TIME TO BREAK FREE?

Martin Ince examines the complex mix of political, social and economic issues that the referendum on Scottish independence throws up.
On 18 September 2014, the people of Scotland will be asked to answer a simple question: ‘Should Scotland be an independent country?’ The referendum on this question is a landmark political event, the culmination of many years of effort by the Scottish National Party and its leader Alex Salmond. It will mark the first time since England and Scotland united in 1707 that dissolution has been formally contemplated. But research reveals that these few words mask a world of complex social and economic issues. Charlie Jeffery, Vice-principal of the University of Edinburgh, is heading the ESRC’s research on the effects of the referendum and its aftermath on life in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

For him, the potential break-up of the UK would be “a change in the basic unit of analysis” for a wide range of issues, making it a “natural experiment” in political, social and economic organisation. One key issue is that if it did happen, there would need to be continuing agreement and economic organisation. One key issue is that if it did happen, there would need to be continuing agreement between London and Edinburgh on many issues, starting with Scotland’s use of sterling. Jeffery says: “UK Prime Minister David Cameron has no interest in helping the ‘yes’ side of the referendum. So he is doing nothing to suggest that there is a serious prospect of independence. In practice, compromises would emerge from difficult negotiations with a new Scottish government.” An obvious example is the basing of nuclear weapons in Scotland, something that the SNP opposes vigorously but which has less resonance with the public. The vast cost of relocating nuclear submarines to England would be a powerful incentive for compromise.

IMPROVING ODDS

While current opinion polls tend to suggest that there is little chance of a majority ‘yes’ vote in September, Jeffery points out that the question has never been tested in a “hot campaign”. Salmond and his deputy Nicola Sturgeon are popular politicians, he says, while the SNP has a big and effective political machine. The ‘no’ campaign, called Better Together, relies heavily on the Labour Party’s organisational resources and seems to have fewer resources on the ground. Politically, says Jeffery, there could still be “game-changers” that improve Salmond’s odds. One is the poor image of the Conservative party in Scotland. In the 2010 UK general election it won only one of Scotland’s 59 Westminster seats. Jeffrey thinks that if Labour shows little sign of winning the 2015 general election, the Scots might see more reason to cut loose.

The 2014 election for the European Parliament, to be held four months before the referendum, might also help the ‘yes’ campaign. Jeffery explains: “Scottish opinion is more pro-European than in England. A strong anti-European result in that election would send a message about England to the Scots, especially if it led to the Tories becoming more anti-European in response to success for the UK Independence Party.”

But Jeffery adds that, as with all elections, it is always about the economy. “There is a strong correlation between people’s voting intention in the referendum and their belief about what would happen to the economy of an independent Scotland. At the moment about a third think independence would be better for Scotland economically, by ‘breaking free’ from England. Another third are undecided, and the rest think it is dangerous. These numbers suggest that the winner of the economic argument may edge the referendum.”

John Curtice, a prominent election expert, has a grandstand view of the referendum as Professor of Politics at the University of Strathclyde. He points out that 40 years of polling have never shown a consistent majority for Scottish independence. He adds: “At a little under 20 per cent, the level of ‘Don’t Knows’ is lower than it was just weeks before the vote on introducing the Alternative Vote in Commons elections.” This makes it more difficult for either side to move the balance of opinion in their direction. He also points out that for many people, Scottish independence is a far more emotive topic than which party to support in an election. He says: “The important thing is not how Scottish people feel. Everyone here feels Scottish. The key issue is how the British feel. Many seem to be asking not whether they would like Scotland to be an autonomous independent nation, but whether they want to leave the UK. People do not change their sense of identity easily.”

However, Curtice agrees that the referendum is far from decided, and that the economic debate is vital. “If you tell people that they would be £500 a year better or worse off, their voting intention alters a lot. So the SNP might turn things round if they can convince voters that they would be more prosperous in an independent Scotland.” The ‘yes’ campaign, he says, may be helped by the fact that in Salmond and Sturgeon, it has “the best organists, even if they don’t have the best tunes”. And he stresses that in politics, the unexpected may always have a role to play, perhaps in this case a sudden shift in oil prices.

