All change?
The new face of British politics

Paved with gold: The London attraction

Scotland chooses: What would No mean?

Voices: Making economics more reliable
Welcome

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

This issue in our main feature the British Election Study team analyses the results of the May council elections in England and Northern Ireland, and the election of members of the European Parliament, and predicts what the results may mean for UK politics.

Professor Henry Overman examines London’s economic success and the implications for the rest of the UK.

Much has been made about the uncertainties that would result from a majority vote for Scottish independence. But what about the consequences of a No vote?

We report on the second ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize and the researchers who are making a difference to society, business and policymaking.

And we talk to Professor Sir David Hendry about his life’s work on macroeconomic models.

I hope you find the magazine enjoyable and informative.

Nick Stevens, Editor - nick.stevens@esrc.ac.uk

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Phil Thornton talks to Professor Sir David Hendry about his work on developing economic models and how the economics profession can improve the way it predicts the future.
The risk-averse nature of the aviation industry is the most significant factor behind its slow progress towards radically more fuel-efficient technologies, according to a new University of Edinburgh study.

Major improvements in passenger aircraft are urgently required to reduce aviation’s environmental impacts. Potential fuel-efficient technologies include lighter structural materials such as carbon fibre, more efficient turboprop engines, and more aerodynamic airframes such as flying wings. But these have either been introduced very slowly (carbon fibre), only used for certain short-haul routes (turboprop engines), or have not been used at all in civil aircraft (flying wings).

“The key question is why such technologies have not been used more substantively to produce greener aircraft,” says researcher Dr Graham Spinardi. This study suggests the answer is that these technologies do not fit easily within an industry approach based on incremental improvement.

Through a series of case studies, researchers highlight the risk-averse nature of an industry where not only can high-profile disasters kill hundreds of people, but also designing new aircraft is a lengthy and expensive process. The commercial risks are thus very high. Three fatal crashes of the De Havilland Comet in the 1950s as a result of metal fatigue showed that innovation often brings new risks.

“The risk-averse innovation system exacerbates the phenomenon of ‘path dependence’ whereby once a particular technology is adopted it becomes ‘locked in’ as it gains further investment at the expense of alternative approaches,” says Dr Spinardi. Social attitudes to aviation can also present an obstacle to greener aircraft when, for example, the public’s expectations regarding noise, comfort and speed conflict with technical alternatives that could reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Stimulating radical innovation is difficult, and this study shows that supporting R&D, while necessary, is clearly not sufficient. For example, decades of work on laminar flow control (a technique which reduces turbulence that causes drag as air flows over the wing) established that it can offer significant reductions in aircraft fuel consumption. But the business case for its incorporation into commercial aircraft has been hard to make without experience of how it would complicate day-to-day operations. So the potential benefits of new airliner technologies demonstrated in tests provide insufficient evidence to convince risk-averse managers to sanction adoption of technology for operational aircraft – but the only evidence that would convince them requires that such technologies are used operationally.

Overcoming this type of lock-in requires R&D in innovative greener aircraft technologies to be supplemented by support for more realistic testing, and ideally sponsorship of operational use, says Dr Spinardi. ‘Technology-push’ must be coupled with ‘demand-pull’ to provide practical evidence that radical greener aviation technologies are both safe and reliable for day-to-day use.
Traditional measures of ageing misleading

CURRENT MEASURES OF population ageing are misleading and a new measurement – the Real Elderly Dependency Ratio (REDR) – is more informative, says researcher Professor John MacInnes of the University of Edinburgh.

Population ageing matters to policymakers because of concerns that a greater proportion of older people in the population will put unsustainable pressure on budgets. “These concerns are based on measures of ageing that do not take proper account of rising life expectancy or changes in the labour force,” says Professor MacInnes.

The standard indicator of population ageing is the Old Age Dependency Ratio (OADR) which divides the number of people who have reached state pension age by the number of working age adults to estimate the proportion of older people relative to those who pay for them. “This approach fails to distinguish between being of working-age and actually working, while classifying all people above the statutory pension age as dependents,” he says.

In reality, social and economic shifts have broken the link between age and dependency. Young people spend an increasing number of years in education, while many older workers retire early. Moreover, the OADR disregards how, over time, rising life expectancies effectively make people of the same chronological age ‘younger’. In 1950, a 65-year-old British woman had an average life expectancy of 14 years; today she can expect to live another 21 years (the figures are 12 and 18 years, respectively, for men).

The Real Elderly Dependency Ratio (REDR) would provide a better measure of population ageing’s impact, researchers say. REDR divides the total number of people with a life expectancy of 15 years or less by the number of people actually in employment, regardless of their age. This measure accounts for the real impact of changes in mortality, by allowing the ‘old age’ boundary to shift as advances in health prolong people’s productive lifespans.

The problem with the metaphor of ‘population ageing’ is that unlike individuals, populations neither grow old, nor die. What does change is their age structure, but unlike individuals, populations can grow older in terms of an increase in average years lived, while simultaneously growing ‘younger’ in terms of average years left to live. In fact this is what has been happening to the British population for the last century. This suggests that the sustainability of pension, welfare, health and social care systems may be less problematic than is often assumed, Professor MacInnes concludes.

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MANY SOUTH AFRICANS do not drink alcohol, but among those who do, rates of binge and hazardous drinking are among the highest in the world. New research, funded jointly by the ESRC and Department for International Development (DFID), highlights a complex relationship between problem drinking, the illegal sale of alcohol and deep-rooted poverty and inequality. "A greater awareness of the 'upstream' causes as well as the 'downstream' effects of alcohol such as drunkenness, violence and crime is required if policymakers are to make headway on this problem," says researcher Dr Clare Herrick.

"Alcohol represents both a cause and consequence of poverty, creating a vicious spiral that existing policy has little capacity to break," says Dr Herrick. In the area of the study, Cape Town, 78 per cent of alcohol outlets are unlicensed. Alcohol is sold illegally through small businesses called shebeens. Frequently these are run by women in their homes for whom they provide a practical (if risky) way to make a living. The researchers say that closing shebeens without providing alternative employment could increase the risks of poverty for shebeeners. Excessive drinking, of course, increases the likelihood of poverty for others.

"At present the highly visible downstream outcomes of alcohol consumption receive most attention from policymakers," says Dr Herrick. "But efforts in this area need to be counterbalanced by work on the systemic causes of poverty and massive inequality which underpin South Africa’s alcohol problem."

"Patients are making journeys because they are deeply unhappy with a body part they feel needs to be corrected but they cannot afford surgery at home," says researcher Professor Ruth Holliday. "Most people would probably choose to stay at home and be cared for by experts whose interest is only medical and not financial."

