s office. I was involved in every task from answering phone calls from concerned constituents, to attending meetings with the public and private individuals, as well as canvassing door-to-door and signing petitions on local issues.

My main achievement was successfully planning a 110 village tour for the new candidate to go around the constituency and get her name and policies out there among potential voters. I am in fact returning to the office in the summer to help out with, and oversee the tour and make sure my careful planning goes smoothly, along with the rest of Sarah’s campaign, all the way through until election day.
LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIPS ANALYSIS TEAM IN THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS

by Aarti Sehdev
(BA Business Economics, with Placement)

In August 2013 as part of my industrial placement, I had the privilege to experience the life of a government economist at the Department for Work and Pensions. Having been placed in the Labour Market Partnerships division within DWP, I was immediately required to utilise the core microeconomic knowledge learnt at university to provide analytical support to policy decisions within my division. At first it was a little daunting, especially because I did not know what was expected from me. However the support from my line manager and colleagues helped me settle in to the role quickly and easily.

During the year I worked on various projects which were both technical (as I was in a team of analysts) and non-technical, as we worked closely with policy colleagues. One of my first tasks, after a lot of introductory reading, was to provide labour market briefing for the minister’s office on the skills level and impacts of skills for benefit claimants. This was done through undertaking empirical analysis on the labour force survey data, as well as looking through DWP’s existing evidence base.

My work got more interesting as I settled into the role. I provided analytical support for a pilot study announced in the Autumn Statement and was the analytical expert for a specific policy, which meant that any analytical requests DWP received from other departments on this policy was my responsibility. One of the highlights of my placement was that I had the opportunity to meet the Minister for Employment in person. This was a great opportunity for me as I was able to showcase the work around the latest employer skills survey and the skills of young people, and was able to get direct feedback from the Minister for Employment, as well as her views on the topic.

During the placement I learnt a lot, not just professionally, but for my own personal development too. The civil service do consider personal learning and development opportunities, and offer courses that support the development of skills. These courses range from Excel and statistics courses to less technical courses such as communicating with ministers and managers. There were also a vast array of seminars and public debates that were available for attendance at HM Treasury and the House of Lords.

Overall, I’m very glad that I took a year out on a placement and have found it to be both a privilege and a pleasure that this was at DWP. On personal reflection, I have found the year to be extremely insightful and would encourage anyone who would like to see the real work that economists do, to apply. I have left DWP having built various professional contacts and gained marketable skills that can be used in the public and private sector.

PLACEMENT FOR BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS MODULE

by Jessica Jaensch
(BA Politics and International Relations)

It always intrigues me to hear what young people have to say about politics. Furthermore, I have a great interest in feminism and, since my secondary school was an all-girls school (in Colchester), I thought it would be fascinating to conduct some research there for my British Government and Politics placement.

My research had two aims; firstly, to learn what girls of different ages thought about feminism and feminist issues including the definition of feminism, ‘lad’ culture, feminist pressure groups, and the representation of women in politics, the media, and the workplace. Secondly, to ascertain whether providing information on the subject would make a measurable difference to their opinions.

The bulk of my research consisted of a survey I created for all 250 students. They completed the survey at the start of the week and then I gave a mini-lecture during a whole-school assembly on the topics within the survey a few days later. The students were given the survey to complete again following the mini-lecture in order to measure any changes. In addition to this data, I also conducted a focus group interview with ten students, two from each year group. The students were open and honest, explaining that, while some felt strongly about feminism prior to the lecture, others were unaware of certain issues. The main conclusion from my research showed that unbiased information on feminism does alter the opinions of girls, indicating the need for clearer information on the subject in schools and the media.

This placement allowed me to get a taste of what it is like to conduct, collate, and analyse primary data. Whilst doing so is not easy, it is both stimulating and rewarding. Moreover, it allowed me to develop the skills I require in order to follow my desired career after graduating from university.
Volunteer experience in rural India

by Essene Tighe (BA Politics and International Relations)

In the summer of 2013 I spent three months in rural India in the state of Rajasthan, where I worked with women from low castes to help them build small profitable businesses. I had travelled before I started my degree, working with an aid organisation in Kenya, and wanted to gain further experience in development work, with the hope of working for an NGO. I was sent by an organisation called Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and worked for Prayas, a small partner organisation in India specializing in the Indian health and welfare system. The three month placement I undertook was fully funded through a government funded programme that VSO are taking part in, called ICS. This covered all pre-departure costs and an in-country allowance. I was accepted onto the placement after a written application and a day’s interview in London. I had to fundraise £800 as a contribution to the cost.

We were put through extensive training both in the UK and in Delhi before starting any work. The placement involved working in an area of health, livelihood or education and once in the country we were assigned projects in our community. Nine UK volunteers and I lived together in a small campus overlooking the village of Devgarh. Our home for three months was very basic but we were surrounded by miles of beautiful farmland and lakes. With a departure date of June, just after first year exams, monsoon season in India was in full swing.

We were each assigned an Indian counterpart, who would be our language and cultural lifeline while we were there. My counterpart, Khushbu, had worked with the previous cycle of western volunteers. She is a very confident, westernised Indian from a very traditional family, with dreams of becoming a bank manager. We worked with Self Help Groups; small co-ops of lower caste women who save money each month in case of financial struggle. We worked with 44 women delivering informative workshops and training sessions. Daily work included planning, practising and delivering these workshops.

The experience was extremely daunting, with little practice in leading workshops and all had to be translated into their rural dialect. A working day sometimes lasted from six in the morning until six at night, with unreliable public transport and long walks between villages.