David Phillips, a senior research economist at the Institute for Fiscal Studies, is looking at how independence might play out in terms of taxation and welfare. He says that the question of whether Scotland pays its way within the UK is complex. “The answer depends on how one treats North Sea oil,” he says. “Public spending in Scotland is about 11 per cent more per
head, while the onshore tax revenues per head are similar, so Scotland is a net recipient if you don’t count oil. The oil revenue varies over time, but in 2011/12 was enough to pay for Scottish spending. Oil production could be lower over the next five years, which would damage Scotland’s fiscal position.”

COUNTING THE COST
Phillips adds that an independent Scotland would have to pay for its own institutions, such as overseas embassies, but could well spend less than the UK now does on defence. Its social welfare costs are higher in some areas than in the UK overall, because it has an older, less healthy population. But it spends less on child benefit and tax credits because it has fewer children, and less on housing benefit because it has more social housing and lower rents. He warns that Scotland spends a lot on some smaller areas of public expenditure too, such as transport, economic development and the environment. These could come under pressure after independence – it would be harder for Scotland to balance its budget than it is for the UK at large if oil revenues decline. Central estimates by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) suggest that spending cuts or tax rises totalling £5.9 billion in today’s terms would be required in the first two years of independence to match the UK’s deficit target.

He adds that oil revenues are unpredictable and may turn out higher than the OBR predicts. “If oil revenues turn out to be much stronger than the OBR forecasts, an independent Scotland may in principle be able to cut spending or increase taxes by less than if it remained part of the UK.” But an independent Scotland might want to maintain a stronger fiscal position than the UK, to gain credibility in the financial markets and as preparation for the longer-term challenges of an ageing population and the inevitable decline of North Sea revenues. Of course, Scottish independence is not just about Scotland. It would affect England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Curtice says that while English opinion of the Union has been getting “grumpier” there is little enthusiasm for ending it. “In English politics, the significant other is Brussels, not Edinburgh.” By contrast, the Scots tend to regard London as their dominant point of reference. “Ironically, they have become less critical of the Union since the SNP came to power. They appreciate having a government that is seen to defend Scotland and its interests.”

Curtice adds that the political reality of an independent Scotland might have some surprises. The SNP might fail to win another overall majority, giving the former unionist parties the opportunity to seize power and do a deal with London that leaves nuclear weapons on the Clyde. Scotland might opt for independence, but then use it to make different choices from the ones the SNP would like to see implemented.”

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HOW HAS UKIP GONE FROM A MARGINAL PARTY TO A SERIOUS CONTENDER IN BRITISH POLITICS?

BY ANY STANDARDS UKIP is a success story in electoral terms. It was founded in 1993 and in the first European Parliamentary elections the party contested in 1994 it received just over 150,000 votes and failed to win a seat. By the time of the 2009 European Parliamentary elections some 15 years later, it came in second with nearly 2.5 million votes and captured 13 seats. In Westminster by-elections held since 2010, the party came in second in four of them, with an impressive 28 per cent vote share in Eastleigh in February 2013. The party also has done well in local elections, winning 147 council seats in May 2013 in districts where it previously held only eight seats.

What explains this record of electoral success? There are a number of factors at work, some of them relating to the sociology of the UKIP vote but mainly to the effects of the worst recession since the 1930s.

Well before the current recession occurred, UKIP attracted support from financially insecure older men who believe that the European Union is responsible for many of Britain’s problems. This source of support has grown because euroscepticism has increased among the British public following the well publicised problems in the Eurozone. In January 2008, before the full extent of the recession became apparent, some 48 per cent of respondents in the British Election Study survey said they approved of UK membership of the European Union, while 41 per cent disapproved. By July 2013, 46 per cent approved and 52 per cent disapproved. Many people who were previously ‘don’t knows’ or weak supporters of EU membership have switched to the opposition camp, in part because they increasingly blame the European Union for the economic crisis.

