Society NOW

Stemming the tide
The challenges of a changing climate

2012 legacy: What did the Olympics do for us?

Where do I belong?: The winning photographs

Voices: The UK’s future relationship with the EU

ESRC RESEARCH MAKING AN IMPACT
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Welcome

to the Spring issue of Society Now, the ESRC’s regular magazine which showcases the impact of the social science research we fund.

This issue our main feature looks at the impact of floods and how we create flood-resilient landscape and infrastructure. Should politicians or the people take responsibility?

With fiscal consolidation continuing through to 2018-19 what will the Chancellor do to reduce the deficit and what will the impact be on us?

Almost two years after the 2012 London Olympics we look at the insights academics are gaining into the legacy of the games.

The Scottish government has set out its vision of independence in its White Paper Scotland’s Future. Dr Nicola McEwen examines the proposals.

And Professor Anand Menon, research co-ordinator for the ESRC initiative on ‘The UK in a Changing Europe’, looks at the implications of a referendum on EU membership and what we stand to lose or gain if we leave the EU.

I hope you find the magazine enjoyable and informative.

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The importance of risk management means that rigorous evaluation of the impact of aid spending has become more difficult due to a growing tendency for aid agencies to withdraw international aid personnel from the societies in which they work, says researcher Professor Mark Duffield. Since the 1990s, aid agencies have expanded their reach and ambitions in war-affected or chronically fragile states, providing humanitarian assistance and engaging in a variety of ambitious programmes of social and political transformation led and funded by Western donor governments. This has both raised their profile and increased the security risks they face. Aid work is now more dangerous than in the past and security initiatives to protect international aid personnel have resulted in withdrawal of many into fortified compounds, secure offices and residential complexes, combined with restrictive security and travel protocols.

“This ‘bunkerisation’ has contributed to the growing physical and social detachment of many international aid personnel from the societies in which they work, and a substantial shift towards aid managers attempting to administer or evaluate programmes from a safe distance, through national and local field workers, subcontracted intermediaries and new technologies such as mobile phones and skype,” says Professor Duffield.

In a 28-month project, researchers examined how international agencies and aid workers in South Sudan and Afghanistan have adapted to working in challenging environments as well as the attitudes of host communities to the international aid system. Findings point to a growing remoteness or physical separation of international aid workers and a growing risk aversion among international aid agencies as regards their international personnel. As a consequence, aid agencies often attempt to maintain aid programmes through various forms of arm’s-length subcontracting and risk transfer.

More subcontracting to national and local aid workers has increased problems relating to monitoring and evaluating projects and highlighted the difference between national and international aid workers with the former now exposed to higher levels of security risks without the same level of protections as international staff.

The contradiction between the expectation that agencies maintain or expand their operations in conflict-affected countries, and the pressures to limit exposure of international staff seems irreconcilable. The fundamental contradiction between ‘staying’ and ‘staying safe’ suggests that bunkerisation and remote management are not only here to stay but are simply being addressed through better or smarter operational security management.

The difficulties faced by aid agencies in monitoring their work directly in the field, and growing reliance on remote methodologies, constitutes a crisis of evaluation, says Professor Duffield. "At a time of austerity there is a concern that funds are being spent on aid projects when the possibility of rigorous and independent evaluation is no longer an option in many recipient countries."

"Bunkerisation has contributed to the growing physical and social detachment of many international aid personnel"
Disadvantage increases disabling conditions

FOR CHILDREN LIVING in the UK’s most socio-economically disadvantaged households the odds of developing chronic, disabling conditions are twice those of children living in the least disadvantaged, according to a new study from the University of Warwick.

In the first study of its kind, researchers examined data from the UK Office of National Statistics Longitudinal Study (ONSLS). “Our aim was to look at children who were identified as being free from conditions that had a significant impact on daily life – for example, severe asthma and chronic mental health or developmental conditions – in early childhood (0-10 years) and examine whether exposure to socio-economic disadvantage during this period increased their risk of developing a disabling chronic condition in later childhood and early adulthood (10-20 years),” says project leader Dr Clare Blackburn.

Researchers also undertook the first systematic review of existing evidence for the link between socio-economic deprivation and child disability. “Findings show that in high-income countries, a high majority of studies indicate a statistically significant relationship of childhood disability with socio-economic disadvantage,” says Dr Blackburn. For children living in low socio-economic households, the odds of being reported to have a disabling chronic condition were 70 per cent greater than for children in better-off households.

Together these studies add to the evidence indicating that the level of exposure to socio-economic disadvantage in early childhood matters in terms of health and future life chances. And that concern over the issue of childhood disadvantage appears warranted. A quarter of UK children are still living in low-income families and the number of children experiencing material deprivation is forecast to increase between 2010 and 2015.

“Without targeted policies and programmes to tackle socio-economic disadvantage, the prevalence of chronic disabling conditions in childhood may increase resulting in further demands on health, education and social services,” says Dr Blackburn. “Our study confirms the findings from other studies of child health, that targeting preventative efforts to reduce socio-economic disadvantage in early childhood is likely to be an important public health strategy to reduce health inequalities in later childhood and early adulthood. Although more research is needed, the current evidence tells us that developing policies that result in more favourable social and economic living conditions are important. Reducing poverty among households with young children is likely to remain key to achieving this.”

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Women count cost of divorce

NEW RESEARCH SUGGESTS that the greater legal protection offered by marriage does not appear to translate into economic protection where women are concerned. When relationships fail, income loss for women who were married is greater than the financial loss experienced by women who were cohabiting. “Cohabitees lose less even after taking into account characteristics such as age and children,” says researcher Professor Hamish Low. But it’s not access to benefits or employment after separation that explains the difference. Rather, divorced women do not return to living with their extended families. “The difference arises because of differences in access to family support networks,” he says. “Cohabitees’ household income falls by less because following separation they are more likely to live with other adults, particularly their family.”

Celebrity makes an impact on elites but not the public

FOR DECADES CELEBRITIES have been working for good causes both independently and with charities. Many assume that celebrity advocacy attracts public attention to a charitable cause. But while celebrity advocacy can be effective for working with business and government, it can be limited among wider publics. Celebrity advocacy does not always engage well with much of the public, says researcher Professor Dan Brockington. A star of a particular TV soap, for example, will only resonate with the audience of that TV show. “Celebrity is populist in form, but not always popular in character,” he says. Celebrity can work well for fundraising but not awareness-raising. In focus group research on media consumption of development issues, for example, celebrities are rarely mentioned as a source of information or influence. Audience surveys also show that almost three quarters of people think others pay more attention to celebrity than they do.

But celebrity advocacy does make an impression on politicians and business leaders – one of the most important groups in terms of policy formation. These people not only enjoy meeting celebrities, but also believe that celebrity influences the public. This is good news for well-connected charities with good links who have been able to build credible brand associations between their organisations and particular public figures. But it also promotes certain forms of elite-dominated democracy which may be less healthy in the longer term.

Celebrity Advocacy and International Development will be published by Routledge in April

IN BRIEF

PAYING ATTENTION
Human visual perception is strongly affected by current expectations and intentions. What is perceived is determined by what is the focus of attention. Innovative new research will explore whether systematic differences exist between individuals in their ability to attend to more than one thing at a time. Findings will inform current theoretical models of how attention operates.
ESRC grant number ES/K006142/1

SOCIAL JUSTICE
Based on research in three countries, China, Tanzania and Venezuela, researchers aim to contribute to the challenge of reconciling forest conservation with social justice for local people in developing countries. Researchers will generate new empirical data on what social justice means to these local people and work with donors, NGOs and policymakers to bring this new knowledge into practice.
ESRC grant number ES/K005812/1

 PATTERNS WORK
Patterns, in terms of project and programme management, are not a decorative design or motif, but a structured description of behaviours or problem-solving approaches. Patterns help draw out the lessons learned through experience. Researchers aim to develop a collection of patterns that can be used to capture the lived experience of Project and Programme Managers (PPMs) and create a website to share this information with practitioners.
ESRC grant number ES/L001985/1
HEALTHIER EATING
Making healthy food choices is not easy in an environment in which high calorie foods are easily available and highly visible. In relation to eating behaviour, people look to others as a guide for how much to eat and even food selection. Researchers aim to explore whether one way of encouraging healthier eating is to provide people with information on healthy eating habits of others.
ESRC grant number ES/K002678/1

CARBON INNOVATION
In a series of six seminars, experts will discuss the challenges and major choices for environmental innovation in the next four decades as the UK undergoes a green transformation. Seminars will address technological and organisational environmental innovation, the central role of government policies and public attitudes towards environmental matters, as well as the role of the environmental sector’s SME firms in driving technology.
ESRC grant number ES/L000628/1

ADMIN DATA SERVICE
Access to administrative data for research is a positive public good. Using this data, researchers can evaluate public policies on everything from educational reforms to health service innovations. The new Administrative Data Service (ADS) is part of the Administrative Data Research network (ADRN) which also includes four new innovative administrative data research centres.
ESRC grant number ES/L007452/1

IN BRIEF

Ethnicity in politics online
A NEW ONLINE data centre offers easy access to good quality information about ethnic minorities’ political integration, participation and attitudes. Designed by researchers from the University of Manchester, the website www.ethnicpolitics.org presents the main findings of the Ethnic Minorities British Election Study (EMBES) as well as other relevant data and expert opinions in an accessible format. EMBES was conducted after the 2010 General Election to provide the largest and most up-to-date survey of British ethnic minorities’ political attitudes and behaviour ever conducted.