Although the main purpose was to work, we did not go without crazy bus journeys and Tuk-Tuk rides, a weekend in the big city of Jaipur, an elephant sighting, monkey bites, 100 different temples, many religious ceremonies, lots of sari shopping and an Indian MacDonald’s with no beef burgers! I will always be grateful for being able to experience raw Indian culture, meet interesting people and travel to villages that westerners have never before been to. I have to mention the food briefly as it was one of the areas that I struggled with the most. Rice, lentils, and chapatti was the extent of our diet for the three months and a banana or a piece of cucumber from the local market was a weekly treat!

My time in India was extremely challenging, but I learnt a huge amount about how to work within a business and more importantly a team. I gained invaluable skills in communication, leadership and the administration that is very important to a working NGO. Although I struggled with the drastic gender divide and experienced inequality myself, the three months gave me time to discover the career path I would really like to pursue and opened my eyes to the difficulties with working in development work and different government systems. Cultural differences were often very shocking, particularly the young age that girls have to marry, but with the hope of going into foreign correspondence, I am now confident in my ability to cope in new surroundings.

This experience will be great for my career development. There are many benefits to an overseas placement; gaining life experience and independence that would not necessarily come from staying in the UK. I would advise anyone who is interested in undertaking a similar placement to go to your host country with an open mind, motivation and make the most of each experience while you are there, as the three months will be gone before you know it and you will be back writing essays!
VISIT BY HM TREASURY TO THE ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT

In January, Professor Giovanni Razzu organised a one-day workshop between the Department of Economics, colleagues from the Henley Business School, and HM Treasury. Senior officials, mostly from Treasury’s Growth and Productivity Team, but also the Director General for Public Spending and the Chief Microeconomist, visited the Department to discuss specific issues relevant to the Treasury’s work on growth and productivity.

The morning session was devoted to presentations and discussion on housing issues, while the afternoon focussed on entrepreneurship and foreign direct investment. Professor Geoff Meen introduced the key areas of housing research undertaken in the Department of Economics, and presented evidence on the key economic and social issues associated with the need to expand home ownership for first time buyers. Professor Michael Ball presented evidence on the key characteristics of the UK house-building industry and how this affects the supply of housing.

Presentations in the afternoon session were by Professor Andrew Godley, who provided an historical overview on British entrepreneurship and its most relevant determinants of success and failure, and by Professor Mark Casson on foreign direct investment, covering both the theory and the most relevant empirical evidence. All presentations had a strong focus on policy implications and considerations for Treasury officials to take away and reflect upon. It was a successful workshop, much appreciated by Treasury officials, who found ‘the presentations and discussions intellectually stimulating and policy relevant’.

Professor Giovanni Razzu

ENDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

In June 2014, the Foreign Secretary, William Hague, and actress and Special envoy of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Angelina Jolie, jointly hosted an international summit to galvanise the international community into addressing the challenge of sexual violence in conflict. The summit brought together governments (including almost 80 Ministers), international organisations, NGOs, and academics to raise awareness of the problem, to identify responses, and to commit the international community to addressing it.

UN-led peacekeeping missions are important actors in the fight against sexual violence in conflict, as they are increasingly deployed in areas where such offences are prevalent – for example in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Darfur, or more recently in the Central African Republic. 95% of UN peacekeeping missions are mandated to protect civilians, including against sexual violence. However, addressing sexual violence is complicated by the fact that while most conflict affected countries have higher levels of sexual violence, its nature, and who the main perpetrators are, differs widely across conflicts – from rebels, to government militias, to family members. In many cases it is not rape by soldiers and rebels that is the main problem, but a dramatic increase in incidences of rape by partners. Addressing this can therefore be a major challenge to peacekeeping forces. In addition, peacekeeping forces themselves have at times been implicated in the sexual exploitation and abuse – most notoriously in the ‘sex for food’ scandal implicating UN peacekeepers in Liberia and the Congo.

Professor Dominik Zaum, from the Department of Politics and International Relations, was invited to participate in the discussions on how peacekeeping forces can address sexual violence, and prevent exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. The discussions highlighted the need for better training of peacekeepers, and for a
better understanding of the drivers of sexual violence in conflict-affected countries; but also for more accountability for members of peace operations who engage in abuse and exploitation and might not face criminal prosecutions in their home countries.

The summit discussions highlight the important contribution that further research into the character and drivers of violence, including sexual violence, in conflicts, and into examining and evaluating different responses – both military and civilian – can make, as such knowledge will be at the heart of devising more effective responses to the problem.

Professor Dominik Zaum

PLANNING THE RAILWAYS

The York Festival of Ideas recently (June 2014) hosted a debate on ‘Planning the railways’ between Mark Casson, Professor of Economics at Reading, and Clare Moriarty, Director General of Rail at the Department for Transport. Professor Casson recalled how Victorian railways in Britain had been promoted using private enterprise but within a framework of regulation by the state. Railways had to be authorised by Act of Parliament because they involved the compulsory purchase of land. Parliament applied an early form of social cost benefit to the railways, quizzing railway promoters on the traffic they expected to carry, the cost of building their line, and the environmental damage it would cause. What Parliament did not consider was the relationship between each railway line and the other parts of the railway system. As a result, railway promotion was dominated by local rather than national considerations. Professor Casson claimed that if national considerations had been taken into account then, we would now have a better railway system. There would be improved cross-country routes, less emphasis on lines to London, and loop lines instead of dead-end branches; all of this would allow more flexible operation.