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

But there is more to the story of UKIP’s success than euroscepticism. In our new book (Whiteley, Clarke, Sanders and Stewart, 2013), we investigate the impact of valence policies on electoral support. The term ‘valence’ was introduced by the American political scientist Donald Stokes to describe the fact that voters focus heavily on competing parties’ abilities to deliver policies on issues over which there is widespread agreement about what should be done.

A classic valence issue is the economy. With most voters supporting economic growth coupled with low rates of unemployment and inflation, they tend to support parties that they judge capable of delivering these outcomes. Voters’ concerns with valence issues mean that they typically dominate the political agenda in Britain and elsewhere. Although the salience of specific valence issues varies over time, their continuing importance focuses political debates on ‘who can do the job’ rather than on ‘what the job should be’.

This creates a serious problem for the major parties of government when there is a widespread perception that none of them can deliver the policies that voters want, something that has been evident in our surveys since the start of the recession. When the leading parties are perceived to have failed, it opens up an opportunity for minor parties, which previously would have been ignored by the average voter. The analysis shows that discontent with the Coalition government’s poor economic performance has not translated into growing support for Labour, which is normally what would happen. Instead UKIP is picking up support from people who are discontented with the Coalition’s performance on the economy, immigration and public services.

UKIP has been further helped by the fact that the Liberal Democrats, the traditional party of discontent and protest, is now in government and therefore forfeits the support of ‘none of the above’ voters. In short UKIP has become the beneficiary of the serious crisis that has hit the British economy since 2008, and, as things stand, it has a fair chance of achieving its goal of being the third party of British politics in terms of vote shares in 2015.

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The recession has undermined political legitimacy throughout Europe, especially in eurozone countries.

The After-effects of the economic crisis precipitated by the bank failures of 2008 extend far beyond direct effects on people's material wellbeing. Evidence from the European Social Survey (ESS) – a biennial survey of public attitudes and behaviour in more than 30 countries, funded in the UK by the ESRC – suggests that poor economic performance may even pose a threat to the democratic legitimacy of those countries worst affected.

Javier Polavieja, from the University Carlos III de Madrid, used ESS data to investigate the effect of economic circumstances on public support for the political system. He compared levels of political trust and satisfaction with democracy in 2004/05 and 2010/11 and found evidence of a significant decline in many countries, including those worst hit by the economic crisis. The decline in political trust and satisfaction with democracy was significant in the UK, Belgium, Denmark and Finland; particularly notable in France, Slovenia, Ireland and Spain; and truly alarming in Greece.

There were two ways in which the economic crisis undercut political legitimacy. Personal economic vulnerability to the crisis – being in a manual unskilled occupation or having experienced unemployment or financial distress – was associated with lower levels of political trust and greater dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy. But the effects of the crisis were not confined only to those who experienced economic hardship. The crisis created widespread anxiety about a country's future even among those not personally affected. The decline in support for the political system between 2004/05 and 2010/11 was strongly related to a corresponding growth in dissatisfaction with the economic situation among the general population over this period.

Rebuilding Economics and Trust

The research finds that the effects of the economic crisis on political legitimacy were felt most strongly in the eurozone countries. In the eurozone, more so than in other European countries, changes in attitudes towards the political system were strongly correlated with changes in GDP growth. Perceptions of the adequacy of economic management and the legitimacy of political institutions deteriorated most in those countries where the ability of national governments to respond unilaterally to the crisis was constrained and economic fortunes were instead dependent on the decisions of remote and untested supra-national bodies.

Director of the ESS, Rory Fitzgerald from City University London, said: "This research demonstrates that in the aftermath of the crisis many countries in Europe not only have to rebuild their economies, they must also seek to revitalise public trust in political institutions."
It is time that Parliament gave us a new strong law that sheds light on the activities of professional lobbyists trying to influence government decisions. Without it, we are in the dark as to what lobbyists (and our government) do. For instance, research by myself, Mirko Draca and Christian Fons-Rosen at the ESRC-funded Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) shows that in the US personal connections represent an important part of what clients get when they hire a lobbyist. Here in the UK this is also likely to be the case, but there is no way to go beyond speculation. The types of disclosure laws that allowed that US-based research are absent in our country. As a result, lobbyists operate completely behind the scenes, except for the occasional media scandal. This cannot continue.