Child conduct and callousness
CONDUCT PROBLEMS IN children, including cruelty and physical aggression, represent a major societal problem. About five per cent of children in the UK qualify for a diagnosis of conduct problems. Some, but not all of these children also lack empathy and can appear ‘callous’. In a recent study, researchers aimed to discover more about the underlying neurocognitive vulnerabilities associated with conduct problems and callous traits. The aim, says researcher Professor Essi Viding, is to give direction for more individualised treatment interventions.

In this study, researchers from University College London scanned children’s brains by Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (FMRI) to see how those with conduct problems differ in their response to viewing images of others in pain. The brain images showed that, relative to controls, children with conduct problems show reduced responses to others’ pain specifically in regions of the brain known to play a role in empathy. The brain responses were most reduced for children with conduct problems and callous traits. This pattern of reduced brain activity upon witnessing pain may serve as a neurobiological risk factor for later adult psychopathy, researchers state.

“But it’s important,” Professor Viding says, “to view these findings as an indicator of early vulnerability, rather than biological destiny. We know that children can be very responsive to interventions, and the challenge is to make those interventions better.” The power of neuroscience research is not, she stresses, to ‘pick out the psychopath’ but to help fine-tune or tailor interventions to suit the specific profile of atypical processing that characterises a child with conduct problems and callous traits.
Public support for Armed Forces high

EIGHT OUT OF ten people in Britain have a high or very high opinion of the UK Armed Forces, according to responses from 3,300 UK adults, surveyed as part of the 2011 British Social Attitudes Survey. The study, conducted by the King’s Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR), King’s College London, along with the Aberdeen Centre for Trauma Research, Robert Gordon University, and NatCen Social Research, found considerably less backing for the operations in which the British military have been involved in the past decade, with 58 per cent of the British public opposed to the mission in Iraq and 48 per cent opposed to the one in Afghanistan.

Professor Christopher Dandeker, the lead researcher on the project, points out that this lack of support, as well as public weariness over the missions, may mean that future British governments may find it increasingly difficult to gain support for campaigns with no perceived clear benefit for the UK, including overseas based anti-terror missions or interventions to remove overseas dictators.

Despite the lack of support for Iraq and Afghanistan, there is overwhelming public support for veterans of these missions – more than 90 per cent support personnel returning from these missions regardless of their opinions of the campaign itself. But this support comes with some misconceptions of the effect of military service. Over half of those surveyed felt, wrongly, that current members of the Armed Forces were more likely than civilians to have a mental illness and be suicidal. Public opinion of both military service and its effects is increasingly shaped by civilians, including the media, television and films, as well as by Forces-related charities. In particular, images of repatriation at Royal Wootton Bassett have helped to reinforce the hero-to-victim status of Forces’ personnel.

“At the end of a decade of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, the ‘veteran as victim’ is emerging as a key narrative, with possible implications for public policy and Armed Forces personnel, who may be at risk of being stigmatised by civilian society,” says Professor Dandeker. “Should this veteran as victim myth persist, future recruitment to the Armed Forces as well as public support for military operations could be undermined and employers’ current positive attitudes to employing former Service personnel could change.” The media and some Service charities, the researchers conclude, may need to consider carefully the pictures they paint of people’s lives after leaving the military to prevent this from happening.

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RESEARCH CONDUCTED AT University College London into optimal webpage design may give those with Learning Disabilities (LD) better access to information on the internet.

“While government policy emphasises the need for social inclusion, informed choice and active involvement in society of people with LD, these aspirations can only be achieved by the provision of accessible and relevant information – now increasingly in electronic form,” says researcher Peter Williams. But relevant information on the internet – such as ‘easy-read’ information about aspects of independent living – is often inaccessible to people with LD because of poor website design and consequent difficulties in navigating the web.

To tackle this problem, Williams worked with over 100 people with LD to find which combination of web page attributes helped them find information most easily. Findings show this group of people has only ‘serial access’ to information. In a computing context this term signifies data being read from the storage medium from the beginning forward, until the required item is reached, as with magnetic tape. Applied by Williams to this study, the term refers to the action of reading sequentially, word-for-word, and being unable to skim for information or view pages globally. “This way of viewing pages has several important and unexpected consequences for webpage design which contradict accepted guidelines,” he says.

One surprising finding was that, counter-intuitively, images do not themselves aid speed of access to information. This is because they are ignored until reached ‘serially’ and hence do not help signpost text. Second, for non-visually impaired people, small text-sized content was read quicker than a larger size, as the latter took up more lines. Considering the ‘serial access’ behaviour, the extra eye movements necessitated by not skimming or omitting text made a difference.

Third, in terms of menu or contents lists, evidence suggests that a horizontal arrangement is easier to negotiate than a vertical one because reading horizontally appears to be easier for people with low levels of literacy and fits with the practice of accessing information serially.

“This study shows that the construction and display of electronically-hosted information is complex, and that intuitive approaches – used in many guidelines – may not necessarily provide the optimal presentation of information,” Peter Williams concludes.

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Designing for those with learning difficulties

High costs of leaving Islam

LIFE AS AN ISLAMIC apostate or ‘ex-Muslim’ in the west is deeply problematic, according to a qualitative study of 35 ex-Muslims from the UK and Canada. Although apostasy from Islam is not a fundamental human rights problem in western secular societies – as it is in Muslim-majority countries – it is problematic for ex-Muslims themselves because of the stigma attached to it in Muslim communities and the many challenges involved in leaving Islam.

One of the greatest challenges ex-Muslims face centres on the disclosure of apostasy to their families, friends and community members. Just over half of those interviewed had disclosed their apostasy to their family, with the rest living in the ‘closet’ as secret apostates. Those who did disclose their apostasy encountered negative reactions, including condemnation, shock, hurt, rejection, banishment and denial.

The most commonly cited reason for remaining closeted was to avoid hurting parents by failing to meet their expectations and all desperately wanted to maintain good relationships with their families. Those who concealed their apostasy reported significant costs to their mental wellbeing. “Islamic apostasy in the west is perhaps best understood not as a legal or political problem, but as a moral issue within Muslim families and communities,” says researcher Dr Simon Cottee. “It is a battle less for rights than for respect and emotional caring.”

The Apostates: When Muslims Leave Islam. Simon Cottee (forthcoming 2014) Hurst & Co (UK) and Oxford University Press (USA)
Diversity vital for high streets

Pawnbrokers, payday lenders and betting shops enjoyed a 17 per cent growth on British high streets between 2011-2013, says a report into the fortunes of 1,300 UK high streets. But British towns are forecast to lose 5,000 shops in the next five years, with women’s fashion, stores selling comparison goods such as electronics, and shops specialising in computer games, books, CDs and DVDs, likely to be particularly badly hit. “The story is as much about change in the mix as it is of massive across-the-board declines,” says researcher Dr Jonathan Reynolds. “The most successful smaller town centres are proving to be diverse and versatile, perhaps developing specialist roles.”

Separation agreements prove popular with Scottish couples

Separation agreements are increasingly popular with Scottish couples when they split up. These ‘minutes of agreement’ mean individuals do not have to go to court to settle property, assets or arrangements over children. Use of these agreements, says researcher Dr Jane Mair, has almost doubled in the last 20 years with the majority of parties involved holding a positive view of them.

In Scotland, couples can enter into these agreements which, once signed and registered, have the same legal effect as a court order. Based on a sample of 600 separation agreements registered in 2010, researchers estimate that there is one agreement for every two divorces. In 1992 one agreement was made for every four divorces.

Agreements are predominantly concerned with division of property although the study shows that children are discussed in almost half of the sample. The terms of the agreement were adhered to in the majority of cases and three quarters of those interviewed reported they were either mildly or very satisfied with the agreement they had entered into, although the reasons for satisfaction varied and included both financial and relational.

The study shows that access to good, affordable legal advice is important with evidence that parties who did not take legal advice may have suffered financially. Researchers also highlight the limited provision in agreements for pension sharing or maintenance – a concern because of the gendered nature of post-separation child care.