**Policies needed for South Africa’s alcohol problem**

**IN BRIEF**

**USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

Human rights organisations are increasingly using social media to connect and share information with the range of stakeholders concerned with mitigating human rights violations: policymakers, publics and the media. This study will explore the nature, opportunities and risks of employing social media networks and increase human rights organisations’ understanding of how social media may be used in the pursuit of governmental accountability. ESRC grant number ES/K009850/1

**OUTCOMES OF CARE**

Do children who enter care do better or worse than children with similar backgrounds and histories who remain at home? This multi-disciplinary study aims to provide important new information to policymakers and practitioners on the circumstances in which support at home, or alternatively entry to care, can best promote the safety and development of children who have experienced abuse or neglect. ESRC grant number ESA02566/1

**SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS**

Policymakers should rely on making decisions in the light of mainstream scientific opinion – what is often known as ‘the scientific consensus’. Researchers aim to understand how this consensus is formed by exploring consensus formation in the field of physics. Ultimately, the research will inform discussions on how to identify the boundaries of legitimate science and when science is or is not controversial. ESRC grant number ESS006401/1

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**Seeking cosmetic surgery abroad**

**Research suggests ordinary people on modest incomes chose cosmetic surgery abroad often after 5-10 years’ consideration because it is cheaper than the UK.**

Sixty thousand UK citizens go abroad each year for cosmetic surgery and the number is rising. Of the 105 such travellers interviewed in a University of Leeds study, the overwhelming majority were happy with the outcomes of their surgery. A small minority experienced complications, some of which needed further treatment when they got home. But when complications do occur, patients are often blamed for making a poor choice and being a ‘burden’ on the NHS. “Patients are making journeys because they are deeply unhappy with a body part they feel needs to be corrected but they cannot afford surgery at home,” says researcher Professor Ruth Holliday. “Most people would probably choose to stay at home and be cared for by experts whose interest is only medical and not financial.”

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**IN BRIEF**

**PROBATION CHANGE**
In 2013 the Ministry of Justice announced plans to outsource a large part of the work carried out by the Probation Service to other providers. Researchers will explore the process and implications of moving probation work (and staff) from the public service to a Community Rehabilitation Company and gather perspectives of probation workers and company managers.

**ESRC Grant Number** ES/M000028/1

**PEACE BUILDING**
Many of the largest infrastructure development projects across sub-Saharan Africa are in remote rural areas. Large development investment can be deeply destabilising and lead to violence while doing little to create jobs. Researchers will explore how and why local peace-building efforts succeed in minimising violence in areas where large new investment is taking place such as rural parts of Kenya and Sierra Leone.

**ESRC Grant Number** ES/L005670/1

**GENDER DISPARITIES**
Labour markets are key institutional routes through which the benefits of growth are distributed across populations. Despite high rates of growth in recent decades, marked gender disparities in labour market outcomes persist across South Asia. Researchers will investigate the interactions between individual choice, cultural norms and economic structure that might explain persisting gender disparities in labour market outcomes in Bangladesh.

**ESRC Grant number** ES/L005484/1

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**Special needs children bullied more**

SCHOOL CHILDREN with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are three times more likely to be bullied than children with no identified SEN, according to a study of over 15,000 13-14 year olds. And for autistic children the likelihood of being bullied increases seven fold.

The study also finds that while all pupils bullied in Year 9 (13-14 year olds) are much more likely to drop out of school at Year 11 (15-16 year olds) than those who were not bullied, this is more pronounced for children with SEN.

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**Tackling police working hours**

A MOBILE PHONE App that accurately records hours of work is one initiative to emerge from research into how to improve the health and wellbeing of Police Inspectors in England, Scotland and Wales. The App, developed in partnership between the University of Cardiff, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) and the Inspectors Central Committees (ICC), provides an essential first step in the management of hours worked.

Police Inspectors working long and often excessive hours was a problem highlighted by researchers Dr Victoria Wass and Professor Peter Turnbull in their 2012 research report, Time For Justice: Long Working hours and the Wellbeing of Police Inspectors. The report identified causes of working ‘beyond the call of duty’ that ranged from a failure to systematically record and monitor working time, to a ‘macho’/‘can do’ workplace culture and the desire of many Inspectors to work as long and as hard as required to secure promotion.

“The evidence base is now sufficiently compelling that long hours cannot continue to be treated as a natural or unavoidable part of being a Police Inspector,” says researcher Dr Wass. In addition to the mobile phone App, the ESRC-ICC project has developed a programme of action including workshops, networks and policy briefings to share good practice and help develop policies and guidelines designed to meet the needs of Inspectors, their families and the Police Service.

Long working hours is a problem that extends beyond the police and the researchers believe that the App and other ideas arising from the project will have value to workers in other emergency services and professional groups where questions of work-life balance are of growing concern.
DESPITE BEING SPOKEN fluently by only one per cent of people in Scotland, the Gaelic language is viewed by Scottish people as a unifying force and a core part of the nation’s cultural heritage, according to data from the 2012 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey.

Although very few of the 1,229 randomly selected people surveyed were fluent in Gaelic, researchers found widespread acceptance of the language. More than three quarters of respondents saw the Gaelic language as an important part of Scottish heritage even though over two thirds of that group did not understand Gaelic.

Overall, the survey found that people in Scotland were well-disposed to greater public visibility of Gaelic in the future. Around half of people were in favour of road and public signs to be bilingual throughout Scotland and 48 per cent supported the availability of Gaelic-medium education (where children receive most of the lessons in Gaelic) throughout Scotland.

Looking to the future, more than 80 per cent of people wished there to be at least as many Gaelic speakers in 50 years as there were in 2012, but only 45 per cent of respondents expected that this would be the case.

Researcher Professor Lindsay Paterson concludes that Gaelic is an accepted part of Scottish life. "Not only is there almost no hostility to the language, but there is a quite widespread willingness to accord rights to use it." Professor Paterson’s colleague Dr Fiona O’Hanlon says: “Gaelic is seen by a large majority of people as being important to the heritage of the whole of Scotland, even though only a small percentage speak it.”

The research further suggests that support for revitalisation of Gaelic is associated with support for Scottish independence. Even after allowing for other influences on support for independence (such as expectations of the economic impact of independence, feeling Scottish, and gender), there is a ten per cent gap between those who do and do not want there to be more Gaelic speakers. This gap is similar to the analogous gender gap in support for independence, which has caused much debate.

Gaelic adds specific cultural content to the sense of belonging to the Scottish nation, and is associated with views about Scotland’s constitutional future, researchers point out.

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Redressing the gender balance in surgery

WOMEN NOW OUTNUMBER men at medical school but surgery continues to be dominated by men who make up 84 per cent of surgical trainees. One reason for women’s under-representation, say researchers Dr Kim Peters and Professor Michelle Ryan, is that women are less likely to believe that they fit in to the speciality.

New research by psychologists at the University of Exeter, in collaboration with the Royal College of Surgeons, the Medical Women’s Federation, and Scalpel (the UK’s largest undergraduate surgical society), suggests that the continuing gender imbalance in surgery may be, at least in part, explained by the subtle social processes which lead under-represented groups such as women to believe they do not fit the prototypes of certain career paths. Women’s perceived lack of identity fit with successful surgical consultants reduces their expectation that they will succeed in a surgical role.