The comprehensive reporting of federal lobbying activity began, in the US, with the passing of the 1995 Lobbying Disclosure Act. This law was amended and reinforced substantially in 2007. The law compels any individual who is employed by a client for services that include lobbying activities to register with the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate. Every quarter, the lobbyists have to disclose the financial compensation they receive from each client, the pieces of legislation they lobbied on, the government offices contacted, and so on. Yes, the Lobbying Disclosure Act has a few loopholes – grass roots organisations are, for instance, exempted from the Act. But the Act has also provided empirical political economists with enormous datasets that they can use to understand whether (and if so, how) lobbying shapes government decisions. With their properly researched findings, economists have in turn helped to shape public debate about how best to regard and regulate lobbying.

One particularly successful example of this is our recent research on the ‘revolving door’ – the movement of government employees to lucrative jobs in the lobbying industry. The most common interpretation is that these revolving door lobbyists are simply cashing in on their political connections and that corporations and other organisations are hiring them to acquire privileged access to serving politicians. Of course, lobbyists often dispute this notion. They claim instead that their earnings reflect expertise on policy issues and the inner workings of government in general. In other words, they argue, it is ‘what you know’ not ‘who you know’ that matters. In the UK, similar arguments are often used. In hiring the former head of HMRC, Deloitte justified the appointment by citing his substantial expertise on ‘advising foreign governments on the development of effective tax regimes’. That may well be true, and, in practice, separating the ‘what you know’ from the ‘who you know’ is an empirically tricky issue.

Making connections
Our CEP research uses data made available by the US Lobbying Disclosure Act to investigate this issue. It focuses on the personal staffs of US Congressmen who switch to the lobbying industry, then studies the impact of a serving Congressman on the lobbying revenues of his/her former staffers. If a politician is no longer serving in Congress, then the political connection held by their

Stephen Byers was caught out by undercover journalists in 2010 boasting he was “a cab for hire” and could influence parliamentary contacts for a financial payment.
Several high-profile figures have imploded in recent years – here are the heads that fell.

A SWIFT FOXTROT
In October 2011, Liam Fox, the then Secretary for Defence, resigned as a scandal broke about donations from Tory backers to his friend Adam Werritty. As his 'adviser' – not an officially recognised role – Werritty travelled with Fox, but the funding of this globe-trotting was called into question and the damaging allegations escalated. Fox made the call to David Cameron.

THE BELL TOLLED
Public relations firm Bell Pottinger’s chief lobbyist Tim Collins got into hot water in December 2011. He was caught on camera boasting about his ‘mates’ at Westminster: “There is not a problem in getting the messages through to them.” The claim of behind-closed-doors dealings caused the company’s ethics to be questioned.

TWO LORDS-A-LEAPING
Lord Taylor of Blackburn and Lord Truscott were suspended in 2009 when found to have told undercover journalists they were willing to change bills in return for cash. They breached the Upper House’s code of conduct to ‘always act on their personal honour’ – the first such occasion in a 350-year period.

WHO CAN LOBBY AND WHY BOTHER?
- Anyone can lobby an MP or Lord – a member of the public, group of constituents, pressure groups or campaigners, commercial organisations or local businesses.
- Often lobbyists are ex-MPs, ex-senior officials, peers, or representatives of big companies.
- If you want to try and influence the opinions of MPs or Lords, lobbying is the route you should follow, by sending letters, making a presentation, organising rallies, for example. Start with your local MP.

former staffers should be in effect obsolete, as the politician no longer has direct influence over legislative outcomes or the content of congressional debates. This would be equivalent to studying how much the revenue of defence-industry consultant Adam Werritty changed after his friend Liam Fox ceased to be the UK Secretary of Defence.