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A FEW WEEKS INTO 2014, and the year will surely be remembered for one thing: sandbags – specifically the incongruous sight of Ghurkhas delivering sandbags to the stricken residents of Staines.

As flooding blighted parts of Britain, with spectacular rises in groundwater levels, the UK faced a major rethink of how it deals with floodwaters – from tougher planning protections in flood-prone areas, to improving the water-holding capacity of land.

There's the broader picture too: the recent floodwaters will accentuate the significance of Climate Week, which is intended to focus minds on how we prevent climate change. The Met Office's chief scientist Dame Julia Slingo says “all the evidence” points to climate change as a key reason for storms raging across Britain. So we must learn to deal with extreme weather events while trying to mitigate – and minimise – climate change to protect ourselves and our environment.

ESRC-funded academics have been looking into these issues to shed light on areas as diverse as our response to extreme weather, from flooding to drought, to how we use resources like water. It's as a result of this type of research that, after the worst rainfall in 250 years, Prime Minister David Cameron hinted at major changes to transport networks, housing and infrastructure.

Take building on flood plains, for example. As floodwaters rampaged through built-up areas, much criticism was directed at those who bought or built houses on flood plains. In turn, residents blamed a decision to stop dredging rivers.

Professor Nick Pidgeon is an ESRC Climate Leader Professorial Fellow. He's also Professor of Environmental Psychology and Director of the Understanding Risk Research Group at Cardiff University, and is researching public responses to, among other things, climate change risks.

He says: “We know from our ESRC research (Perceptions of Climate Change, which involved a survey of 1,800 participants) that people who experience flooding are more concerned about climate change, and that climate change and flooding are related in people's minds, so you would expect these events to raise concern about climate change in general.” His 2011 research concluded: “Severe environmental changes and events, such as flooding, present significant opportunities to engage people with climate change, and encourage action.”

Professor Pidgeon says there will now need to be much tighter restrictions on where we build, and we will need to pay more for flood defences – something the public may well accept. “We're going to have to build more resilient flood management systems in more locations, move railways... many of these are quite long-term infrastructure investments.

“There will also probably need to be much stricter building controls. The building industry and others may want to lobby against it, so there will be a political debate, but it is also a regulatory issue, and if you are building on a flood plain you need to build houses with greater levels of flood protection.” His comments come amid a reported 30 per cent increase in applications to build in locations designated as high flood risk by the Environment Agency.

Professor Pidgeon, who is also a member of the UK Department for Energy and Climate Change's Science Advisory Group, added: “Our work for the UK Energy Research Centre shows people fully understand that money has to be paid on infrastructure, whether it's different ways of producing power or strengthening defences against climate change. They realise this will have

**“Nowadays rivers don't offer much economically apart from aesthetics and tourism”**
a financial impact on them, but will also require them to take out more personal protection for their own home, and change their personal behaviour. “All the climate science points to the risk of extreme events (like flooding) in the UK increasing with climate change. “Flood relief schemes like the one around Maidenhead and Windsor are working, so things are being done, but it takes time and financial commitment.”

The financial cost of the recent flooding is being calculated and is likely to be considerable, says associate professor of economics Dr Guy Michaels, a member of the ESRC-funded Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) at the London School of Economics.

Insurance experts already suggest the cost of clearing up could exceed £1 billion. Dr Michaels says building on flood plains is part of the problem, but adds: “Many UK cities have, through history, been established near rivers or on the coast because both provided important transport routes – and we have to live with the consequences of flooding while becoming more adept at dealing with it.

“After the fall of the Roman Empire, Britain’s urban network collapsed and restarted in the Middle Ages, and there was considerable value put on having coastal access – either directly or through navigable rivers,” he said. “Nowadays rivers don’t offer much economically apart from aesthetics and tourism opportunities, and they sometimes pose risks of flooding.

“It is hard to say what the aggregate costs on the economy are right now, and it’s very hard to predict weather patterns in the short and long-term. At CEP, we are assessing the impact of urban flooding globally, and there may need to be trade-offs – acquiring the best techniques for securing built-up areas against flooding, while diverting water to pasture land.”

After the floodwaters recede, what – if anything – do we have to learn about the broader issue of our need and use of water? The Sustainable Practices Research Group (SPRG) is a consortium with a hub at Manchester and partners at the Universities of Cardiff, Edinburgh, Essex, Lancaster, Leeds, Newcastle, Queens University Belfast and Salford. Funded by the ESRC, DEFRA, Scottish Government and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, it has been looking into how richer societies use and misuse this valuable resource.

Clean water, for example, requires a great deal of energy to purify and pump to a house, and then to heat. The SPRG’s Patterns of Water report looked at how people in southern England use water in the home. Based on a survey of 1,800 people in 2011, it found that nearly three quarters of people have a bath or shower daily, a massive change to a generation ago.

Dr Alison Browne, based at The University of Manchester’s Sustainable Consumption Institute, said these changes in habits have huge implications for water and energy consumption.

Drawing on ongoing research – the INTERREG IVB NWE funded Drop Project which looks at preparedness for and adaptation to water scarcity in north west Europe – she hopes it challenges
the way industry and policymakers plan for and adapt to scarcity of water for drinking, nature and agriculture.

The Drop Project involves policy analysis and interviews with stakeholders in Somerset as one case study, and five other case study regions across Europe. Dr Alison Browne said: “What these recent floods teach us is that there is a risk of creating reactionary agendas to water management in a way that creates fragmentation, and contradictions in policy areas. For example, the Water Bill working its way through Parliament should be an opportunity to reconsider the connection of issues such as flooding and scarcity management for agriculture, nature, and the supply of drinking water. But fractured thinking still dominates, which has reduced the key debates in the Water Bill to ones about flooding and competition, and this restricts our ability to create strategies as opposed to ‘crisis management’ responses.”

Will Climate Change week actually ‘change’ anything? Professor Elizabeth Shove of Lancaster University, an ESRC Climate Change Leadership Fellow, is not sure: “It turns the topic into a matter of personal opinion – sort of ‘if you believe in climate change, action will follow’. This kind of association with climate change, as an overt political topic, doesn’t necessarily play out into the areas of resource consumption that really matter for climate change. There is no reason to suppose our understanding of climate change will transform patterns of consumption which have a dynamic and logic of their own.”

Nor did she believe floodwaters would fundamentally change how we use water: “There is a lot of discussion about people’s attitudes to energy or water uses, but using water is highly routinised. It’s not a matter of attitudes. It’s more tied up with the ongoing reproduction of shared social practices and habits like washing, showering and laundering, and not linked to attitudes about waste, the environment, droughts or floods or whatever.”

For her part, Dr Browne said she believed that although it may not change everyday life and consumption, events like Climate Change week “can change the political intensity and support for climate change. I think that it is an opportunity to create ‘linked-up’ thinking in regards to broader water management policy – considering the way we manage water in the context of extremes, for example, rather than just dealing with flood policy or drought or supply/demand management policy.”

Most experts are agreed that we need more flood-resilient landscapes and farming practices, and working with nature and not against it is crucial. But Professor Pidgeon warned: “People want politicians to act because they see climate change as too big for them to act, while politicians worry about the electoral cycle so try to place responsibility on people, and no one does anything. That’s what I’ve described as a governance trap – no-one takes responsibility for organising the long-term. That can be got round with enough political consensus, which to some extent we have, and that’s why we have the Climate Change Committee (an independent body established under the Climate Change Act to advise the UK Government on reducing greenhouse gas emissions). That Committee will become increasingly important.”

Sarah Womack is the former Social Affairs Correspondent and Political Correspondent of the Daily Telegraph
The long road ahead

The Chancellor’s decision to extend the fiscal consolidation through to 2018-19 means even more dramatic spending cuts are now planned, despite the better headline economic news. The IFS Green Budget outlined the tough challenge of reducing the deficit.

Only 40 per cent of the Chancellor’s planned spending cuts will be in place by the end of this financial year – with 60 per cent yet to come, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). The Institute, which is core-funded by the ESRC, publishes the Green Budget annually as an analysis of the UK’s fiscal situation and available options for the Chancellor’s Budget. This year the IFS outlined the tough challenge of reducing the deficit.

The planned cuts would amount to more than 30 per cent in the ‘unprotected’ public service budgets since 2010 – even with £12 billion a year of additional cuts to social security spending, the report points out.

These daunting figures do not tell the whole story and additional challenges lie ahead that will affect how cuts will be made over the coming years.

For example, the Government has already committed to £6 billion a year in additional spending after 2015-16, so to fund this spending it is likely even more cuts will need to be made in some areas.