Based on their findings, researchers developed a Women in Surgery Seminar Series to increase the visibility of female surgical role models as well as resources including a vodcast and blog (both at womeninsurgeryresearch.wordpress.com/latest-posts) which provide positive role models for female surgical students. Researchers believe this package of interventions will help in the process of boosting women’s motivation to embark on and succeed in a surgical career.
Understanding long-term relationships

WHO AND HOW we love may be changing but our desire to be in a relationship endures. Seventy per cent of households are still headed up by married couples and although long-term may no longer mean forever after, a research team from the Open University found there is no sense that couples perceive their relationships as time-limited when they are together.

According to findings from a two-year study of how couples experience and understand long-term relationships today, it is ordinary everyday thoughtful gestures which help to sustain a relationship over time. And, based on data from an online survey (completed by 5,445 people) and qualitative interviews with 50 couples, the Enduring Love? study is now providing government departments and organisations such as Relate and One Plus One with evidence on how couples sustain long-term relationships.

“We already knew a great deal about why relationships break down,” says researcher Dr Jacqui Gabb. “Based on this project we now have insight into why people stay together which is currently helping to inform and influence relationship support services and relationship education in the UK.”

Policy action on adolescent violence towards parents

THE HIDDEN PROBLEM of teenagers attacking their own parents has been highlighted by researchers from the University of Oxford. Based on its findings, the research team is currently working with the Home Office, Youth Justice Board and several domestic violence organisations to create policy guidance on the issue of adolescent violence towards parents.

In the first academic study of its kind, researchers analysed raw data from the London Metropolitan Police area, revealing that in one year (2009-2010) alone, there were 1,892 reported cases of 13-19 year olds committing violent assaults against their own parents or other carers. Prior to this study, the problem has remained largely hidden with no national figures on cases reported to the police.

“In addition to living in fear of assault, parents report feelings of shame and blame and are reluctant to report the problem out of a fear of the consequences for their child,” says researcher Dr Rachel Condry. “This apparent reluctance of parents to go to the police means that such violence is likely to occur far more frequently than reported cases would suggest.”

Findings for the London Metropolitan Police reveal that son-to-mother violence was most common, with 87 per cent of suspects being male and 77 per cent of victims being female. Families described a range of reasons for explosive behaviour including substance abuse and mental health problems but some families were at a loss to explain their child’s aggression.

The study identified adolescent-to-parent violence in all levels of society: some victims were from families struggling on benefits; others had professional jobs and high incomes.

A lack of practical support for this issue means that families are struggling to deal with the problem, warns researcher Dr Caroline Miles. Currently, only a handful of localised programmes across the country work specifically with the problem of adolescent-to-parent violence. What’s more, to date, police forces and youth justice or other agencies working with these families have not had the specific guidance they need to support these families.

“This is a complex problem: society does not want to over-criminalise young people yet we cannot continue to have a blank page on this issue,” says Dr Condry. Consequently, the research team is following the initial study with a project aimed at developing guidance for those working in the field.
Bilingualism impact on Alzheimer’s

SOME RECENT STUDIES have reported that people with Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) who are bilingual develop symptoms several years later than people who are monolingual. But a new, small-scale study finds no evidence for a significant delay in the onset of AD in Welsh/English bilinguals. This finding was comparable to that in Montreal where no bilingual advantage was found in non-immigrant bilinguals. One explanation, researchers say, is that having both languages available in the environment from an early age results in a simultaneous form of bilingualism so language use is more automatic than for bilinguals who acquire fluency in a second language later on. “This may make bilingualism less likely to provide resilience in the face of cognitive impairment,” says researcher Professor Linda Clare.

Value of patents to protect UK firms’ innovations

PATENTING IS USED quite widely by innovative UK firms, according to a survey of innovation and patent use commissioned by the Intellectual Property Office. “While only three per cent of all firms take advantage of patenting, when looking at those firms which innovate this number rises to 40 per cent,” says researcher Professor Suma Athreye.

“Despite popular belief that patents are no longer fit for purpose, this research shows that there is still great value to UK firms in patenting,” says Professor Athreye. “But it is those firms which are developing new-to-market innovations that really benefit from patenting to protect their Intellectual Property (IP) and to allow them to bring in revenue through licensing.”

Bought-in technology (often underpinned by patents) is important to the UK economy and the study estimated that in 2007-2009 expenditure on technology licensing was £6.9 billion – almost 40 per cent of the private R&D expenditure in the UK.

In the global marketplace patents protect UK business interests and support knowledge circulation in the economy. Innovators – those organisations that really benefit from patents – already take advantage of this. Rather than focusing on encouraging use of patenting through legislation, policymakers need to consider how to boost the conditions for innovation in general, researchers conclude.

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IN BRIEF

ACTIVE IN CAMDEN

Less than a quarter of British girls and one third of boys achieve the recommended one hour of physical activity a day. Camden Borough Council will re-design six school playgrounds with exciting bespoke features to encourage children to become more active. Using small wearable motion sensors, researchers will collect physical activity data on pupils and examine the impact of this playground initiative. ESRC grant number ES/M003795/1

SYRIA IN CONFLICT

Syria is currently undergoing a serious conflict with vast numbers of Syrians suffering but the character of the conflict is different across diverse places within Syria and is changing over time. New armed groups, for example, are emerging regularly. Researchers aim to create a database that captures this complex situation and helps increase understanding of what is happening in Syria – when, where, by whom and why. ESRC grant number ESA014955/1

COGNITIVE TESTING

After more than a century of active research on cognitive abilities, dozens of varied assessment tools now exist and the generalised findings from such varied sources is problematic. Development of the International Cognitive Ability Resource (ICAR) aims to address this issue. The ICAR will facilitate the development of a large and dynamic bank of cognitive ability measures for use in a wide variety of applications. ESRC grant number ESA016591/1
May saw local council elections in England and Northern Ireland and the election of members of the European Parliament. Who were the winners and losers and what do the results tell us about the future of party politics in the UK? Ed Fieldhouse and Jane Green of the British Election Study (BES) analyse the results and explain the study’s findings.
To what extent does the result of the election for the European Parliament act as a predictor for the result of the general election in 2015? Is this the usual mid-term blip where voters express frustration about certain issues but then go back to their traditional allegiances?

European Parliament election results have tended to be poor predictors of general election voting intentions. For example, the 2009 European Parliament election saw UKIP win 16.5 per cent of the vote but the 2010 general election saw the party win 3.1 per cent of the vote. This pattern confirmed the view that European Parliament elections signal a protest vote, a vote conditioned by the different electoral system, and vote choice based on second-order political issues, not least views about the EU itself. The 2009 BES internet panel study closely predicted the 2010 UKIP general election result following the UKIP vote share in the 2009 European Parliament election. Roll forward five years and what does the BES predict for UKIP vote share in 2015? The first wave of 2014 BES internet panel data predicted UKIP 2015 general election vote support at 14 per cent (excluding ‘don’t knows’ and people who say they will not vote). While this is a significant decrease from the European Parliament vote share of 27.5 per cent, it is not the collapse in fourth party support we have previously witnessed. The 2014 European Parliament result looks likely to be a better predictor for the result of the 2015 general election, but the BES remains as good a predictor as it has ever been.