The study finds that connections matter hugely. Lobbyists suffer an average revenue loss of 24 per cent in the semester following their former employer’s exit from Congress. In dollar terms, this translates into $177,000 per year for the typical lobbyist’s practice. And, as one would expect, the size of the revenue drop increases with the importance of the politician. For instance, Senators are more valuable than Representatives and, even within the two chambers of Congress, more senior politicians – defined in terms of either tenure or committee status – are more valuable than their junior counterparts.

How much do connections matter in the UK? We have had the former Labour Transport Secretary Stephen Byers affair, the Conservative Defence Secretary Liam Fox resignation, and the case of HRMC Director, Dave Hartnett, moving to Deloitte. The list goes on but it is impossible to go beyond anecdotes that may be revealing but probably represent a very incomplete picture.

The bill presented to Parliament on 2 September 2013 contains so many loopholes and exemptions that it is unlikely to provide us with a good enough image of the lobbying industry. Let’s please have a law covering all lobbyists (not just those privately employed by firms with lobbying as their main business) and all activities (not just meetings with ministers and senior civil servants). Only then can we start to understand and better regulate lobbyists’ behaviour, and maintain public confidence in our political system.

ceplse.ac.uk

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**YOUTH VOTE**

Youthful intent

The young people of Scotland are a politically motivated generation

SCOTLAND VOTES IN September 2014 in a referendum to decide whether to become an independent country. For the first time in a national election in the UK, 16-17-year-olds will have the vote. With funding from the ESRC’s Future of the UK and Scotland Programme, the Applied Quantitative Methods Network, in partnership with an Edinburgh University research team, surveyed the views of young people in Scotland on their attitude to politics, on national identity, and on how they intend to vote.

Interviews were carried out by phone with over 1,000 randomly selected people aged 14-17 across Scotland, and also with one of their parents. The questions were piloted at Knox Academy - a large comprehensive school in Haddington, a town typical of ‘middle Scotland’ - where pupils gave detailed comments on the draft. Advice was also obtained from d|part, a Europe-wide network that aims to support political participation.

**INTENTIONS ARE GOOD**

The result that most catches the eye was on voting intention: 23 per cent of the young people said they would vote ‘yes’ to Scottish independence, 58 per cent ‘no’, and 19 per cent were undecided. There was little variation according to age, or by region. Young men were more likely to choose ‘yes’ than young women (28 per cent compared to 18 per cent).

Most were happy with the present system of devolved government, only 13 per cent wanting to abolish the Scottish Parliament.

Behind these broad intentions lay evidence that young people are engaged with the issue, are interested in politics, and take the referendum seriously enough to have discussed it with friends and family. Almost all (94 per cent) were aware that the referendum is taking place, and two thirds were likely or very likely to vote. Fifty-seven per cent said they were interested in politics to some extent, 88 per cent had discussed the referendum with someone else, the most popular being parents (53 per cent), people in their class at school (53 per cent) and friends (45 per cent). But young people did not simply follow the lead of their parents – 44 per cent did not share the view of their parent – and two-thirds wanted more information before they would make up their minds.

A major factor influencing their decisions was national identity. Most young people felt Scottish, but most also shared this with a sense of being British: 12 per cent felt ‘Scottish not British’, 39 per cent ‘Scottish more than British’, and 45 per cent ‘equally Scottish and British’. Their position on this scale was strongly tied to vote intention, the ‘yes’ intention being 52 per cent, 29 per cent and 12 per cent respectively.

Intention was also tied to how people felt about the future of an independent Scotland. Only 27 per cent would feel ‘confident’, and 70 per cent of them would vote ‘yes’. But 47 per cent would be ‘worried’, and 90 per cent of them would vote ‘no’. As with Scotland’s adults, debate is taking place among young people on who they are and what the future holds – this is certainly not an apathetic generation. The research team intends to repeat the survey in 2014 to see if a year of campaigning will have had an effect on young people’s views.

www.aqmen.ac.uk/youngscotsurveyresults

The research team: Dr Jan Eichhorn, Professor Lindsay Paterson, Professor John MacInnes.