Clare Moriarty discussed the privatisation of the railway network in 1994, and its aftermath. She identified three stages in the development of the system after privatisation: initial chaos, when unforeseen complications emerged; the ‘lost years’ when infrastructure was in the hands of a private company, Railtrack, and the most recent period when government began to exercise a guiding hand. This guiding hand was reflected in the nationalisation of infrastructure through Network Rail, improvements in signalling, station rebuilding (as at Reading), and centralised train procurement. Ms Moriarty suggested that the railway system was now in good shape, but that further investment was needed to meet the travel demands of a growing population, to switch freight from road to rail, and to bring the different regions of the country closer together in terms of travel time.

A lively discussion ensued, involving academics, policy-makers, railway professionals and members of the public. Issues raised included the need for longer trains, better timetabling, a simpler range of tickets at lower prices, and a more equitable distribution of rail investment across regions. It is hoped to continue the discussion further, but this may have to wait until after the next election, when the political priorities of the new government are clear.

Professor Mark Casson
How Should We Reform the Constitution?

The Scottish independence referendum has ensured that 2014–15 has been a busy year for our resident expert on referendums and constitutional reform, Dr Alan Renwick. Here he reflects on some of the big issues.

Scottish voters have spent the past year weighing the pros and cons of independence. Those of us who live in England – even those of us who are exiled Scots – don’t have a vote. But the result of the referendum – which you will probably know by the time you read these words – will have a profound effect on everyone throughout the United Kingdom. If Scots vote to leave, the character of the rest of the UK will be deeply changed. Even if Scots choose to stay in, the vote will increase pressure for reconfiguring Scotland’s relationship with the other parts of these islands, with knock-on effects elsewhere.

In either of these scenarios, some fundamental thinking will be needed about the constitution of the United Kingdom. If Scotland goes it alone, will the current relationships among Wales, Northern Ireland, and England remain sustainable? If Scotland stays but gains greater powers, how will the West Lothian question – on why Scottish MPs at Westminster can vote on English matters while English MPs cannot vote on Scottish matters – be answered? Should there be an English Parliament, or English regional assemblies, or stronger local government, or ‘English votes for English laws’, or some combination of these?

There are no easy answers to such questions. What we need is a process to generate answers that will deserve and gain wide respect from both politicians and ordinary citizens.

In either of these scenarios, some fundamental thinking will be needed about the constitution of the United Kingdom. If Scotland goes it alone, will the current relationships among Wales, Northern Ireland, and England remain sustainable? If Scotland stays but gains greater powers, how will the West Lothian question – on why Scottish MPs at Westminster can vote on English matters while English MPs cannot vote on Scottish matters – be answered? Should there be an English Parliament, or English regional assemblies, or stronger local government, or ‘English votes for English laws’, or some combination of these?

There are no easy answers to such questions. What we need is a process to generate answers that will deserve and gain wide respect from both politicians and ordinary citizens. But what should that process look like? I have been investigating a variety of constitutional reform processes in order to consider how each of them might perform. The options range from traditional, very exclusive processes such as committees of the great and the good, through various forms of appointed or elected assembly, to the highly innovative form of a ‘citizens’ assembly’, comprising randomly selected citizens from around the country. None of these are perfect, but some are definitely better than others.

My pamphlet After the Referendum: Options for a Constitutional Convention, launched in Parliament in April, explores the evidence on all of these options and draws out recommendations as to what would work best in the UK. I argue that we should follow the example of the recent Irish Constitutional Convention, which comprised a majority of randomly selected ordinary citizens and a minority of politicians chosen by the various political parties. This is the process that would be most likely to generate a well-reasoned constitutional settlement that would command the respect of politicians and citizens alike.

The pamphlet is available on the Constitution Society’s website, so you can go there to find out more!

www.consoc.org.uk

Associate Professor Alan Renwick
DID HOME SUPPORT HELP OR HINDER MURRAY’S WIMBLEDON CHANCES?

Home advantage is writ large in sporting folklore – partisan crowds cheering the home favourite to victory. After all, Team GB won a record-breaking haul of medals at London 2012, Australia turned an away Ashes defeat into a demolition of England once back in front of an Aussie crowd, and Andy Murray rode a tide of support to win Wimbledon last year.

But academic research suggests that, outside of subjectively-judged sports (such as gymnastics or diving, where outcomes are decided by judges’ scores), there is no consistent evidence of home advantage in individual, non-team sports, despite appearing prevalent throughout Olympic history. Research by James Reade (Economics) with Liam Lenten of La Trobe University in Australia, investigates home advantage in tennis, using a dataset including almost every men’s singles match since the major tournaments became ‘open’ to professionals in 1968 – about a quarter of a million contests in total.

Put simply, if two sports contestants of equal strength face each other 1,000 times, each contestant should win 500 times. Home advantage says the player playing at home wins more than 50% of the time. There are at least two forces at work when sports contestants perform at home: the ‘hope’ effect, helping local heroes, and the ‘expectations’ effect, hindering them. These two effects counteract each other, providing a ‘bliss point’ for contestants – where home advantage is maximised, as the hope effect most outweighs the expectations effect.

Why do economists care about this? Increasingly, economists view tournaments as a potential alternative model to explain pay structures in firms. Rather than reflecting their abilities to affect the revenue of their companies, some argue, the pay of CEOs reflects their victory in the ‘tournament’ to become CEO, with their prize a fat corporate salary.

Much has changed in men’s tennis since 1968. Back then, less than a thousand matches were played each year in just 13 tournaments for a combined prize pot of just US$88,000. In 2007, more than 8,000 matches were played in 65 tournaments, with US$67m at stake. Tie-breaks have been added, racquets are now radically different, and the top players, now multi-millionaires, make more money from sponsorship deals than from playing tennis. Despite these changes, we can still make some remarkably strong statements about home advantage in the sport.