"The government is increasingly relying on a small group of very rich taxpayers to balance the books"

Public service spending per person is set to fall by 2.4 per cent a year. Even though the overall fall is set to be less than this (at 1.7 per cent), the population is estimated to increase by 3.5 million from 2010 to 2018 – leaving less available to spend per person.

And the population is getting older, with people aged 65 and over estimated to increase by two million in the same period. This means greater demands on the NHS, and, again, less to spend per person – nine per cent lower in 2018-19 than in 2010-11, when adjusted for age.

On the revenues side, the IFS researchers find that government is becoming increasingly reliant on the three main taxes – income tax, VAT and National Insurance contributions – which will account for two thirds of all revenue by 2018-19.

With this reliance come risks. The government’s revenue forecasts assume that fuel duties rise each year with inflation from September 2015 onwards but if, as recent history suggests, this does not happen, the government would need to make up £4.2 billion a year by 2018-19. Further significant increases in the income tax personal allowance would also be expensive.

The government is also increasingly relying on a small group of very rich taxpayers to balance the books. The share of income tax paid by the top one per cent of taxpayers rose from 11 per cent in 1979 to 27.5 per cent in 2011-12. The income tax alone paid by these 300,000 very high-income individuals accounts for 7.5 per cent of all tax revenue and they will also pay a large fraction of VAT and capital taxes.

And much of the expected increase in underlying revenues over the next few years is projected to come from growth in capital taxes, which are notoriously difficult to forecast.

"Returning growth, and forecasts suggesting we should be running a Budget surplus by 2018-19, should not lull us into a false sense that all is now well with the public finances,” cautions IFS Director Paul Johnson.

“The outstanding debt will still be very large and the scale of additional spending cuts required to hit that budget surplus remains hugely challenging, especially on top of cuts already delivered. A combination of significant additional spending pledges already made and a growing and ageing population will only add to the challenge.”
The causes of the financial crisis of 2009 have been extensively discussed and researched. Failure of systemic risk oversight by regulators is clearly cited as a major contributor to the crisis but also the central role of defective organisational culture in general, and risk culture in particular.

Interest in this idea of risk culture continues and problems of risk culture have been referred to extensively in official reports, such as the US Senate report into the ‘London Whale’ at J.P. Morgan and the analysis of problems at HBOS in the United Kingdom. In November the Financial Stability Board published a consultation document on risk culture and the Financial Reporting Council published a revised version of its guidance to internal auditors are also being drawn into the discussion as they come under pressure to audit the risk culture of financial organisations.

There are many definitions of risk culture and they generally refer to the organisational norms, habits and attitudes which inform the actual taking of risk, and the actual operation of related controls and mitigation. In our ESRC co-funded project on risk culture in financial organisations, carried out over 18 months, we focused mainly on the risk management function as an important but not unique contributor to the risk culture.

Working inside several banks and insurers – and an airline for comparative purposes – we identified a number of key cultural trade-offs that are important for risk taking.

Despite widespread agreement on the importance of risk management, and the crowded advisory market and regulatory interest in promoting risk culture improvement programmes, we found that risk culture remains an elusive managerial and regulatory object. Within the banks and insurers we studied we found much enthusiasm to improve management of risk but also great variety of practices to change risk culture.

One of the key issues and potential indicators of the condition of an organisation’s risk culture is the extent to which risk appetite and related key risk indicators are understood, owned and actioned within business units. This may depend in part on the authority of the risk function within the organisation and its ability to manage the role of providing valued advice while acting as an overseer. Rather than attempting an overarching account of culture as a whole, our pragmatic approach looked at cultural encounters and actions inside organisations – close to the ‘joining the dots’ approach advocated by the UK Financial Conduct Authority.

The focus on risk culture is undoubtedly a symptom of how society has reacted to the financial crisis and the demand for more security. Many respondents in our study associated risk culture with taking less risk and this poses a challenge for regulators in the future to distinguish a good risk culture from that of a highly precautionary culture.

Our research suggests that a good risk culture is less to do with the level of risk-taking as such, and more to do with the self-understanding, transparency and information quality within organisations about critical risk and control trade-offs.

We also found that risk culture is unlikely to be only entity-specific; there seems to be a community of actors across organisations such as consulting firms, regulators and financial organisations who share values of compliance, process clarity and auditability. Since it is widely recognised that the financial crisis was made worse by too little variety in risk management systems, which made all banks react in the same way under stress, it would be ironic if the current interest in risk culture resulted in similar pressures for homogeneity.

Focus on risk culture is a symptom of how society has reacted to the financial crisis

The nature of risk

What exactly is risk culture in financial institutions and who is responsible for managing it? Professor Michael Power explains

Directors on risk management – formerly the Turnbull Report – which includes a new focus on risk culture. Internal auditors are also being drawn into the discussion as they come under pressure to audit the risk culture of financial organisations.

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*Risk culture in financial organisations by Michael Power, Simon Ashby and Tommaso Palermo is available at www.lse.ac.uk/researchAndExpertise/units/CARR/pdf/Final-Risk-Culture-Report.pdf*
LESBIAN AND GAY couples’ attitudes towards civil partnerships were investigated as part of a comparative study involving the UK, the USA and Canada. According to my research, civil partner couples in the UK welcomed the package of clearly defined legal rights, including next of kin rights and inheritance rights.

Couples with children said that civil partnership provided a context for them to be recognised as a family unit by offering a legal status that others could relate to and understand. Research participants also reported that civil partnership made them feel more included and assertive in a range of public and commercial service contexts, for example in health and social care settings.

Civil partnerships have had an important impact on family and community life in the UK. In particular, civil partnership ceremonies have provided opportunities for family members as well as friends, neighbours and work colleagues to acknowledge gay and lesbian relationships. For same-sex couples this was often a source of great satisfaction, affirming and cementing even long-standing relationships within their social networks.

For others, ceremonies were more bittersweet, bringing difficult family relationships to a head and reminding same-sex couples that despite their new legal status, they could not expect to be treated as equals within their families. Civil partners were sometimes wary of pushing the boundaries of acceptance, with some for example making a clear decision not to kiss at the end of their ceremony for fear of causing offence.

Negotiating the differences between marriage and civil partnerships has been one of the most difficult aspects of this new form of recognition. A minority of civil partners who took part in the research wanted to maintain clear boundaries between their new legal status and heterosexual marriage. But these distinctions were eroded from the outset, with civil partnership ceremonies routinely referred to as ‘gay weddings’ in the media and by couples themselves.

Civil partnerships have had an important impact on family and community life in the UK.

Some couples were more open to interpreting civil partnerships as being broadly equivalent to marriage, often because they felt that civil partnership was unfamiliar, sounded bureaucratic and lacked the social status and cultural meanings that went with marriage. In the early days, some couples even had to explain to family members, hoteliers and caterers what a civil partnership was.

With same-sex marriage due to be implemented in England and Wales from March 2014 and the UK government consulting on whether to extend civil partnerships to opposite-sex couples or abolish them altogether, it is worth considering whether, less than ten years on, civil partnerships have had their day.

The move to same-sex marriage in England and Wales, with Scotland due to follow suit, may be seen as evidence that civil partnerships were an inadequate substitute for marriage, and failed to achieve parity of esteem with marriage or to stem demands for fuller equality. At the same time, it would be misleading to overlook the contribution of civil partnerships towards both the greater visibility of same-sex couples in UK society and the continuing erosion of negative social attitudes towards homosexuality.

As the first UK same-sex couples prepare to marry, we should perhaps raise a glass to civil partnerships as a pragmatic stepping-stone, without which equal marriage in 2014 would have been politically impossible.
Almost 1,000 young people from 332 UK schools, sixth forms and further education colleges entered 2,089 images in the ESRC's Where Do I Belong? photographic competition. The competition challenged young people aged 14-18 in or outside education to take a picture of where they feel they belong.

The judges were Ellie Crisell, journalist and BBC television presenter, Sophie Batterbury, Picture Editor of The Independent on Sunday, Ollie Smallwood, freelance photographer and writer, and, from the ESRC, Chief Executive Paul Boyle and Jacky Clake, Head of Communications. The winning entries were displayed at The Strand Gallery, London during National Science and Engineering Week (18-23 March 2014), and are also shown here. See also news page 29.

Clockwise from below:
Society hurts - Winner: Opinions and beliefs category, Grace Ridge, Shelfield Community Academy, Walsall
Dreams are only a step away - Regional winner: Scotland, Matthew Charles, Galashiels Academy, Galashiels
Man’s best friend - Regional winner: England, Toby Pickard, Dr Challoner’s Grammar School, Amersham
Wildness of the theatre - Winner: Community category, Ben Huntley, Cox Green School, Maidenhead
Nightskate - Winner: Interests and hobbies category, Jackson Barton, Highcliffe Sixth Form, Christchurch
Be ready - Winner: the Future category and overall winner, Leone Crick, Lealands High School, Luton
Where do I belong?