**LOBBYING**

A question of citizenship

How do corporations balance lobbying with social responsibility?

IN LIGHT OF THE ECONOMIC crises and corporate scandals of recent years, the ways in which corporations take part in politics have become a major concern for societies across the globe. In the UK this concern is reflected in heated debates about the pending lobbying bill, revisions to the rules on corporate reporting and wider public controversies about tax avoidance.

Despite the growing interest in the political behaviour of corporations, the public knows relatively little about the strategic and social considerations that underpin corporate political behaviour: What kinds of corporations get involved in politics? When do they seek to talk to national politicians and to European legislators? And how do corporations reconcile openly political activities such as lobbying with expectations of corporate social responsibility (CSR)?

These questions are investigated in a new research project led by Professor Patrick Bernhagen (University of Aberdeen) and Dr Kelly Kollman (University of Glasgow) with the support of Dr Alvise Favotto and Dr Natalia Patsiurko. The project tracks the political behaviour of 2,000 large corporations across different activities (lobbying, campaign contributions and CSR) and venues (national, European Union and United Nations). This information can shed light on corporations’ political strategies as well as on how coherent these strategies are.

For example, analysing the data will show if a corporation simultaneously commits to reducing
its carbon emissions while lobbying governments or international organisations to prevent more stringent regulation of such emissions. In this way the project can identify to what extent CSR commitments are effective, rather than ceremonial in nature or even part of a corporate lobbying strategy to avoid future regulation.

LOBBING & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The project’s preliminary findings suggest first that corporations that engage in lobbying or political campaigning are also more likely to become active in social responsibility initiatives – a pattern that is observed at national, European and global levels. While corporate social responsibility may be beneficial for society, this implies that public officials may want to be wary of corporations engaging socially with the aim of enhancing their legitimacy in the political realm.

Second, even though large corporations respond to evolving global standards of corporate conduct, there are considerable national differences in how corporations define and seek to implement their environmental and social responsibilities. This suggests that it is possible to engage corporations in a discussion about their responsibilities to society, but that global CSR initiatives may need to be tailored to different political settings to a greater extent than they presently are.

Corporations that lobby are more likely to be active in social responsibility initiatives, which may be beneficial for society, but public officials may want to be wary of corporations engaging socially with the aim of enhancing their legitimacy in the political realm.
WHAT WILL BE THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD SERVICE AS IT COMES UNDER THE LICENCE FEE IN APRIL 2014?

THE BBC WORLD SERVICE, often referred to as the ‘voice of Britain abroad’, is well known to over 183 million people around the globe who regularly tune in or log on to one of its 27 language services. But the British public, with the exception of intrepid travellers and insomniacs who listen to BBC Radio 4 in the dark hours of the night when World Service programmes are broadcast, know little about it.

This is a shame because from April 2014 British citizens will pay for its services and will need to understand why. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will no longer fund the World Service as one of its public diplomacy partners, and subsequent changes in its governance, funding cuts and its integration into the BBC’s Global News Division will bring opportunities but also pose significant threats. These changes matter greatly for how Britain is perceived around the world and for its ability to influence by attraction – its exercise of what Joseph Nye refers to as ‘soft power’.

At a time when the rising powers of BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) are investing in international media and public diplomacy initiatives to project themselves onto a world stage, European powers are cutting investment in these services. Some see international broadcasters like BBC World Service and France 24 as remnants of a bygone era, colonial relics and Cold War propaganda tools that have no place in a media-saturated, multi-polar world, but that ignores a rich history of cultural encounters and translation activities that enabled the BBC to forge a unique brand of corporate cosmopolitanism.

For the last 80 years, the World Service derived much of its intellectual, creative and diplomatic significance from the non-British broadcasters who have been at the heart of the BBC’s foreign language service, broadcasting to home countries, but these broadcasting diasporas have remained largely absent from the public understanding of the World Service. Successful waves of exiled, refugee, dissident and migrant intellectuals and writers have been essential to establish and renew the BBC’s reputation as one of the world’s most credible and trusted international broadcasters.