Very superficially, there is no home advantage at all. In fact, players playing at home are 2–4% less likely to win. This, though, may be as a result of wild cards – where tournament organisers give ‘free entry’ to players, often from the home country, who would not qualify purely on merit. These players will therefore be more likely to lose. It is also before other important factors are taken into account: age, experience, rank, right or left handedness, height, weight, seeding and so on. Once these are considered, we in effect create a match between two almost evenly matched tennis players. Even with this, home advantage remains very weak, albeit giving a tiny statistical advantage.

Perhaps more interesting, is that despite increases in prize money, media attention, sponsorship deals and so on, there has been virtually no change in almost half a century. Despite costs and delays caused by travel being vastly reduced in the intervening 46 years, it seems hitting the road is just as unlikely to affect the game of today’s tennis pros as it did those of the late 1960s.

Dr James Reade
LEVERHULME TRUST SUCCESSES

Professor Catriona McKinnon has been awarded a prestigious two-year Research Fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust to work on the project ‘Climate Change as Postericide’. The idea of postericide is entirely new to political and legal philosophy: it denotes conduct creating systematic and serious risks of extinction for the human race. Professor McKinnon will write a monograph defending the idea that such conduct ought to be recognised as a crime in international criminal law. This will be her second book on climate justice. This continues the Department of Politics and International Relations’ success in obtaining Leverhulme Research Fellowships, with two other members of staff presently holding such positions.

This includes a Fellowship held by Patrick Porter, who completed a book project, ‘The Global Village Myth: Distance, War and the Limits of Power.’ This takes aim at Globalism, and the dangerous policies it tends towards. Conversations with students and colleagues about the nature of security in the ‘post 9/11’ world stimulated the idea. We often hear the idea that technology kills distance. In the field of security, ‘Globalists’ often tell us that technology has shrunk the world into a fragile and dangerous place.

A revolution in information, communication and technology, it is argued, has reduced the transaction costs of interaction over space and linked the world to the point where it has shrunk or collapsed distance, and making the United States and its allies increasingly vulnerable to violent threats. Predators, Globalists fear, have easy access, laying waste to our cities through nuclear terrorism or an ‘Electronic Pearl Harbor,’ using the web to learn the dark arts of mass destruction and networking worldwide.

But how true is it? Although technology may accelerate movement and compress physical space, it does not necessarily shrink strategic space, the ability to project power affordably across the earth.

A glance at the world suggests that exporting violence effectively might be getting harder, not easier. Violence by non-state armed groups on western soil is considerably less frequent than decades ago. The book tests the theory in three areas: ‘Netwar’ (or war by ‘global guerrillas’ like Al Qaeda), amphibious conquest (or the attempt to invade from water to land, a kind of conflict that pits technology against terrain), and new disruptive instruments, such as cyberwar and drones. In all three cases, it turns out that Globalism badly overstates the death of distance.

...AND THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

Dr Jonathan Golub is conducting research on the international dimensions of authoritarian rule, as part of a team led by Dr Oisin Tansey at Kings College, London. The four-year project was funded by a major grant from the European Research Council. The project adopts an innovative multi-method research design that combines advanced quantitative techniques with rigorous case study analysis. To gain a more complete understanding of the key determinants that explain why countries become autocratic and how they sustain authoritarian rule over time, Dr Golub and Alex Schmoltz (KCL) have started by critically evaluating the methodological choices made by prior quantitative studies in the field. Many of these studies rightly employed survival analysis, a technique specifically designed to model why things (like regimes) endure over time, but did so in a manner that renders their conclusions suspect. Golub and Schmoltz will present a paper at the 2014 American Political Science Association conference in Washington D.C. that aims to correct these problems. The paper will thus provide more reliable insights about how regime duration depends on domestic factors (e.g. economic development, institutional structures) and international factors (e.g. war, contagion from neighbouring states).

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MILITARY

It is no exaggeration to say that this year can be regarded as a milestone in terms of our interaction with Britain’s armed services. There have been a range of activities and high level meetings. It has also been a significant year in the development of the School’s relationship with Sandhurst.

The tempo for this year came in part from the previous academic year when as part of the General Dynamics seminar series titled: ‘British Military Campaigns since 1969: An Audit of Performance’, a seminar was held that had as its focus: ‘Capturing the Lessons of Northern Ireland.’ With the generous help of Lt General Andrew Graham, a number of key participants in Operation Banner were invited to the University in January 2013 for a one-day seminar. In October 2013, Dr Geoff Sloan was invited to the Northern Ireland Office to brief and discuss the proceedings with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP.

The beginning of the academic year also saw the Royal Navy posting into the School, for the Autumn Term, Captain David Reindorp RN. He was sent at the behest of the First Sea Lord to undertake a research project whose focus was to design a scheme for the professional education of naval officers. A spin-off of this posting was the organisation of a one day seminar sponsored by General Dynamics on the theme of: ‘The Role of Higher Education in Defence Policy, Military Strategy and Operational Strategy.’ Three papers were presented, and representatives from the Royal Navy Army and Royal Air Force outlined their respective service view of higher education and their approaches to working with it.
The plenary session was chaired by Air Chief Marshal Sir Brian Burridge, one of the School’s Visiting Professors. The success of this event has resulted in a follow-on seminar being planned for September 2014 on the theme of: ‘The Dilemmas of Strategy in the 21st Century’. Three members of the School will present papers: Professor Colin Gray, Dr Patrick Porter and Dr Sloan. There will also be a paper from Captain Reindorp.