Anti-clockwise from left:
The essence of life - Winner: Family and friends category and judge's favourite (Ollie Smallwood), Jodie Krause, Surbiton High School
Does anyone care? - Judge’s favourite (Paul Boyle), Abigail Carter, Hinchley Wood Sixth Form, Esher
The Ceiriog Valley - Regional winner: Wales, Will Hawkes, Ysgol Dinas Bran, Llangollen
Bring down the walls! - Regional winner: Ireland, Curtis Irvine, Bangor Grammar School
Urban land - Winner: Country category, Nadia Rouhipour, St Peters C of E Aided School, Exeter
Good friends share - Judge’s favourite (Sophie Batterbury), Amy Chapman, formerly of Park House School, Newbury
Story of faith, Judge’s favourite (Ellie Crisell), Lucy Colbert, Surbiton High School
Split opinions - Judge’s favourite (Jacky Clake), Sam Rees, The Netherhall School, Cambridge
To meet the demand for improving understanding of the Olympic legacy, and born from the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) own desire to develop an objective analysis of each Games’ impact, in 2009 the ESRC commissioned a team from the University of East London (UEL) to produce the Olympic Games Impact Study (OGI) – a six-year project analysing data from before the games were awarded, right up to the present day.

“The Olympics is classed as a ‘mega-event’ – these are planned or unplanned events with the potential to provide enormous transformations in a short time,” explained Professor Allan Brimicombe, head of the UEL Centre for Geo-Information studies and Project Manager for the London OGI. “Given the level of investment, we want to establish what the benefits are.”

The team released a pre-games report in 2010 assessing 56 impact indicators, measuring factors as diverse as air quality and crime rates. It showed that the games were having a positive impact even before they began, with major improvements to water quality and transport networks around the east London Olympic park. Top-level sports were also already showing they’d been affected for the better by the Olympics coming to the UK – but the impact on school sports, nutrition and health were less clear.

“We have a lot of optimistic appraisals – but we have to ask what the net benefit is. What are the effects of the Games compared to what we would have done had we not won the Games?” asked Professor Brimicombe. Though the number of adults taking part in regular sport increased between 2005 and 2012 – even after taking the rising population into account – it is difficult to isolate the causes of individuals’ changing habits.

“One of the things London did right is including legacy from the beginning.”

Understanding the specific net effects of the games remains a key focus for the team as they continue to gather data ahead of their post-games report, due in 2015, but their research is already feeding into public policy at the highest level. Noted for his work on the OGI, Professor Brimicombe was appointed as a Specialist Advisor to the House of Lords Select Committee on Olympic and Paralympic Legacy, which made 41 recommendations to better assure that the promised legacy will materialise. The current arrangements have resulted in confusion on timeframes and a lack of clear ownership, according to the Lords’ report, which recommends that a single government minister should oversee the many strands of Olympic legacy, and urged action in light of the ‘epidemic of obesity’ facing the UK.

“There needs to be more investment in producing a more active nation,” Professor Brimicombe explained, citing written evidence to the Select Committee claiming that obesity was costing the UK £20 billion ever year – far exceeding the cost to the public purse of hosting the games. Though the government’s own London 2012 meta-evaluation claims that more Brits are participating in sport because of the Olympics, it only looks at the short timeframe up to 2012 itself. Lasting impact is harder to achieve, and it’s not just a British problem, according to Professor Brimicombe: “No Olympics has achieved heightened participation long term.”

The figures do appear to be going in the right direction though, according to Sport England. Its research finds that there is a positive trend in sporting participation in terms of numbers doing
sport regularly but that attributing this to the games is difficult. It’s hoped that the post-games report will shed more light on whether London 2012 is having a lasting impact at a grass-roots level, but with Team GB registering their best ever Winter Games performance at Sochi, and similarly high levels of elite sport funding committed to 2016’s Rio Games, the signs are promising.

Some conclusions from the OGI are already much clearer. “One of the things London did right is including legacy from the beginning,” says Professor Brimicombe. “If you are not planning with legacy in the beginning then it is highly unlikely legacy will happen – as has been the case in many previous Olympic Games.” The infrastructure in east London was planned with its post-games future in mind, and the development included large-scale experiments for soil clean-up and water recycling. Compared to similar developments and some people’s expectations the reduction of environmental impact was quite pronounced. The planning practices employed for 2012 can help not just future Olympic hosts, but organisers of other mega-events in the UK and worldwide.

One of the most significant impacts so far, though, is in the nature of the OGI itself. London 2012 was the first summer Games to feature such a study, and UEL’s work will provide a blueprint for Olympic nations for years to come. “The IOC feels that the London 2012 OGI is the exemplar which others should try and emulate”, explained Professor Brimicombe, following a progress meeting with the British Olympic Association and the IOC. The UEL approach looked at impact on a number of scales – from the host borough level, to the level of London, to the level of the UK as a whole, giving a detailed insight on how effects grew or diminished with proximity to the Olympic park. Advice from the UEL team is already being sought from other host and candidate cities wishing to embed legacy in their plans early on.

“We’ve set a standard. I’ve commented on South Korea’s OGI to the IOC, and we’ve strong links with Rio,” Professor Brimicombe adds. “One of the things that’s really helped us is the open data policy in the UK, and now our reports are freely available and are given to a lot of people researching London 2012, and doing OGI in other places.” The team also organised a mega-events conference last year, sharing their expertise developed throughout the OGI process.

As more of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park opens this April, some insights into Olympic impact are only just revealing themselves, and will continue long after the UEL delivers its final OGI report in 2015. “This is a 30-50-year journey,” emphasised Professor Brimicombe, highlighting the House of Lords’ recommendations to ensure a continuing legacy is achieved. “We are only just beginning.”

Aaron Boardley is an ESRC Communications Officer
We present an at-a-glance overview of the key issues in Britain today. In this issue our focus is on housing. All statistics are from the February 2014 DCLG English Housing Survey data unless otherwise stated.

**Total number of dwellings**

At March 2012 there were 19 million private dwellings (owner-occupied plus private rented tenures) and 4 million social rented (Private Registered Providers plus local authority tenures).

*Source: DCLG Dwelling Stock Estimates: 2012*

**Weekly rents**

Average (mean) weekly rents in both the social and the private rented sectors increased between 2008-09 and 2012-13. In the social rented sector, average rent increased from £71 in 2008-09 to £89 per week in 2012-13 while average private rents increased from £153 to £163 over the same period.

**“There is no place more delightful than one’s own fireside”** Cicer

In 1918 the majority, or 77%, of households in England and Wales rented accommodation, with the remaining in ownership.

In 1918 just 1% of households socially rented but rental sector policies following the World Wars increased this to a peak of 31% in 1981.

Ownership increased from 1971, reaching a peak of 69% in 2001; however in the last decade it has fallen to 64%.

Nearly half (45%) of households in the private rented sector were couples (with or without dependent children). This is consistent with the younger age profile of the sector.

Single occupants aged under 60 made up 23% of all private rented sector households while only 6% were single occupants aged 60 or over.

The proportion of lone parent households was higher in the rented sectors than in owner occupation: 16% of social renters and 12% of private renters were lone parents with dependent children, compared with just 3% of owner occupiers.
Types of tenure

In 2012–13, there were an estimated 22 million households in England. Overall, 65% or 14.3 million were owner occupiers, 18% (4 million) were private renters and 17% (3.7 million) were social renters.


Housing stock by dwelling type

In 2012, 92% of owner-occupied dwellings were houses, mostly semi-detached or detached/bungalows. Meanwhile, 61% of privately rented dwellings were houses, most of which were terraced.

Housing stock by dwelling age

The age of housing stock varied considerably by tenure. A third (33%) of homes in the private rented sector were built prior to 1919 while 22% of housing association homes were built after 1990.

“Α house is not a home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as the body”

Benjamin Franklin

Housing stock by type - all dwellings

Purpose built flat, high rise 1.8%
Purpose built flat, low rise 14.3%
Converted flat 4.1%
Bungalow 8.9%

All terraced houses 27.7%
Semi-detached house 25.8%
Detached house 17.3%

Housing stock by dwelling age - all dwellings

Post 1990 14.0%
1981–90 8.6%
1965–80 21.0%
1945–64 20.1%
1919–44 16.6%
Pre 1919 19.7%

Mortgage lending

Gross mortgage lending was an estimated £15.5 billion in January, down 8% compared to the gross lending total of December 2013 but a third higher than January 2013 (£11.6 billion).

Source: Council of Mortgage Lenders February 2014
TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

Towards independence?

Dr Nicola McEwen, Associate Director of the ESRC Scottish Centre on Constitutional Change, analyses the Scottish Government’s White Paper Scotland’s Future, which builds the case for an independent Scotland around the themes of democracy, fairness, and economic prosperity.