Is it possible to isolate the effects of disaffection with the government and current anti-immigration sentiment that may account for much of UKIP’s success?

One misconception about UKIP is that the party appeals to people who have long been disillusioned by politics and by the major party choices. BES survey questions about political efficacy suggest that UKIP support is only marginally higher among people who think that politicians don’t speak for them (28 per cent of respondents like or strongly like UKIP who agree that ‘politicians don’t care what people like me think’, whereas the average proportion who ‘liked’ UKIP in February-March 2014 was 26 per cent). The same is true for questions about trust in Members of Parliament. UKIP support is only marginally higher among respondents who have little or no trust in MPs compared to those who have some trust in MPs. UKIP’s support is overwhelmingly from people who previously supported one of the major parties, and then overwhelmingly among people who report previously voting Conservative. It would therefore be quite wrong to conclude that UKIP is giving a voice to people who have become disaffected with the political system. What is true, however, is that UKIP support is considerably higher among BES respondents who hold negative attitudes about coalition government (as well as negative attitudes to the parties in coalition, and Labour in opposition). We asked four questions about general evaluations about the effectiveness and accountability of coalition governing compared to single party government. The proportion ‘liking’ UKIP was 31 per cent if respondents held negative evaluations of coalition across all four items, and 17 per cent if respondents held all positive evaluations of governing in coalition. The very presence of a coalition rather than a single-party government has seemingly contributed to UKIP’s recent success.

It is unsurprising that UKIP is picking up support among people holding anti-immigration attitudes. We asked respondents whether they think immigration is good or bad for Britain’s economy. Of those scoring ‘one’ on a seven point scale (immigrants are bad for the economy) 32 per cent say they would vote UKIP at the General Election next year, making it the most popular party in this group. At the other end of the scale (immigrants are good for the economy) UKIP pick only two per cent of votes. This pattern was replicated exactly (32 per cent to two per cent) when we asked whether immigrants enrich or damage cultural life. Whereas the percentage citing UKIP as the best party on the most important problem was 0.6 per cent in 2010 (post-election survey), that figure was 12 per cent in the first wave of the BES internet panel study (fielded in February-March 2014). The rise in salience of immigration is undoubtedly a fundamental factor in the rise of support for UKIP, as well as some possible hardening in anti-immigrant attitudes.

"UKIP’s support is from people who previously supported one of the major parties"

Over 50 per cent of BES respondents intending to vote UKIP in 2015 were self-reported Tory voters in 2010

UKIP is drawing most of its support from former Tories. Over 50 per cent of BES respondents intending to vote UKIP in 2015 were self-reported Tory voters in 2010 compared to only
12 per cent for Labour and 17 per cent for the Lib Dems. Their support is also less solid than that of the major parties. Approximately three quarters of those saying in March that they would vote UKIP in 2015, still said this in June. The equivalent loyalty rates for both Tories and Labour was 86 per cent. Moreover, of those not staying loyal to UKIP, the largest proportion drifted to the Conservatives (nine per cent) followed by Labour (three per cent). But this does not mean that UKIP may not damage Labour in constituencies thought to be former Labour strongholds. In 2010, UKIP came second in five Labour seats, in no Conservative seat and in one Lib Dem seat (Romsey). The eventual damage will depend on how much the Conservatives can hold on to traditionally strong Constituencies, the Lib Dems to theirs and Labour to theirs. One interesting consideration is that Conservative support has become relatively stronger in the South of the country, and Labour support is relatively stronger in the North. UKIP therefore has a similar dilemma to the dilemma facing the Lib Dems in the 1990s; the need to fight on two fronts to very different sets of electoral characteristics.

**Has the face of British politics truly changed or is it likely to revert to the conventional three-party system in 2015?**

The key consideration is the difference in votes and seats. Voters may split their vote more over four (or five) parties in 2015 than has ever been the case (let’s remember that Scotland and Wales have seen four-party politics for many years, though UKIP support remains very weak in Scotland), but we may still see three dominant national parties in Parliament (and a Liberal Democrat party in coalition again with a smaller number of MPs).

“Conservative support has become relatively stronger in the South of the country”

and 10 = strongly like for each leader, Farage scores 3.2 in the February-March 2014 BES, Clegg 3.1, Miliband 3.7 and Cameron 3.8. Hardly a ringing endorsement of any of the party leaders on offer to the British electorate going into 2015.

**If the vote continues to be split four ways, are we even more likely to have coalition governments in future?**

Yes. Majority government is most likely when two parties secure a majority of available votes between them. The increase in voters’ tendency to vote for third or other parties has been a long-term trend in British elections and has led to an increased likelihood of coalition government, culminating in the result in 2010. The likelihood of coalition government is vastly increased by a long-term decline in the number of competitive seats, driven by geographical polarisation in party support.

Whereas in the past small shifts in support for the main parties lead to big swings in the number of seats won, the decline in marginal seats has meant that ever greater swings in vote share are needed for one party to gain a decisive advantage in terms of seats. The ground has been fertile for a fourth party to enter the British electoral arena for some time, made more likely now by voter reactions to coalition government. It is ironic that those voters who dislike coalition government the most (voters more likely to support UKIP) could be the ones contributing to an increased likelihood of coalition government in future.

**Did the focus on UKIP’s European election headlines mask the fact that Labour was actually successful in the local government elections?**

It is true that the normal coverage of a local election result would focus on the winners and losers, and Labour would have been billed as the winner (with various caveats around what might be reasonable expectations of projected national vote share), Labour’s vote was well down on expectations of a major party of opposition the year before a general election and also down on its 2012 share. Whilst it may be obvious that vote shares
might be lower in a four-way competition, it would be ridiculous to argue that the focus on UKIP was disproportionate to its significance. UKIP’s rise is the largest party incursion into mainstream British politics in a generation and the largest political upset to mainstream politicians in as long. The root causes are among the most important questions we can answer in British electoral politics. We make no apologies for discussing UKIP’s rise at length in various media interviews in the coverage of the elections. We were pleased to be the go-to source for election analysis across a range of outlets.

**Any predictions for the 2015 General Election?**

Like recent Polls, the wave 1 of the BES found the Labour Party slightly ahead on vote share (38 per cent to 31 per cent for Conservatives) which would, if repeated next year, be sufficient for a parliamentary majority even with UKIP running at 14 per cent. But normally we would expect the governing party to be unpopular mid-term and recover as the General Election approaches. In this sense we might expect support for the Conservatives to recover between now and May 2015. Usually the main opposition party wins the European Parliament elections, and Labour’s failure to do so this time around is bad news for their 2015 prospects. Also, the Lib Dems might have expected their vote to hold up more than the polls suggest, but the local election results for

The Lib Dems call this into question. Their support showed no signs of recovering from its post 2010 collapse, with the exception of a few headline results. So the Lib Dems are likely to do badly, losing a significant proportion of their current MPs. UKIP could surprise some people by winning no MPs at all and surprise others by winning several. But even our largest UKIP estimate would still be in single figures. The most interesting and difficult aspect to predict is the effect of UKIP votes on seat losses between the major parties: UKIP may not win a constituency but it may cause a major upset in Con-Lab, Con-Lib or Lab-Lib constituencies. More BES data will help us answer this question as we get nearer to the 2015 general election.

