

## EDITORIAL

### (RE-) INTRODUCING *POLYVOCIA* – THE SOAS JOURNAL OF GRADUATE RESEARCH

The *SOAS Journal of Graduate Research* was founded in 2004/05 with the aim to establish a ‘serious online journal’ that would showcase the ‘talent of SOAS junior researchers and the expanse of research interests, topics and regions covered by SOAS.’ But since its maiden issue on interdisciplinarity *Crossing Boundaries*<sup>1</sup> went online, the journal lay dormant. Since November 2009 we have been working to revive it. Still committed to the original mission to provide a refereed and cross-disciplinary forum for SOAS research students we have taken the freedom to choose a new, short and crisp name: *Polyvocia*, many (diverse) voices. We wanted the journal’s name to reflect our diversity and that of our research interests: the multitude of languages, regions and disciplines covered by SOAS; the variety of approaches and research methods we use; as well as the plurality of our opinions and convictions.

We also wanted this diversity reflected in the types of contributions we publish. Thus, this second issue of the journal features a selection of articles based upon papers presented at SOAS’ first Research Students’ Society conference in May 2009<sup>2</sup> as well as short research notes and a film review. Organised by research students for research students, the conference explored the theme of regions and regional studies. The papers published here have been peer reviewed and thoroughly revised and extended upon by the authors. They provide an insight into how SOAS research students think with and about regions, how they approach their research subjects through regional frameworks and how they critically reassess them. By contrast, research notes were not intended to comprehensively explore any one issue but instead briefly showcase an aspect of the author’s research. With the author’s permission we have included their contact details – so if you have any questions or comments please contact them.

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<sup>1</sup> See Melissa Elliott’s 2005 editorial ‘Interdisciplinarity and the SOAS Journal for Graduate Research’ in *Polyvocia*, Vol. 1.

<sup>2</sup> For an introduction see Thomas Alberts’ ‘Regional Studies and Critical Perspectives on Regions’ in this issue.



None of this could have been achieved without the support we received from inside and outside SOAS. So we want to use this opportunity to express our gratitude to all of you. In particular we want to thank the anonymous peer reviewers who volunteered their expertise and advice. We especially thank the presenters of last year's conference who patiently stuck with us through the peer review process and, based upon the feedback their received, revised their papers, some substantially. We are also grateful for SOAS Pro-Director and Professor Graham Furniss' endorsement of the journal which enabled us to publish online through the school's website, the DLL/Learning and Teaching Unit via Dr. Desmond Thomas' advice and support, as well as the SOAS webteam's training and assistance. Last but not least, we acknowledge the support and feedback of the RSS team under whose auspices the journal is being published.

Hopefully, you will agree with us that the journal's new name, *Polyvicia*, and the content reflect some of the range of the research expertise offered by SOAS junior researchers. As the RSS conference develops into an annual forum of exchange for research students with their fellows at and beyond SOAS, we hope that *Polyvicia* will continue to publish the conference proceedings annually and supplement them with a variety of contributions from the wider SOAS research student community.

The *Polyvicia* Editorial Team

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Alice Tilche — Michaela Unterbarnscheidt — Willa Zhen

## **THE SOAS RESEARCH STUDENTS' SOCIETY**

The revived *Polyvicia* – *The SOAS Journal of Graduate Research* is one of a number of projects initiated by the SOAS Research Students' Society (RSS).

The SOAS Research Students' Society was officially formed on 23 May 2007 with the aim of establishing a community of research students at SOAS to provide peer support, share research practice, disseminate information and lobby for change. The range of activities of the RSS include its well-acclaimed training component through the [RSS seminars](#) dealing with practical

issues such as fieldwork, teaching, upgrading, publishing, and post-doctoral opportunities. The RSS also organises regular social activities where research students can meet their contemporaries at SOAS. In May 2009 the RSS organised a conference under the heading of *Regional Studies and Critical Perspectives on Regions* Podcasts of selected sessions are available [here](#). The 2010 RSS conference under the theme *Changing Lens: Visual Media and Otherness in Academic Research* took place 30-31 March. The conference programme, abstracts and information on the presenters is available via the [RSS conference website](#).