A MATTER OF DIPLOMACY
The Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRES) ‘Reframing the Nation’ research theme and its affiliate Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded ‘Tuning In’ project have produced the first interdisciplinary analysis of the relationship between these exiled, refugee, dissident and migrant broadcasters and the diplomatic imperatives that have shaped the overseas operations of the BBC since its inception as the Empire Service in 1932. The research has brought together international scholars and CRES researchers to collaborate and examine, for example, the evolution of world music, global sports and drama for development as well as a range of more conceptually focused themes including diasporic nationalism, religious transnationalism and the politics of translation. The book ranges from an examination of British expat audiences in the 1930s through to World War Two political satire and the problems of reporting Jewish persecution, to the historical role of the BBC in South Asia, the Middle East and Iran. It ends by examining the way new interactive online media are transforming audiences, creating digital diasporas and challenging established journalistic principles. The study develops an analysis of the attitudes, working methods and intercultural experiences of programme makers, as shaped by corporate, journalistic and strategic interests. It shows the complex cultural and diplomatic value of the World Service, and how British voices, attitudes and government policy (national interests and values) have become part of a wider narrative exchange with the BBC’s overseas audiences.

The cultural bridge to audiences created by successive generations of diasporic staff at the World Service is important and remains the underlying currency of the Service’s continued success as an international broadcaster and a diplomatic force. It would be a sad loss for Britain if the World Service was to lose its distinctive diasporic voice and its associated diplomatic cultural value.

OPINION
THE VOICE OF BRITAIN ABROAD

By Professor Marie Gillespie

It would be a sad loss if the World Service was to lose its distinctive diasporic voice.

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www.cresc.ac.uk/our-research/reframing-the-nation
**WHEEL OF FORTUNE**

MPs’ salaries increase in April. What do their pay and expenses cover?

**SALARY**
An MP’s salary is £66,396 (April 2013) – this will increase to £67,060 in April 2014.

**ACCOMMODATION EXPENSES**
- **Accommodation** Not payable to London Area MPs or those with grace-and-favour accommodation.
- Covers rental payments, hotel accommodation and associated expenditure. For owners of second homes, it covers utility bills and Council Tax.
- **Caring responsibilities** Various levels of parental or caring responsibility for dependent children or a family member.

**TRAVEL**
There is no limit on the travel expenses MPs can claim, but it is subject to rules. Overall MPs claimed £4.5m in travel expenses in 2006/7.

**STAFFING**
Some of the costs included are: staff salaries, National Insurance and pension contributions, overtime payments, health and welfare costs.

**OFFICE COSTS**
This covers costs for renting, equipping and running an MP’s office or surgery. Some of the things it doesn’t include: alcoholic drinks, stationery provided by the Houses of Parliament, newsletters, personal accountancy.

**START-UP EXPENSES**
This is to meet the costs of setting up one or more constituency offices as a new MP.

**WINDING-UP EXPENSES**
This is to meet the cost of completing any outstanding parliamentary functions when a person ceases to be an MP.

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**EXPERIMENT**

**The Westminster money-go-round: salary plus yearly expenses**

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**MPs around the world**

Where does the British MP’s salary sit when compared to MPs in other countries worldwide? All amounts are in British pounds sterling, equivalent to national currency.

![Bar chart showing the salaries of MPs in various countries around the world.](chart.png)

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**Sources:**
- Wheel of Fortune, www.parliament.uk
- Worldwide salaries, IPSA.

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**Notes:**
- MPs Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses (Fifth Edition) 1 April 2013 For more details visit www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/RP13-33. For countries other than Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, comparisons based on gross basic annual salary before tax and pension contributions and without expenses or allowances, for a member of the national parliament (in nearest equivalent position to a UK House of Commons MP without additional responsibilities). Those London Area and Non-London Area MPs who declare they won’t claim for accommodation expenses but represent a London constituency are entitled to a London Area Living Payment – £13,700. Sources: Wheel of Fortune, www.parliament.uk Worldwide Salaries, IPSA.