**And what can it tell us about the Scottish referendum in September?**

The BES benefits from additional funding from the ESRC’s Future of the UK and Scotland initiative. This allows us to study a sample of Scottish voters in the run up to, and immediately after, the Scottish Independence referendum. Our findings from wave 1 show the race is still wide open, with the No camp ahead by 51 per cent to 37 per cent with the rest undecided. But it is these undecided voters that could still hold

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The Lib Dems might have expected their vote to hold up more than the polls suggest, the key. Our research suggests that, alongside the economy and feelings of uncertainty, devolution preferences are key drivers of referendum vote intentions. Moreover, just like Yes voters, the ‘don’t knows’ are more likely to hope for further devolution of powers but do not expect those powers to be delivered within the union. Perhaps more importantly, preliminary findings from BES wave 2 (carried out in June) indicate that amongst those respondents that remained in the survey, there was a slight drop in the No vote to 49 per cent and a slight increase in the Yes vote to 38 per cent. The BES is unique in that it is able to track the referendum vote intention of the same voters over time. This tells us that just over 90 per cent of those voting intending to vote Yes or No did not change their mind in the three months between waves. Also very few respondents switched from Yes to know (three per cent) or vice versa (two per cent). But those who said they ‘don’t know’ in March were much more likely in June to say they’ll vote ‘Yes’ (25 per cent) than ‘No’ (16 per cent). This suggests that the race might get tighter as we move towards the finish line.
London calling

London’s concentration of economic activity attracts people and resources, creating greater employment opportunities and higher salaries, but also fast-rising house prices and a high cost of living. Is London’s superior economic performance a good thing for the rest of the UK – or even London itself? Professor Henry Overman explains...

In his recent BBC TV series ‘Mind the Gap: London versus the Rest’ Evan Davies explored the economic forces that are polarising Britain. As the programmes made clear a big part of the story concerns the geographic concentration of economic activity in London (and the South East).

Such concentration raises a number of questions. Is it good for those who live or work in London but bad for those who don’t? Is the attraction of London creating an economy that is distinct from the rest of the UK? What are the implications? To answer these kind of questions, we do need to think about the role of London. But we also need to think about the role of the UK’s second tier cities – and of the structure of our urban system more generally.

It is useful to start with a realistic discussion of finance and the globally orientated part of the London economy. Neither of these factors is as dominant as suggested by popular discussion. Financial services are clearly a growth sector, but most of London’s long-term job growth has come from activities other than finance. For sure, some of this is linked to finance, although it is not clear how much. But London has strength in a range of business and information services well beyond the financial sector.

On the consumption side, London is a preferred location for the super-rich and some exceptionally wealthy people live in its more affluent neighbourhoods. But the super-rich are a tiny, if much publicised, minority. Take, for example, foreign buyers in the London housing market. Both the number of high value transactions (eg, properties over £2 million) and the share of foreign buyers in overall transactions (rather than the much smaller new-build market) are small. It seems much more likely, therefore, that domestic sources of demand are the most important driver of the London housing market.

In terms of production, London does serve global markets, but far more jobs are tied to the UK market beyond London. Indeed, what is most distinctive of the London economy is its competitive strength across a very wide range of services and the skill levels of those that work in these services.

In short, a large part of London’s superior economic performance comes from the concentration of able and talented workers (both British and foreign), who would be paid relatively well wherever they lived. In turn, that concentration is partly driven by the fact that London provides greater opportunities for individuals to use and develop their talents. All of this means that London has higher wages, more expensive housing and a greater general cost of living, with the gap in all of these rising as pay inequality in the labour market has grown. But, at least for those who are young, able and willing to economise on housing costs, London offers opportunities that are simply not available elsewhere. And since many later move on to other areas of the country, London also acts as a source of highly skilled workers to economies throughout the UK.

Whether you think this is good or bad for Britain partly depends on how one tells the story about what is going on. If, as is popular, one talks about London sucking the talent from the rest of the UK then this sounds like a pretty bad thing. London offers opportunities that simply aren’t available elsewhere. When large numbers of people respond to these opportunities, what happens?
If we focus only on average outcomes, we see population, wages and house prices increasing in London and falling (at least in relative terms) in other cities. But from the perspective of people who live in these different places, the economic impact is much more nuanced. Indeed, as is the case for the majority of significant economic changes, the story is one of gainers and losers in all cities (including London).

In London, higher wages (and better amenities) tend to offset higher housing costs. If this were not the case, then people would not be moving to the city and it would not be growing so spectacularly. But not everyone in London is better off. Individuals outside the labour market may be worse off due to rising housing costs. This is one of the reasons why deprivation measures can be high in London. Rising housing costs may also lead to worse outcomes for those workers whose wages are not very responsive to local economic conditions (e.g., the low-skilled or nurses and teachers whose wages are set nationally). This effect is partly responsible for the arguments about affordability issues for ‘key’ workers.

Similar patterns also play out in other British cities such as Bristol and Manchester that have recently seen faster growth. In cities that are doing less well, this story of winners and losers is also repeated. Individuals who are able to move away do well. For those who stay the balance of changing income and housing costs determines who gains and who loses.

Beyond the individual effects, such uneven spatial development also has implications for overall economic growth. Here, once again, debate is polarised. For some, it is obvious that spreading growth across the UK would make use of underutilised resources. For others, London and the South East are key and we should focus on making sure they continue to perform. Unfortunately, it is essentially impossible to provide empirical evidence on whether more or less geographical concentration leads to faster growth and thus to distinguish which of these two stories is correct.

My own view is that, rather than focus on London’s dominance, we need to ask why aren’t other large cities offering people similar economic opportunities and what can be done about it? Looked at this way, the evidence suggests that more even spatial development at the broad national level may require, paradoxically, the growth of one or two other large cities so that they provide similar opportunities. To resolve this paradox, we need to remember that ultimately we care about the effect of policies on people more than on places. If growth for all requires us to provide opportunities for all, then it just may be that we have to put up with the fact that some places will always do better than others.
We frequently hear politicians and public commentators bemoan the lack of aspiration among young people, dismissing them as a celebrity-obsessed, work-shy ‘get rich quick’ generation who don’t appreciate the value of hard work. As part of our ESRC-funded research we carried out 24 group interviews with 148 young people aged 14-17 across England to see how they view ‘celebrity culture’.

Our first finding is that young people use celebrity talk to do a range of things, for example, to demonstrate their maturity, discuss their values and ideas about morality and conduct, show that they belong to a certain friendship group, or flirt with each other. Celebrity provides a shared collection of stories through which to talk about other things and has become part of how ideas and values circulate in society – including ideas about success, aspiration, work and happiness. How young people talk about celebrity can give us insights into how they negotiate these ideas in relation to their own lives and possible futures.