The Scottish Government’s vision of independence, set out in its White Paper Scotland’s Future published in November, incorporates a nuanced understanding of how a small European nation-state might exercise its sovereignty when navigating its way in an inter-dependent world.

The case for independence is built around three inter-linked themes: democracy, fairness, and economic prosperity. Underlying all of these is the belief – undisputed by any side in the debate – that Scotland is a distinctive nation with a right to determine its own future.

At the heart of the democratic case is the belief that, with independence, Scots would be assured of being served by a government they chose to elect. The White Paper notes that, for 34 of the 68 years since 1945, Westminster governments have been elected without majority representation in Scotland, such that ‘policies are imposed on Scotland even when they have been opposed by our elected Westminster MPs’ (p41). That the same could be said of other nations and regions of the UK is neither here nor there from a nationalist perspective. The SNP’s principal goal is that Scotland’s right to determine its own affairs be recognised, and that right, it is claimed, cannot be guaranteed within the Union. This democratic case clearly seeks to make political capital out of the fact that the current UK coalition government is led by a party with only one MP in Scotland.

The democratic case is supported by, and reinforces, the social case for independence. The UK government’s welfare reform agenda has brought issues of social justice and the future of the welfare state centre-stage in the referendum campaign, creating an opportunity to contrast a neo-liberal future within the UK with the promise of a more equal, socially progressive independent Scotland. Using the welfare state in pursuit of territorial goals is not unique to this referendum. The territorial politics of welfare is a common feature of nationalist claims across advanced democratic nations and states. It was a feature of the Scottish home rule movement in the 1980s and early 1990s, against the backdrop of the social and economic policies of the Thatcher/Major governments, when a Scottish Parliament was presented by its advocates as necessary to protect public services and to develop ‘Scottish solutions to Scottish problems’. In the current context, such claims are met by a counter-narrative which both appeals to solidarity across Britain and questions the affordability of the SNP’s social democratic vision without being able to pool risks across a larger population.

The third strand of the case for independence is an economic one. Since the key economic levers under the control of government remain with Westminster, independence is presented as essential to enable the Scottish economy to prosper. Surveys consistently suggest jobs and the economy are a primary concern of the electorate when considering how to vote in the referendum. The White Paper dedicates over 20 pages to outlining Scotland’s current public finances to emphasise the Scottish government’s view that there is no question of Scotland being able to afford to be independent, and few would dispute this basic affordability claim. Moreover, the assumption that an independent Scotland would own around 90 per cent of North Sea oil and gas deposits is barely questioned. What is disputed is whether the finances would be sufficient – given the level of inherited debt and Scotland’s revenue-raising capacity both at home and in

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The Scottish Government’s White Paper presents an embedded form of independence, with a variety of proposals for close co-operation with the rest of the UK.
I'm SCOTLAND's FUTURE PLEASE VOTE YES
international markets – to underwrite the costly universal public services delivered in Scotland today, as well as those promised as part of the independence vision.

The Scottish Government’s White Paper presents an embedded form of independence, with a variety of proposals for close co-operation with the rest of the UK. The Scottish government remains firm in its commitment to press for a formal currency union with the rest of the UK, in which Scotland’s government would effectively become a shareholder in the ownership and governance of the Bank of England. In broadcasting, according to the vision portrayed, a Scottish Broadcasting Corporation would participate in a joint venture with the British Broadcasting Corporation, ensuring access to existing BBC services and programmes.

The White Paper underlines a commitment to maintaining the British Isles Common Travel Area (currently operational between the UK and the Republic of Ireland) to facilitate cross-border travel and avoid the need for internal border posts. There are many more institutions where the Scottish government wants continuity and shared service delivery. Many of these are functional, low-profile institutions, like the Office of Rail Regulation, the Civil Aviation Authority and the Green Investment Bank. The National Lottery and the Big Lottery Fund would also continue as now, and the UK research councils – an issue dear to the heart of many academics – would be shared and co-funded.

Managing institutions and services on a cross-border basis would require some mechanism for joint decision-making, oversight and governance. Yet the White Paper says very little about such governance arrangements. Experience from elsewhere suggests that a variety of treaties and bilateral agreements would be necessary, supported by less formal day-to-day co-ordination and communication between officials.

All such shared arrangements would of course be subject to negotiation with the UK government if Scots vote Yes in September. The White paper presents Scottish-rUK institutional co-ordination as the common sense approach, and in the interests of both an independent Scotland and the rest of the UK. This is somewhat presumptuous, optimistic and perhaps a little naïve. The Scottish government may legitimately claim to be in a position to determine what is in Scotland’s best interests, but it can’t define the interests of the rest of the UK. The UK government and the UK parties have already ruled out a currency union, with heavy hints that other cross-border arrangements may be unpalatable, impractical or impermissible under EU law. If there is a Yes vote, political pragmatism may point towards a more accommodative approach, but competing political pressures and perceptions of national interests will play a part.

The referendum debate is in large part about whose vision of independence one believes would transpire after a Yes vote: The soft vision of independence set out in the White Paper, which would dissolve the parliamentary union between Scotland and the rest of the UK, but see Scotland embedded in a range of other economic, defence, social and cultural unions in the British Isles and Europe; or a starker vision of independence as separation, where Scotland ‘walks away’ from the rest of the UK, with all the financial, political and security risks that is thought to entail.

A common critique of the Scottish Government’s vision is that it is not offering ‘true independence’. But no country is truly independent in today’s world, unaffected and unconstrained by the decisions of others even if, for small states, the degree of interdependence is often greater than for larger states. The Scottish Government’s vision – not unlike the visions put forth by other leading nationalist parties in Europe – explicitly acknowledges the constraints on decision-making autonomy such embedded independence would bring.

Their argument is rather that independence would mean the power to choose which partnerships would work for Scotland. It remains to be seen whether rUK would prove to be a willing partner.
Britain in 2014 is available from WH Smith Travel and High Street shops, Boots, Waitrose, Waterstones and Marks and Spencer. You can also order a copy by calling 01793 798177 or emailing sales@azonelogistics.co.uk
Does the general public in the UK really care as much about the EU as politicians think?

Politicians are gambling both ways on this. Polling indicates that only a minority of voters really care that much about the EU. In a YouGov survey of issue saliency carried out in late 2013, only 18 per cent put the EU amongst the three most important issues confronting the UK, while only seven per cent said it was the issue that mattered most to them and their family (ranking 11 out of 12 issues). On the other hand, a rising proportion of the electorate display strong ‘anti-politics’ sentiments, exemplified in part by a belief that they have little or no say over government. Whilst the EU itself might not be a major subject for most people then, refusing them a say over UK membership might entail electoral risks.

Faced with these mixed signals, political parties have adopted contrasting positions. For some, arguments about the EU, and particularly those pertaining to the free movement provisions it upholds, are a powerful electoral tool. UKIP clearly stands to do pretty well in the European elections in May. Although polling by Lord Ashcroft has suggested that Tory voters have switched to UKIP for a variety of reasons and not just because of its views on the EU, some Conservative backbenchers have tucked in a Eurosceptic direction as a means of competing more effectively with UKIP challengers. Ed Miliband, in contrast, has recently announced that he would not hold a referendum on UK membership of the EU, except in the (unlikely) event of the Union being given major new powers.

Do we tend to focus on the EU negatives – waste, bureaucracy, too much regulation – and ignore its achievements: preserving peace in Europe post-1945; encouraging movement of people and goods within Europe; and creating a powerful body for trade with large nations?

European integration has certainly provided significant general benefits: it played a role (albeit not as central as some of its most ardent supporters are wont to claim) in preserving peace following the Second World War; it helped to entrench democracy in Greece, Spain and Portugal following their accession; and it was crucial in ensuring peaceful transitions to liberal democracy in the countries of East and Central Europe. None of these undertakings, however, now achieve the popular resonance they once did.

Currently, the Union lacks the kind of overall narrative that could be used to legitimise integration as a project. Partly as a result, many debates about it focus on the specific impacts of its actions. Those engaged in such debates tend to emphasise those aspects of the Union – positive or negative – that reinforce their arguments. Consequently, the conversation about the EU has tended to lack nuance. Whilst membership of the EU certainly brings with it numerous benefits – not least the economic benefits conferred by participation in the single market – its impact is certainly not positive at all times and on all sections of society. Indeed, like any body charged with making distributive decisions, the Union benefits some of its citizens more than others. Whilst some farmers benefit from the Common Agricultural Policy, consumers have to content with inflated food prices. Social regulations might generate costs for employers whilst offering greater protection for employees.

What are the likely effects on UK trade with Europe if it leaves the EU? Would things continue pretty much as normal?