Another dimension of this academic year was the two visits to Reading from senior officers of the Army and Royal Navy to discuss ways in which the School can enhance the provision of officer education. The first visit was from Brigadier Gary Morris and a team from the Directorate of Educational Capability at Army Headquarters. The second was from Commodore John Weale RN, Director of Naval Education, who discussed with the Vice Chancellor how the university could capitalise on the number of forthcoming educational initiatives that the Navy is in the process of implementing.

Finally, but by no means least, the university’s relationship with the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst evolved in a number of important ways. Due to an initiative taken by the Vice Chancellor, the inaugural lecture of what will become an annual Reading-Sandhurst event took place on the 22nd October 2013. The Commandant of RMAS, Major-General Stuart Skeates CBE gave a lecture at Reading on: ‘The Dimensions of Leadership’. There are plans for the Vice Chancellor to give a lecture at RMAS in October 2014. This academic year also saw the arrival of the first tranche of new Sandhurst lecturers to participate, in Reading’s course for new lecturers.

Associate Professor Geoff Sloan

MIGRATION RESEARCH IN SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

International migration continues to be an area of debate and polemic. While the evidence suggests that UK labour markets generally adjust well to the inflow of migrants, with the possible exception of periods of recession, there is a widespread public opinion that international migration has a negative impact on British employment. In general the British public’s attitude towards migration is complex and tends to be more sceptical than in Europe. For instance, British attitudes show that a higher proportion of UK residents than Europeans think that immigration is more of a ‘problem than an opportunity’ and that ‘migrants take jobs from natives’. However, some two-thirds also believe that migrants fill positions where there is a shortage of workers. The International Centre for Housing and Urban Economics (ICHUE) has over the past few years conducted a number of studies for local authorities and regional bodies in the South East on issues relating to international migration.

In 2013 Drs Nygaard and Francis-Brophy were commissioned by the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) to undertake a profile of Bulgarian and Romanian migration to the South East in order to assist South East authorities planning for the ending of transitional controls at the end of 2013. This research underlined the high employment level of Bulgarian and Romanian nationals and their low reliance on social security/benefit payments. Many migrants from Eastern Europe were found to work in a number of sectors and occupations with hard-to-fill vacancies. This research was widely reported in national and regional media as the year drew to a close.

Dr Nygaard was also a member of Kent County Council’s advisory group on impact analysis of Bulgarian and Romanian migration. In a follow up piece of research on the skills, industry and occupational profile of all migrants in the South East, the Economics-Education team show that while migrants and British born residents tend to work in similar industries and jobs, migrants from the new accession countries (2004 and 2007) are less likely to perform the same jobs as UK born residents. SESPM Partnership Manager Roy Millard states of the research: Our partners welcomed this research as an important planning tool which provided an independent, practical resource to assist a proactive approach to forward planning and to effectively assess and address local impacts. This is particularly important for the South East given the region has the highest levels of migration outside of London.

ICHUE continues to inform public policy in the South East and participate in debate around migration through hosting the Thames Valley Strategic Migration Group twice yearly. This is a forum that brings together local authorities in the Thames Valley, law enforcement and immigration officials, as well as a range of Non-Governmental Organisations, for debate, research and information dissemination on issues of migration.

Associate Professor Christian Nygaard
NEW VOICES IN CRIMINAL LAW THEORY, DEATH VALLEY (CALIFORNIA)

In March, Associate Professor Patrick Tomlin attended an unusual workshop in Death Valley, California, at the invitation of the Institutes for Law and Philosophy at the University of Illinois and Rutgers University, and the Robina Institute of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice at the University of Minnesota. The conference was called ‘New Voices in Criminal Law Theory’, and was organised by some of the best known and influential figures in the field of philosophy of criminal justice. These well-known figures invited eight promising junior scholars in the field from the US, Canada and the UK, as well as several other senior scholars. All the papers were given by the junior scholars (including Tomlin), with the senior figures acting as commentators. It was an intense couple of days, though time was also built in to explore a little of the sights of Death Valley. Tomlin’s paper, critiquing the ‘Duty View’ of punishment, was well-received, and generated a lively discussion. The workshop provided Tomlin with an excellent opportunity to meet and interact with both senior and junior scholars in one of his main areas of research.

In addition, the January issue of the journal Ethics included an article by Patrick Tomlin. Ethics is one of the primary venues in the world for moral and political philosophy. In his paper, Tomlin shows that those who adopt a particular (very popular and influential) view about the justification of punishment (retributivism) should reject an equally popular and influential view about the content of the criminal law (the harm principle). Many well-known philosophers have assumed or asserted the compatibility of retributivism and the harm principle since they are ostensibly theories about different things – the legitimate content of the criminal law, and what we should do with those who break the law. However, Tomlin carefully shows that they cannot be consistently endorsed, and therefore at least one must be rejected. The article further promotes thinking about different issues in criminal justice theory in concert with one another, as what positions we can consistently endorse on some issues will depend upon the positions we endorse on others.

Associate Professor Patrick Tomlin

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Most Americans and Europeans are familiar with stories of ancestors ‘Americanizing’ their names upon migration to the US. Research by Costanza Biavaschi (shortly to join the Economics Department), Corrado Giulietti (IZA) and Zahra Siddique (Reading) is the first to provide evidence on the extent to which this occurred, as well as the related economic consequences of such name changes. Using a random sample of migrants who naturalized to become American citizens in 1930 New York, the authors find that name changes were widespread, with a third of European migrants abandoning their foreign-sounding names to adopt a popular American name. Additionally, changing one’s name paid off: migrants who Americanized their names had greater economic success than those who did not, with migrants who changed their name into the most popular American names (such as William, John or Charles) earning 14% more than the rest.

The authors are able to track a wide range of migrant characteristics over time since naturalizing migrants had to fill two separate documents five years apart as part of the naturalization procedure. This allows a comparison of migrants’ economic success over time, across those who kept their original name and those who chose more American names.