Young people were critical of those who earned what they saw as excessive salaries, who they felt wasted their money and were too motivated by wealth. These feelings were often expressed through discussions of footballers’ ‘overblown’ salaries and comparisons with others who are less well rewarded but were seen as doing more important work than celebrities, particularly members of the military. These feelings were also reflected in accounts of ‘bad’ and irresponsible uses of money such as excessive and wasteful spending on consumer goods for pleasure, and randomly giving away large amounts of cash.

As with hard work, social class was important to who was viewed as earning and consuming ‘appropriately’. While footballers, music and reality television stars were mentioned negatively, the even-wealthier members of the royal family or technology billionaires were not spoken about in the same way; instead, their wealth was seen as well-established and normal. As for philanthropy, people who ‘gave back’ – either financially or through other philanthropic work – were generally highly regarded, although this had to be for genuine reasons and not pursued simply for publicity.

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Elite gymnasts tend to score well above population norms for eating disorder symptoms. Professor Jacinta Tan explains why and what can be done to help

Elite gymnasts tend to be preoccupied with weight and body shape, with some scoring well above population norms for eating disorder symptoms, according to research carried out by myself and Dr Andrew Bloodworth, Associate Professor Jeanette Hewitt and Professor Mike McNamee, in partnership with British Gymnastics.

Our research, at Swansea University, also found that elite gymnasts – both male and female – tended to have high self esteem along with some degree of ‘eating disordered’ features that can be functional to their sport, for instance in helping to maintain strict control over eating, weight and shape which is essential to optimal performance at the elite level. At the same time, eating disorders can have very serious consequences to long-term health and, because of the age profile of gymnastics, adolescents entering the elite ranks raise developmental concerns about their psychological health and physical growth, especially as eating disorders tend to develop during this phase.

Sports organisations have known about the raised risk of eating disorders amongst athletes for many years. Professor Jacinta Tan explains why and what can be done to help

Sports organisations have known about the raised risk of eating disorders amongst athletes for many years, particularly among elite athletes and those in sports with a strong aesthetic element. There is even a diagnostic label, the ‘Female Athlete Triad’, which has been specifically developed to describe this phenomenon among female athletes. And there are position statements from the International Olympic Committee and many other sports professional organisations, which call for clear pathways to detect and deal with athletes suffering from eating disorders.

Our research found that there is a possibility that some athletes are able to ‘switch on’ and ‘switch off’ their preoccupation with weight, intake and shape as required and use their ‘eating disordered’ behaviour as a functional tool. But such athletes may run serious risks of developing full-blown eating disorders. We also found that the standard definition of anorexia nervosa, which includes criteria of weighing below a population norm, is not easily applied to elite gymnasts because of their high muscle mass.

What our research adds is the understanding that the concept of eating disorders can be problematic as applied to elite athletes, and the pressures that can arise in the elite athletic contexts. The research is one of very few eating disorder studies of elite athletes in the UK and it found that in many high performing clubs in the UK which regularly produce world-class gymnasts in non-Olympic disciplines but do not possess lottery funding, coaches reported they had little access to resources for education or support for nutritional advice and growth monitoring.

Our research findings recommended that physical growth and development of all elite gymnasts who are children and adolescents should be regularly monitored for all elite gymnasts and policies put in place if athletes fall below the norms. Coaches should be educated that there should be less frequent weighing of athletes to avoid development of an unhealthy preoccupation with body weight. And coaches should be given more training on nutrition and eating disorders. The findings have been published in a lay report, which has been given to British Gymnastics and Sports Coach UK and will be given to coaches of gymnastics clubs.

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What if Scotland votes No?

As we enter the regulated period of the Scottish independence referendum campaign, we can expect debates over the consequences of a Yes vote to intensify. Much has been made about the uncertainties that would result from a Yes vote. Much less is heard about the consequences – in some ways no less uncertain – of a No vote. By Dr Nicola McEwen

WHAT HAPPENS IF Scots vote No in September? The only thing we can be sure of is that change is inevitable, but how much change, and to whose benefit, is less clear.

One set of changes, already agreed in statute, will come with the full implementation of the Scotland Act 2012. Some minor provisions of the Act have already been implemented, but its main tax provisions are scheduled to come into force in the next two years. From April 2015, the Scottish Parliament will assume legislative responsibility for taxes related to land transactions and waste disposal, and will have the power, under certain conditions, to borrow up to a maximum of £2.2bn for capital spending and £500m for revenue spending.

From April 2016, a new Scottish rate of income tax will be introduced. Scottish taxpayers will see their UK income tax rate cut by 10p, with a commensurate cut in the Scottish block grant – the fiscal transfer from the Treasury to the Scottish government – leaving the Scottish government to set a rate which replaces the lost revenue. The principal motivation for these changes was to ensure that the Scottish government would have to raise some of the money it spends. But as well as enhancing fiscal accountability, the new taxes bring additional fiscal autonomy, giving the Scottish parliament the power to set the Scottish rate of income tax at a higher or lower level than UK income tax.

Change is unlikely to stop there. All three main UK parties are committed to further devolution, and each has presented proposals for inclusion in their manifestos ahead of the 2015 General election. Though there will be no single offer before the referendum, there is some overlap between them.

The proposals centre on income tax devolution. The Liberal Democrats were the first to propose the devolution of almost all income tax as part of a broader package to increase the powers of the Scottish parliament. Departing from the ‘line in the sand’ drawn by the Scottish Tory leader Ruth Davidson when she was elected in 2011 to set the limits on devolved powers, the Conservatives have also backed the devolution of all personal income tax, including the setting of rates and bands. Labour’s proposals are the most modest, and would see roughly three quarters of income tax fall under the control of the Scottish parliament.

In each case, the proposals have emerged from party-appointed commissions. The result bears the hallmarks of internal tensions and political compromise.

With a long summer of campaigning ahead, the result is far from a foregone conclusion.
a maximum form of devolution within the UK if Scots vote No in September.

The independence referendum has been something of a gamble for the SNP. Although its election victory in 2011 gave it a mandate to hold an independence referendum, the party was well aware that its majority had little to do with pro-independence feeling. Convinced of the virtues of independence, it committed itself to trying to convince the rest of the population that it offered the best future for Scotland. It may yet be successful. But were there to be a big No vote, the party and its leader could be damaged. On the other hand, a narrower victory for the No side would still be a victory of sorts. It would see support for independence reach a record high, and could enhance rather than diminish the stature and authority of the SNP government.

The scale of defeat may also affect the influence the Scottish government has in Whitehall. Before and after devolution, ministers and officials have at times argued persuasively in defence of Scottish interests in their dealings with their Whitehall counterparts, gaining some concessions for Scotland in part because a UK government that refused to give concessions risked provoking the demand for Scottish self-government. A referendum which produces a No vote – especially if the result is convincing – could weaken the Scots’ bargaining power in the intergovernmental arena and make it more difficult for the Scottish government to exert influence.