That depends fundamentally on the kind of relationship the UK manages to negotiate with the EU should it leave. There are several possible
options. Exit could entail a complete break, with the UK relying on WTO rules to regulate its trade with the Union. In this case, the potential effects are significant, as these rules do not forbid all tariffs, whilst doing virtually nothing to address non-tariff barriers. Alternatively, the UK could negotiate a deal with the Union that sees it adopt a position like that of Norway or Switzerland. Whilst the relationship of each with the EU is different, they both enjoy at least some access to the single market. Both, however, have to comply with EU regulations over which they enjoy no direct influence. Whilst the Swiss enjoy a slightly looser relationship, this means that they do not, for instance, benefit from full access to the EU’s market for financial services, which would obviously be crucial for the UK.

The devil, in other words, will be in the detail. And much will depend on the way in which negotiations between the UK and EU proceed, and whether other member states are willing to offer generous terms to London. What is clear is that a referendum vote in favour of leaving will not be the end of the matter, as British and EU negotiators will need to agree on a mutually acceptable new relationship.

What are the financial facts behind the UK’s relationship with Europe? Do we contribute a lot more than we receive back in subsidies for industries like farming or investment in infrastructure in regions such as Cornwall and Wales?

It is virtually impossible to stipulate accurate facts about the relative costs and benefits of UK membership. On the one hand, British contributions to the EU budget amount to about 0.5 per cent of UK GDP. A small proportion of this comes back to the UK via payments from, for instance, EU structural funds. Above and beyond direct payments, however, participation in the single market is said to be worth between four and five per cent of GDP. Whether some or all of these benefits could be retained in the event of exit from the EU will, as I mentioned earlier, depend on the relationship a British government charged with negotiating such an exit could negotiate.

Does the US really value the UK’s membership of the EU and, if so, why?

Officials in the Obama administration have certainly stated, both publicly and privately, that they would like to see the UK remain in the EU. The reason given tends to be that the UK benefits from membership, and will enjoy far greater international influence within than outside the Union. It is also the case that successive American administrations have seen significant benefits for themselves in having the UK within the EU. Britain is seen as an ally on economic issues such as liberalisation of the market and the protection of the financial services sector. In the area of security, many in Washington see London as a useful bulwark against schemes to provide the EU with more autonomy that might lead to it becoming a competitor to NATO.

What about the current internal dynamics in Europe? Switzerland has rejected free flow of EU migrants (with a referendum vote just scraping 50 per cent) despite committing to this in their agreement with the EU. Are we likely to see more scepticism and borders going up against migration across Europe? If so, how closely is this linked with a public perception of less money/fewer resources?

The Swiss have indeed voted to impose quotas on EU migrants. But, as ever, the details are yet...
to be finalised. For one thing, the referendum did not specify the level at which the quota should be set. For another, because Switzerland is altering the terms of its agreement with the EU, the latter may limit the degree to which Switzerland can benefit from participation in EU programmes and the single market. The Union has already postponed talks with the Swiss on their participation in its multi-billion-euro research and educational schemes, and excluded Swiss students from exchange schemes.

The timing of the Swiss move is also crucial. Given the demands made by some eurosceptics that the UK seeks to renegotiate the terms of, or even end, its membership of the European Union, there are those in the European Commission who are anxious to concede as little as possible to the Swiss to avoid setting a precedent that can be drawn upon by the UK.

More broadly, it does tend to be the case that opinions on migration become less positive in times of economic hardship. Politicians in several member states, including the UK, the Netherlands, and Germany, have expressed disquiet about the dangers of large-scale migration from poorer, southern EU member states to the richer north. Yet, for the moment, it is only in the UK that there is significant political support for the idea of restricting freedom of movement – one of the four freedoms on which the single market is based. Consequently, it is unlikely that these core provisions of EU law will be altered.

The fear of the consequences of leaving the EU might prove a powerful motivating force.

France is keen on a closer political (as well as economic) union, with Germany hesitantly agreeing, being tired of propping up the economy. What about the rest of EU – is the majority trend towards more union, looser union or the status quo?

There has, over the last few years, been a marked hardening of the tone of some erstwhile pro-integration states towards the EU. The Dutch are perhaps the clearest example of a member state that was traditionally staunchly pro-integration and is now demanding limits to further centralisation and a greater respect for the principle of subsidiarity.

Other states, in contrast, perceive a need to tighten integration, not least to ensure the more effective functioning of the Eurozone. The problem confronting both sides in this debate, however, are the difficulties of any attempt to revise the EU treaties.

In France, whatever President Hollande might think of the objective need for treaty change, he is reluctant to support such an initiative as he might be forced into holding a referendum on the outcome – which he is likely to lose. Moreover, officials from several member states point to another problem with treaty change, notably the danger that negotiations would be held hostage by a British government anxious to secure the ‘renegotiation’ of the terms of membership that is has promised.
WHERE DO I BELONG? PHOTO COMPETITION
Almost 1,000 teenagers aged 14 to 18 from across the UK entered the ESRC’s photographic competition – giving their own artistic twist to the question of ‘Where Do I Belong?’

Social science affects us at work, in school or college, within our communities, when exploring our identities and expressing our beliefs. We challenged young people for their take on society and the social sciences by asking them to take a picture of where they belong and feel at home.

Over 2,000 images were entered from 332 schools across the UK. That number was whittled down to 500 images for the panel in January, where 46 images were shortlisted. An exhibition of winning and shortlisted entries was held in March at the Strand Gallery in London.

The judges included BBC journalist and TV presenter Ellie Crisell, Sophie Batterbury, Head of Pictures at The Independent and Ollie Smallwood, a freelance photographer. Picking the winners was hard, according to Ollie Smallwood: “The selection of winning images caused deliberation and debate among judges, which was largely instigated by the interpretations of the competition theme. It was fascinating to see how young people had used a visual art form to express their feelings on this subject,” he said.

For one teacher, Dave Allen from North Halifax Grammar School, the main attraction of the competition was that it gave his pupils the chance to closely focus on society: “I routinely ignore calls for competition entries, but this seemed a good platform. The connections between photography, society and history are very important to us,” he said. See pages 16-17 for the winning images or visit: www.socialscienceforschools.org.uk/photography-competition

NEW INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT THE RETAIL SECTOR
The ESRC announced funding of the flagship Retail Sector Initiative to support a wide range of collaborative projects with businesses such as M&S and Waitrose, working alongside social and economic researchers to undertake research and knowledge exchange activities.

Neighbourhoods rely on the retail sector as a provider of employment and skills development, with the local town centre a focal point for community activity. But in recent years the sector has been through many changes caused by the speed and impact of technological innovation, the changing nature of the UK high street and the global economic slowdown.

CENTRES AND LARGE GRANTS 2014-15
The 2014-15 Centres and Large Grants competition will open in mid-April. As in previous years, in addition to the open route, the competition will feature steers in areas of strategic priority, as identified by the ESRC Council. These will be announced when the competition opens.

The upper threshold for any single award is £10 million (100 per cent fEC) and it is anticipated that the budget for the next round will be £22 million. The ESRC Council expects to make around four awards. For more information about the competition see the ESRC website or email: centreslargegrants@esrc.ac.uk

ESRC LAUNCHES IMPACT ACCELERATION ACCOUNTS
The current Knowledge Exchange Opportunities Scheme will close on 31 March 2014 due to falling demand.

From summer 2014, the ESRC will be providing funding for knowledge exchange activities through Impact Acceleration Accounts (IAAs). IAAs are block awards made to Research Organisations to accelerate the impact of research. Tried and tested by the ESRC and other Research Councils, IAAs allow Research Organisations to respond to knowledge exchange opportunities in more flexible, responsive and creative ways than centrally administered schemes.

The IAA funding will be used flexibly and rapidly to support the following key areas:

- Building relationships and networks with potential users of research to facilitate co-production of knowledge and maximise impact;
- Movement and secondment of people between Research Organisations and user stakeholders;
- Support for researchers to build networks with potential users of the products of their research, and further work to establish ‘proof of concept’ for their innovations;
- Drive culture change in Research Organisations to promote knowledge exchange and improve related skill sets and capabilities;
- Improve engagement with the public sector, civil society, industry (including SMEs, local business and the Technology Strategy Board) and publics.

The support from IAAs will enable Research Organisations to provide funding for Knowledge Exchange (KE) activities in ways that best suit their institutional strategies and opportunities.

Allocation of IAA funds is based on the size of Research Organisations’ ESRC recent research funding history. Those institutions which have been provisionally allocated IAAs will be required to submit business plans in order to release these funds. A specially convened panel will review the business plans to ensure they are of sufficient quality.
People

NEW YEAR HONOURS 2014
A number of prominent social scientists and ESRC grant holders have been honoured in the New Year Honours list. We are pleased to offer our congratulations to everyone honoured.