Since migrants who change names may be intrinsically different than migrants who kept their original name (for instance they may be more ambitious or better native language speakers), the authors use linguistic complexity – measured by the Scrabble points of the name when arriving in the US – as an independent source of variation in name changes. Using this strategy, they find the presence of a causal and significantly positive effect of name changes on economic performance.

Dr Zahra Siddique
THE ECONOMICS OF FOOTBALL

Associated with his recent publication in the *Economic Journal*, investigating market efficiency using Betfair data on football matches, James Reade’s research has been featured in articles in both *Investors Chronicle* and the *Financial Times* recently. Additionally, alongside Giambattista Rossi (UEL) and Dooruj Rambaccussing (Dundee) he has been awarded a Twitter #datagrant, one of six teams of academics selected from 1300 applications, to conduct research projects using access to Tweets back to 2006. The project looks to forecast sporting outcomes using information contained within Tweets, and as part of this James was invited to take part in the Big Boulder Initiative, the annual conference of the social data industry, in June 2014, participating in a panel discussion. The final research will be presented at Twitter HQ in Silicon Valley later in the year.

James is also collaborating with Levelx, a company providing forecasts for the arrival of trains at level crossings in the Berkshire region. Network Rail provide extensive data feeds on the location of trains, yet little information about when trains reach particular points on the network, and in particular level crossings. This can be inconvenient for those seeking to travel in the vicinity of such crossings, and Network Rail has recently initiated a safety campaign to reduce deaths associated with level crossings. James’s input has been to apply econometric techniques to the mass of data that Network Rail makes available in order to improve the forecast times of arrival at level crossings, contributing to the mobile phone app that Levelx is currently trialling.

Dr James Reade

LINKS WITH CHINA

In October 2013 Professor Catriona McKinnon visited the Institute of Climate Change and Public Policy at Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology (NUIST), with which the University of Reading has numerous research and teaching links. She is now a Visiting Professor at the Institute, which she will visit annually. While in Nanjing she gave a keynote presentation at a conference on Climate Ethics that brought together scholars from across China. Further research links in this area will be forged in a workshop at Reading on 22-23 September, which will be attended by a party of ten Chinese scholars.

Professor Catriona McKinnon

LINDAU MEETING ON ECONOMIC SCIENCES

Dr Vivien Burrows was invited to take part in the fifth Lindau Meeting on Economic Sciences in Lindau, Germany in August. She was selected following her participation at the European Economic Association Conference in August 2013, where she presented the paper ‘Housing equity withdrawal and household saving in the UK: a bivariate approach’. The Lindau Meetings in Economics were established in 2004 and are held every three years. They bring together young economists and Nobel Laureates and provide a unique forum for the exchange of knowledge, ideas and experience. The programme of the meeting comprises lectures, discussion sessions and master classes.

Dr Vivien Burrows
DISCOVERING DALMANOUTH: ROMAN-PERIOD FISHING, FARMING AND URBANIZATION AROUND THE SEA OF GALILEE

SPEAR is unusual among schools of social sciences in having its own archaeologist, Ken Dark, and his latest research project has been attracting literally global attention from academics and media alike. This is the first investigation, using modern archaeological methods, of the Roman fishing economy of the Sea of Galilee. Although often mentioned in the Bible, there has been very little scholarly interest in exactly how the Sea of Galilee developed a specialised productive economy capable of supporting intensive urbanisation around the lakeside (the ‘Sea’ is really a large inland freshwater lake), without any outside investment or stimulus. Here, local people identified a renewable, plentiful, resource (the abundant fish in the lake), which could be preserved (by salting in lakeside towns and villages) and then exported to other regions.

Inter-regional trade, and specialist production, were both widespread in the Roman world, but what is different around the Sea of Galilee is that small-scale farming communities apparently instigated this economic innovation and were entrepreneurial enough to turn it into a flourishing business for centuries. Eventually, a new source of income emerged: the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as its state religion, and this led to the emergence of pilgrimage centres around the lake, for example at the Mount of Beatitudes, where the Sermon on the Mount was believed to have taken place. So catering for pilgrims replaced fishing for the wider market as the principal ‘industry’ of the area. But pilgrims needed to be fed, so fishing continued, just with an expanded local market. This only came to an end when political and military circumstances disrupted the flow of pilgrims, and then the fishing economy faded away, taking with it the towns it supported.

How do we know all this? Beginning in 2012, Ken has combined studies of existing archaeological publications with new research using ground-survey and the new field of ‘satellite archaeology’. However, it was one of the results of the survey that really caught media attention, when Ken and his team discovered a previously-unknown Roman town on the shore of the lake. This urban centre extended across the agriculturally-rich Ginosar valley (the one really big area of farmland next to the ‘Sea’) to the small modern hilltop town of Migdal. In the gardens and building sites of Migdal there was another surprise: many fragments of Roman and Byzantine (immediately post-Roman) architectural sculpture and other objects. These suggest a monumental centre to the newly-discovered town, with grand colonnaded buildings, and show its connection with both farming and fishing.

The project will continue for several years to come, and further discoveries can be expected, but this ‘new’ town attracted worldwide media attention, because – in addition to ‘new’ Roman towns of this size hardly being everyday discoveries – it is exactly where historians have located the ‘lost’ city of Dalmanoutha, mentioned in the Gospel of Mark as the place where Jesus was taken by boat after the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes.