A deliberately punitive Westminster response in the wake of a No vote seems unlikely and would be very unwise; it would create a grievance upon which nationalist demands could re-emerge. But the UK government may face pressures from interests in the rest of the UK to revisit thorny issues that have become sources of grievance south of the border. For example, we can envisage demands to change the system of territorial finance and especially the Barnett formula, used to calculate changes to fiscal transfers to the devolved administrations. The West Lothian Question may also raise its head again, potentially leading to diminished Scottish representation in the Westminster Parliament. Either of these would almost certainly produce costs for Scotland.

In writing this article, I am not predicting a No vote. With a long summer of campaigning ahead, the referendum result is far from a foregone conclusion. But if Scots do decide to stay within the UK, it will not mean an end to the debate over Scotland's constitutional future. How Scotland fits within the UK – its voice, recognition and influence – are constant features of political debate within Scotland. How the pro-Union parties and the UK government respond to a No vote, and how the UK itself develops in the years to come, would influence how quickly we would once again be discussing the question of whether Scotland should be an independent country.

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We present an at-a-glance overview of the key issues in Britain today. In this issue our focus is on rural and urban population. All statistics are from the ONS 2011 Census Analysis published in 2014 unless otherwise stated.

### Resident population

For the rural subgroups, the ‘Rural town and fringe’ category accounted for the greatest population at 9.2 per cent, with 5.8 per cent resident in the ‘Rural village’ category and 3.5 per cent in the ‘Rural hamlet and isolated dwelling’ group.

“Clearly, then, the city is not a concrete jungle, it is a human zoo” Desmond Morris

- Major conurbation: 33.5%
- Minor conurbation: 3.4%
- City and town: 44.6%
- Village: 5.8%
- Town and fringe: 9.2%
- Hamlets and isolated dwellings: 3.5%

### Population by region

London’s population is almost entirely resident in urban areas (99.8 per cent). This is ten percentage points larger than the North West which at 89.4 per cent has the second highest percentage of usual residents in urban areas. Wales (67.2 per cent) has the lowest proportion of its population living in urban areas.

“God made the country, and man made the town” William Cowper

- Urban: 82%
- Rural: 95%

Areas classified as rural in 2001 grew by 6.4 per cent in population by 2011, while areas classified as urban grew by 8.1 per cent. The median age rose from 42 to 45 years in rural areas and from 36 to 37 in urban areas. During this period, rural areas experienced an increase in the proportion of usual residents with an activity limiting health problem or disability. The proportion of residents with ‘White British’ ethnicity fell from 85.2 per cent to 77.2 per cent in urban areas; the proportion of urban households renting privately increased from 12.0 per cent in 2001 to 18.5 per cent in 2011.
Economic activity
Residents aged 16 to 74 were as likely to be economically active in urban areas (69.7 per cent) as they were in rural areas (69.5 per cent). Rural residents were more likely to be in employment (64.3 per cent compared with 61.3 per cent in urban areas).

Occupation
Rural areas have a larger percentage of residents employed in skilled trade occupations than urban areas (14.4 per cent compared with 10.8 per cent) and managers, directors and senior officials (13.7 per cent compared with 10.1 per cent).

Qualifications
Residents aged 16 and over in urban areas were more likely to have qualifications than their rural counterparts. Rural residents were more likely to have an apprenticeship as their highest qualification.

Ethnicity
Pakistanis were the third most common ethnic minority in urban areas comprising 2.4 per cent of the population but comprised just 0.1 per cent of the rural population.

“Suburb: a place that isn’t city, isn’t country, and isn’t tolerable”
Mignon McLaughlin
Making an impact

The second ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize recognised researchers who demonstrate how they are achieving outstanding impact through collaborative working, partnerships, engagement and knowledge exchange activities. And how they are making a difference to society, business and policymaking.

On 5 June, nearly 100 people from the worlds of policy, business, charity and the media gathered for the ESRC’s annual Celebrating Impact Prize ceremony at The Royal Society, London. Times columnist David Aaronovitch hosted the evening which recognised academics from across the UK for their impact on some of the most important social and economic issues of today. Ten prizes were awarded to individuals and teams who had successfully engaged with users of their research, using their independent, high-quality work to make a difference to society, business and public policy.

Winners in each of the five main categories were presented with a trophy and a cheque for £10,000, with a £5,000 Second Prize awarded to additional winners. The ceremony also recognised Professor Sir David Hendry with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his decades of work on econometrics and economic modelling, and his commitment to training others throughout his career. Each winner will be able to use the prize to fund further public engagement and communications activities related to their work, to achieve even greater impact.

This was the second year of the prize, judged by a panel of experts from business, academia and the public sector and open to any researcher who had received ESRC funding – from PhD candidates to professorial fellows. Applicants were required to provide evidence of how their research had been used and shaped by the communities they work with, with shortlisted entrants asked to present their work to an interview panel.

A short film of each of the First Prize winners was screened at the ceremony, recognising the important partnerships that underpinned their research with testimony from policymakers, businesses and charities emphasising the difference the research had made. Videos and case studies of all the winners are available online at: www.esrc.ac.uk/impactprize

The Winners

Outstanding Early Career Impact – PhD or early career researchers who have demonstrated outstanding impact

First Prize – Hannah Lambie Mumford, University of Sheffield

Hannah Lambie-Mumford’s research on emergency food provision in the UK has provided evidence to inform the food poverty debate. Her investigation of the rise of the Trussell Foodbank Network and FareShare, two UK charities involved in providing emergency food supplies, is helping policymakers, charities and the media understand the demand for, and operations of, emergency food initiatives. Hannah’s work also goes beyond the provision of food aid to raise issues concerning the underlying causes of food poverty itself, shaping the terms of reference for the April 2014 All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into hunger and food poverty. By working closely with churches and other organisations involved in food assistance projects on the ground, Hannah is stimulating debate on the practical ways churches can act around food poverty.

Second Prize – Olivia Maynard, University of Bristol

Olivia Maynard’s study of how plain, standardised packaging impacts on people’s attention to tobacco health warnings is a key part of a growing body of evidence underpinning recent reviews and changes to legislation. The research was used most recently by Sir Cyril Chantler, who conducted an independent review of existing research on plain
packaging. Based on the review findings, the UK government announced in April 2014 that it would introduce plain packaging in England. Maynard used eye-tracking technology to measure the eye movements of adults and adolescents when viewing branded and plain cigarette packs. The study was the first to use objective behavioural measures to investigate the behavioural impact of plain packaging, and suggests that it could be an effective means of tobacco control.

Outstanding Impact in Society — researchers who have made a contribution benefiting society or a specific group of the public

First Prize — Professor Debra Myhill, University of Exeter
Professor Debra Myhill and colleagues can now clearly demonstrate that embedding grammar in the teaching of writing can have a positive impact on children’s written work. In one study, researchers found that when grammar was linked meaningfully to the writing being taught, children’s writing scores improved at double the rate of children not taught in that way. A further outcome is that many teachers now think differently about the teaching of writing. Through practical guidance and engagement with teaching professionals, the team have helped ‘demystify’ the process of writing and develop teachers’ ability to show children how writing works. The involvement of multinational company Pearson Education is also ensuring that the research achieves significantly greater reach than would otherwise have been possible.