Knights Bachelor – Knighthoods
Professor Richard Blundell, CBE FBA, Professor of Economics, UCL; Director, ESRC Centre for the Micro-Economic Analysis of Public Policy, IFS. For services to Economics and Social Science.

Professor Paul Collier, CBE Co-Director, ESRC Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE). CSAE was an ESRC-funded centre from 1991 to 2001. For services to Promoting Research and Policy Change in Africa.

Companion of the Order of the Bath
Mr John Pullinger, Librarian and Director General, Information Services, House of Commons; former ESRC board member. For services to Parliament and voluntary service to the community through Great Culverden Park Ltd.

Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire
Professor Celia Hoyles, Lately Director, National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics; ESRC grant holder. For services to Education.

Commanders of the Order of the British Empire
Professor Ash Amin, FBA Professor of Geography, University of Cambridge; former ESRC grant holder. For services to Social Science.

Professor John Kay, FBA FRSE, Supernumerary fellow in economics at St John’s College, University of Oxford; former director of the IFS. For services to Economics.

Officers of the Order of the British Empire
Professor Sonia Livingstone, Professor of Social Psychology, London School of Economics; former ESRC grant holder. For services to Children and Child Internet Safety.

Ms Ceridwen Roberts, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Social Policy and Intervention, University of Oxford; former ESRC grant holder and former ESRC board member. For services to Social Science.

DAVID PHILLIPS
IFS Senior Research Economist David Phillips has been appointed to advise the Tax Advisory Group for Wales. The Group will give advice and support to the Welsh Government in developing devolved tax policy, its collection and management, and provide advice on the wider impact of Welsh devolved tax policy on stakeholders, economy and social fabric of Wales.

SIR DAVID METCALFE
Sir David Metcalfe, Emeritus Professor at the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) at the London School of Economics, has been appointed to the board of trustees of the British Horseracing Education and Standards Trust.

NEW LIFE STUDY DEPUTY DIRECTOR
Professor Carol Dezateux, Director of Life Study at the University College London (UCL) Institute of Child Health, has announced the appointment of Professor Peter Elias as Deputy Director of the Study.

Peter has a distinguished background in social sciences and has worked to establish and support other birth cohorts and longitudinal studies over the last 20 years. For more information, see: www.lifestudy.ac.uk

ESRC NEWS AND MEDIA COVERAGE
You can now get up-to-date ESRC news and information from a range of sources. Twitter (@esrc) is a quick and easy way for us to reach a large number of people and we use it to communicate, engage and share with our community. There are also two other relatively new Twitter accounts: @esrcpress – run by the ESRC Press Office and @socialscischool – the account for Social Science for Schools.

As well as Twitter we use several other social media channels, including Facebook (www.facebook.com/theESRC), YouTube (www.youtube.com/user/theesrc) and LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/economic-and-social-research-council).

ESRC news and press coverage is also available on Scoop.it – a site that combines announcements with links to news sites, video and audio. See: www.esrc.ac.uk/presscoverage

2014 FESTIVAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
The 2014 ESRC Festival of Social Science will be taking place across the UK from 1-8 November.

The Festival of Social Science is designed to promote and increase awareness of social sciences and the ESRC’s research, enable social scientists to engage with non-academics and increase awareness of the contributions the social sciences make to the wellbeing and the economy of the UK.

Everyone – from schoolchildren to politicians – can take part in and hear about social science research in the Festival’s many engaging events. Past events have included public debates, conferences, workshops, interactive seminars, film screenings, virtual exhibitions and much more.

The Festival offers an opportunity for researchers to hold events aimed at non-academic audiences and they can apply for sponsorship of up to £2,000 to assist with events. Please note that events which are aimed primarily at academic audiences are not eligible to be part of the Festival or to receive sponsorship.

The call for applications is now open. The closing dates are:

Sponsored applications:
16.00 on 9 May

Non-sponsored applications:
16.00 on 16 May

For more information or to apply for Festival sponsorship, see: www.esrc.ac.uk/news-and-events/events/festival
Publications

Lush Life: Constructing Organized Crime in the UK

This book explores the contested notion of British organised crime. With interviews from thieves, dealers and criminal entrepreneurs, the book explores the flexible nature of the criminal market, the constructed nature of the notion of organised crime, and the normalisation of criminality. The first book to trace the history and policing of British organised crime, it addresses how the interlocking processes of de-industrialisation, organised crime, it addresses how the interlocking processes of de-industrialisation, globalisation and neo-liberalism have normalised activity that was previously the exclusive domain of professional criminals. Lush Life: Constructing Organized Crime in the UK by Dick Hobbs. ISBN 978-0-19-966828-1 (hardback), 328pp @ £65.00. For more information see: ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199668281.do

Managing and Sharing Research Data: A Guide to Good Practice

Research funders across the world are implementing data management and sharing policies to maximise openness of data, transparency and accountability of the research they support. Written by experts from the UK Data Archive with over 20 years’ experience, this handbook gives students, researchers and research support staff the data management skills required in today’s changing research environment. Managing and Sharing Research Data: A Guide to Good Practice by Louise Corti, Veerle Van den Eynden, Libby Bishop and Matthew Woolliard. ISBN 9781446267264 (paperback), 240pp @ £24.99. For more information see: www.uk.sagepub.com/books/9781446267264

Rescaling the European State

Social scientists have regularly proclaimed the end of territory under successive waves of modernisation, yet it continually re-emerges as a key principle of social, economic and political organisation. Rather than a de-territorialisation we are witnessing a rescaling of social life as functional systems, identities, and political expression migrate to new levels. This is not new but is a recurrent feature of the European state. Drawing on interdisciplinary literature and original research, the volume provides a fresh and engaging analytical approach to the understanding of territory and power in contemporary Europe. Rescaling the European State by Michael Keating. ISBN 978-0-19-969156-2, (hardback), 256pp @ £50.00. For more information see: ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199691562.do

Transitions in practice: Climate change in everyday life

Climate change is widely agreed to be one of the greatest challenges facing society today. Mitigating and adapting to it is certain to require new ways of living. Efforts to promote less resource-intensive habits and routines have centred on typically limited understandings of individual agency, choice and change. This book shows how social theories of practice can help us understand what societal transitions towards sustainability might involve, and how they might be achieved. Transitions in practice: Climate change in everyday life edited by Elizabeth Shove and Nicola Spurirling. ISBN 978-0-415-54065-0, (hardback), 208pp @ £30.00. For more information see: www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415540650

EVENTS

14-15 MAY
Health Inequalities Research Network (HERON) Conference
Health Inequalities Research Network (HERON) is an international network founded in 2010. It aims to develop and promote the interaction of health practitioners and researchers with community members and representatives to enable a more collaborative approach to action and research in inequalities in health and health service use at national and community levels. www.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/groups/heron/news/conference2014.aspx

12-16 MAY
The economics of international migration – short course
The ESRC Centre for Population Change will run its first short course to present a detailed picture of international migration today and to give an understanding of the forces behind the patterns of its evolution. The course will analyse, both theoretically and empirically, the interaction between international migration and other aspects of globalisation. www.cpc.ac.uk/latest_news?action=story&id=284

19 MAY
IFS Annual lecture by Professor Raj Chetty (Harvard)
Professor Raj Chetty will deliver the 2014 IFS annual lecture on the ‘The Determinants of Social Mobility: New Evidence and Policy Lessons’. Raj Chetty is the Bloomberg Professor of Economics at Harvard University. His research combines empirical evidence and economic theory to help design more effective government policies. www.ifs.org.uk/events/1005

6-12 JULY
Warwick Summer Workshop on Economic Growth
Following on from the success of last year’s Summer School, the Warwick Summer Workshop in Economic Growth 2014 will give researchers the opportunity to learn about frontier research in the field of Economic Growth. The workshop will consist of Introductory Lectures from Oded Galor and Stelios Michalopoulos (both Brown University). www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/news_events/conferences
The ESRC magazine *Society Now* aims to raise awareness of our research and its impact. It addresses a wide range of readers, from the MP to the businessperson, the voluntary worker to the teacher, the public through to the social scientist, and is published three times a year (spring, summer and autumn).

*Society Now* offers a readable, intelligent, concise overview of current issues concerning society.

To subscribe to the magazine, please send an email including your full name and address to: societynow@esrc.ac.uk

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The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funds research into the big social and economic questions facing us today. We also develop and train the UK’s future social scientists.

Our research informs public policies and helps make businesses, voluntary bodies and other organisations more effective. Most important, it makes a real difference to all our lives.

The ESRC is an independent organisation, established by Royal Charter in 1965, and funded mainly by the Government.

More at www.esrc.ac.uk

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