‘this ‘new’ town attracted worldwide media attention ... it is exactly where historians have located the ‘lost’ city of Dalmanoutha, mentioned in the Gospel of Mark as the place where Jesus was taken by boat after the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes’

Associate Professor Ken Dark
The new DEEM Research Centre was launched on 5 September 2013 with a workshop on the challenges of doing research in development, inaugurated by Professor Stephen Mithen, Pro-VC for Internationalisation at the University.

The workshop brought together speakers from a range of disciplines including economics, politics and geography, and covered challenges to both qualitative and quantitative research in development. It began with three keynote papers on labour markets by Professors Nauro Campos (Brunel and DfID), Hartmut Lehmann (Bologna and IZA) and Jackie Wahba (Southampton).

The papers dealt with current issues in labour market research – the role of regulation, informal employment and migration. Not unexpectedly, the major challenges identified were those in relation to gathering appropriate data to test the hypotheses measurement, which were highlighted by both Campos and Lehman.

In the closing session Professor Dominik Zaum (Reading Politics and International Relations) argued that the reliability and reproducibility of the data that was collected added further to the problems of such research. In addition, papers by Wahba, Dr Zahra Siddiqui (Reading, Economics) and Tom Wingfield (DfID), identified the issues of selection and endogeneity. This was stated quite succinctly by Tom Wingfield when he argued that ‘Quantitative research is ‘especially frustrating’ – many factors correlate with one another, making it ‘nearly impossible to determine causality’. Wingfield also highlighted DfID’s focus on evidence in research contracting, as well as policy analysis and formation.

Dominik Zaum’s talk, entitled ‘Talking with Warlords’, discussed the ethical challenges of doing development research, as well as challenges of access and security. Dr Emily Boyd (Reading, Geography and Environmental Science) argued, in the context of discussing the resilience and vulnerability of climate change, that it was necessary to have a clear understanding of these concepts and also the methodologies for studying them.

Professor Uma Kambhampati, Director

WAYS OF WAR CENTRE

In the past few years, there has been a welcome revival in ambitious, multi-disciplinary studies of armed conflict. The likes of Stephen Pinker, Lawrence Freedman, Ian Morris, Francis Fukuyama, and Azar Gat are harnessing the insights of different disciplines to ask classical questions about the origins, nature and consequences of war.

In this spirit, the School has created a Ways of War Centre to foster dialogue and relationships across inter-disciplinary and professional frontiers. Reading has a rich array of scholars working on armed conflict and security in all its dimensions, from law to history, from language to cinema, from international relations to classics. The Centre hosts a range of activities and serves as a platform for joint supervision, grant raising and intellectual events.

Our launch event, ‘Red Lines and Dominoes: Wars for Reputation’, was held in March 2014. Led by Professor Daryl Press of Dartmouth University, a stimulating afternoon discussed credibility and the problem of how reputations are made and unmade, how states act from fear of domino effects, and the dynamics of saving ‘face.’

In this coming year, the Centre has planned three symposiums. The first, ‘An Eye and An Ear for Conflict’, will consider non-written representations of war, ranging from illustration to painting, to cinema to language. The second will examine ‘Stabilisation after Afghanistan’, and offer the military a friendly ‘red team’ discussion of what can really be learned from Britain’s long war in Afghanistan. The third symposium will be ‘The First Casualty: Secrets, Lies and Leaks in times of War.’

Associate Professor Patrick Porter, Director
There are many specialised lines of research carried out by academics in the Economics Department. One of the more esoteric areas is the study of the economy of medieval towns and villages. Mark Casson has been carrying out economic modelling of the English economy before and after the Black Death. The Department’s Centre for Institutional Performance, in conjunction with the University’s Centre for Economic History Research (CEcHR), recently hosted a conference in honour of one of Reading’s most distinguished medievalists, Dr. Margaret Yates, on her retirement as Director of CEcHR.

A distinguished line-up of economic historians, including Richard Smith, Chris Dyer and Bruce Campbell, discussed changes in the English medieval economy. Case studies of Hunstanton in Norfolk and Alcester in Warwickshire illustrated the agricultural transition from grain to wool production. The medieval standard of living was discussed by Chris Briggs. Plagues and mortality in London provided some grizzly insights into late-medieval and early-modern urban life. The conference was rounded off by a radical reconstruction of the life of that famous medieval outlaw, Robin Hood. Richard Hoyle argued that there are no less than six different Robin Hoods, each created to reinforce some aspect of English identity at a crucial point in the country’s history. This year the CEcHR welcomes its first MRes students, under its new Director, Annalise Marzano from the Classics department. In conjunction with the Economics Department, the CEcHR is also offering a new PhD programme in economic history.

Professor Mark Casson, Director

The World Cup: what economics can learn from football and vice versa

CIP organised a workshop before the FIFA World Cup began in June 2014, featuring some of the top names in the field of sports economics. Ignacio Palacios-Huerta of the LSE gave a keynote talk based on his just-published book, Beautiful Game Theory. Peter Dawson of UEA spoke on the overlap between economics and psychology, what can be learnt from disciplinary procedures in football, and the impact of some recent changes (e.g. extra officials and technology).

Edoardo Gallo talked about research, jointly with James Reade, on the persistence of (mis) trust as observed in the actions of Premier League footballers playing in England, but hailing from all over the world. Rob Simmons discussed tournament design and the impact of varying the number of prizes on investment levels using the UEFA Champions League as an example. John Goddard presented work investigating the longer horizon betting markets for final prizes in year-long football tournaments. Thomas Peeters presented work looking at the wisdom of crowds using a website on which users input their valuation of professional footballers. Ruud Koning considered the pay-TV market for Dutch football which has undergone much structural change in recent years.

Dr James Reade
READING ETHICS AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY:
‘Institutions and individuals’

On 7 December 2013, over 70 moral and political philosophers from as far afield as Barcelona, Boston, Amsterdam, Antwerp and North Kazakhstan gathered in Reading to hear and discuss papers at the intersection of moral and political philosophy. This conference marked the launch of Reading Ethics and Political Philosophy (REAPP) – a new research centre, which brings together members of the politics and philosophy departments.

The keynote paper was given by Professor T.M. Scanlon (Harvard). Professor Scanlon was the perfect person to launch the conference and the centre, not only because he has worked extensively in both moral and political philosophy, but also because he is, as Professor Brad Hooker (Philosophy) said when introducing him, one of the two or three most influential normative philosophers of the past thirty years. Papers were also given by Japa Pallikkathayil (Pittsburgh), Kimberley Brownlee (Warwick) and REAPP’s co-director David Owens: (Philosophy).

The subject matter of the conference – the relationship between moral and political philosophy – was right at the heart of the centre’s aims and concerns, as well as being extremely timely. The relationship between morality and politics, and normative theorising about them, is currently a matter of scholarly attention and contention. The papers and the audience contributions reflected a diversity of concerns and views, and the conference provided a venue and focus for what is certain to be an on-going debate.

Professor Catriona McKinnon, Director

WORKSHOP ON LEGITIMACY IN CONFLICT

Across the social sciences, the concept of legitimacy is increasingly prominent. Similarly, policy makers, when dealing with questions of institutions and interventions (both civilian and military), have increasingly invoked its importance. Whether in the study or practice of conflict, development, or governance, legitimacy is claimed as central to the sustainability and stability of social orders, and the justifiability of ordering practices. Despite these claims as to legitimacy’s key role, fundamental questions remain about how to study legitimacy and its practices: how does one observe and measure something so elusive? How can one make robust and plausible claims about its impact? What do we know about how legitimacy works in different social and political domains?

The workshop held in May, represented an attempt to further our understanding of this elusive concept across academic disciplines and policy practice. In two panels, academics and practitioners from various backgrounds delved into the varying understandings and practices related to legitimacy. The workshop was convened by Birte Julia Gippert (Reading Politics PhD student) with the financial support of SPEiR and the Graduate School, and attended by 34 participants from academia, think tanks, and government institutions.

The programme started with a keynote speech given by Professor Severine Autesserre from Barnard College, Columbia University. Providing an overarching theme to the conference, Professor Autesserre’s talk focused on the interactions of local actors and international peace builders and how these relations, underlying assumptions, and narratives, shape the legitimacy and effectiveness of peacebuilding operations on the ground.

Many of the practices and elements involved in the processes shaping perceptions of legitimacy were discussed in detail by two panels. The first panel looked into conceptual issues of legitimacy and potential measurement strategies. Professor Roger MacGinty from the University of Manchester discussed the notion of legitimacy as decency. Professor Dominik Zaum from Reading critically questioned the usefulness of the lens of legitimacy. Rather than focus on legitimacy as an institutional attribute, he argued to analyse processes as they provide more analytical purchase and insight. Considering how to measure legitimacy, Rachel Slater from the Overseas Development Institute evaluated the possibilities and limitations of statistical analysis. Looking into the other side of the spectrum of measurement, Birte Julia Gippert assessed the possibility and usefulness of measuring legitimacy at the micro level.

The second panel analysed legitimacy as a practice in different settings. Dr Stuart Gordon from the LSE focused on the notion that state and clan legitimacy are usually said to be competing, with the latter undermining the former. Based on empirical work in Afghanistan, he shows that clan legitimacy structures can serve to support state legitimacy when they interact in the form of local-level governance. Dr Alexander Leveringhaus from the University of Oxford evaluated legitimacy from a political philosophy point of view. Dr Sarah von Billerbeck’s contribution focused on the legitimisation of UN peace operations. The final paper was provided by co-authors Dr Nicolas Lemay-Hebert from the University of Birmingham and Xavier Mathieu from the University of Sheffield. They evaluated the discourse on legitimacy in OECD publications.

A conclusion to the workshop was provided by Mark Segal of DFID and Professor Mareike Schomerus from the LSE. The contributions are planned to be drawn together into a special journal issue.

Birte Julia Gippert
**WORKSHOP ON PROBLEMS OF CAUSATION IN WORLD POLITICS**

In June 2014 Dr Adam Humphreys (Lecturer in International Relations) convened a successful two-day workshop on *Problems of Causation in World Politics*. Attracting visiting scholars from the UK, Europe and the US, the workshop explored the challenges posed for scientific and causal inquiry by the complexity of world politics. Specific topics addressed included: lessons offered by the 19th-century Concert of Europe for contemporary efforts to secure great power peace; how we determine what methods of democracy promotion are most effective, and; the scientific basis of claims about environmental migration.

Much of the discussion centred on how we determine the scientific adequacy of causal claims in an area of social life where there is little possibility of replication or natural experiment. In the absence of such measures of scientific validation, it is easy for politics to overtake science, as when misleading claims about the relationship between democracy and war were used to justify foreign interventions, including the 2003 Iraq war. The contributors were in general agreement that we have to be extremely cautious when drawing on causal explanations of past events to inform policy or when seeking to make predictions in world politics.

Dr Humphreys and a number of visiting academics went on to present their papers in two specially-convened panels at the British Political Studies Association conference in Dublin.

*Dr Adam Humphreys*
ANNUAL REVIEW 2013–14

For more information, please contact:

Melanie Richardson
School of Politics, Economics
and International Relations
Room 408, HumSS Tower
University of Reading
Whiteknights
Reading, RG6 6AA
politics@reading.ac.uk
www.reading.ac.uk