Second Prize — Dr Lorna Warren, University of Sheffield
Following an innovative research project under the New Dynamics of Ageing programme, Dr Lorna Warren is using the channels of policy and education to challenge the way older people are represented in society. In the art-based project ‘Look at Me! Images of Women and Ageing’, a group of 41 women from Sheffield aged 43-96 created ‘untraditional’ images of themselves which were then exhibited in several venues in the UK. Now, Dr Warren and colleagues are introducing workshops that explore age-based stereotypes in schools, with a view to include ageism in Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. To raise greater public and policy attention to these issues, Dr Warren last year co-launched a Charter against Ageism and Sexism (ChASM), developed in collaboration with Women in Journalism, research group Women, Ageing and Media, and the National Union of Journalists.

Outstanding Impact in Business — researchers who have generated business impact through successful knowledge exchange and engagement

First Prize — Professor Neil Wrigley, University of Southampton
Professor Neil Wrigley has led a research team whose pioneering work on food retailing has changed the debate on retail sector practices, contributed to government policy, and helped convince key industry players of the value of large-scale, high-quality academic research. His investigation into the problems of food access in deprived urban communities (commonly referred to as ‘food deserts’) is acknowledged to have influenced national and international policy on urban regeneration. In the USA, for example, the importance of access to healthy foods has become a cornerstone of the Obama Administration’s food policy, and in the UK, Professor Wrigley’s pioneering three-year study into the impact of new ‘in-centre’ and ‘edge-of-centre’ supermarket development is widely used in planning proposals and enquiries. The findings provided evidence that supermarket development does not necessarily lead to less trade in the town centre – but rather encourages local shopping overall.

The panel also recognised the business impact of Professor Debra Myhill, winner of the Outstanding Impact in Society award.

Outstanding International Impact — researchers who have achieved impact at an international level in business, policy or societal issues

First Prize — Dr Sabina Alkire, University of Oxford
Dr Sabina Alkire and Professor James Foster of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) have developed an innovative methodology for measuring poverty, capturing aspects such as poor health and lack of education to provide
an at-a-glance poverty ‘rating’ which shows not only who is poor, but also how they are poor. The new method is helping a growing number of governments to more effectively design, implement and monitor their efforts to reduce poverty. The Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN), co-founded by OPHI, now counts officials from over 25 governments and international organisations as its participants.

**Second Prize – Dr Stuart Basten, University of Oxford**

Dr Stuart Basten’s research into Asian fertility helped convince the United Nations (UN) to revise its forecasts on future population trends, with particularly large effects for Pacific Asian economies. Policymakers all over the world turn to population forecasts produced by the UN as the key source of authoritative projections on future population trends. Known as the World Population Prospects (WPP), these forecasts are hugely significant in formulating policy, particularly in developing countries and emerging economies where much of the future population growth will be concentrated. Identifying a shortcoming in the UN’s 2010 forecast, Dr Basten offered the UN an alternative view, and the UN’s redesigned WPP for 2012-013 provides a forecast which is not only more in tune with current evidence, but is based on a stronger methodology for use in the future.

**Outstanding Impact in Public Policy – researchers who have contributed to the development of UK public policy at the local, regional, or national level**

**First Prize – Dr Clifford Stott, University of Leeds**

Dr Clifford Stott and colleagues developed a model of crowd conflict now widely viewed as the leading psychological theory of its kind. Based on his work to engage this theory with policy, police forces in the UK and further afield are reforming crowd strategy and practices with the aim of reducing conflict by ensuring that crowds can have their say. Many believe that forceful policing is essential in order to control crowds and act as deterrence. Dr Stott’s research provided powerful evidence that crowds can be managed more effectively when the police concentrate on enabling lawful behaviour – such as protests – rather than merely trying to control criminal behaviour through fear and force. Today, Dr Stott’s ideas permeate police training and policy as well as the recent introduction of new police ‘liaison units’ designed to avoid conflict through dialogue.

**Second Prize – Professor Shadd Maruna, Queen’s University Belfast**

The team behind the Desistance Knowledge Exchange (DesKE) – Shadd Maruna, Stephen Farrall and Fergus McNeill – are widely acknowledged to be leading researchers on how criminals can leave crime behind. Yet Professor Shadd Maruna insists that the real experts in how individuals stop re-offending are ex-offenders themselves. Building on the knowledge exchange expertise of Dr Claire Lightowler to work with ex-offenders, families, practitioners and policymakers, the DesKE team drew out the common threads from many individual success stories – helping to create and interpret a new body of rehabilitation evidence that is changing policy and practice in criminal justice. Based on this research, a high-level organisational review in the Scottish Prison Service has transformed its approach, and at a local level the DesKE team helped to establish the Wirral Desistance Project, which brought together probation staff and probationers to explore what was working in the rehabilitation process.

**Lifetime Achievement Award – Professor Sir David Hendry**

Over five decades, Professor Sir David Hendry has developed macro-economic models capturing how economies work, which are now embedded in software widely used by policymakers and decision-makers. You can read more about Professor Hendry’s work on page 26.
WE’D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Whether you’re a Society Now subscriber or read it only occasionally, we would like your views on the style and content of the magazine. What do you think of the way it’s written? Is the design easy to read? Are there topics for articles that you think we should cover? Would you prefer a digital version and, if so, on what platform?

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See: www.surveymonkey.com/s/societynow2014
Forecasting the future

The sudden onset of the global financial crisis in 2007 highlighted the need for more reliable macro-economic models. Phil Thornton talks to Professor Sir David Hendry, winner of the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize Lifetime Achievement Award, about how he developed economic models used worldwide to improve the way economists forecast the future.

In November 2008 in the wake of the collapse of Lehman Brothers bank and the onset of a global recession, Queen Elizabeth II asked the question on everybody’s lips: “Why did no one see it coming?” The global financial crisis has triggered a wide-ranging debate over the ability of economists to make forecasts and politicians to understand them.

Neither the crisis nor the debate come as a huge surprise to Sir David Hendry, Professor of Economics at the University of Oxford, who has devoted almost five decades to developing economic models and improving the way the profession forecasts the future.

In his view the profession missed the fact that deregulation can cause serious problems. “In the run-up to 2008 there was an entrenched belief that more choice is better,” he recalls. “The profession was so convinced that deregulation worked that even when the sub-prime loans market started to go badly wrong in 2007 some economists still advocated continuing with them. The profession was not looking in the right place as the crisis unfolded.”

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Hendry’s career has been focused on developing economic methods to model and forecast economies that are constantly evolving. “Econometric methodology concerns trying to extract knowledge about how economies function from data thereon, such as unemployment, inflation, imports and exports and so on,” he says.

For Hendry, who turned 70 in March, his own journey began in 1966 with an MA in economics at the University of Aberdeen. He became interested in books on empirical macroeconomic models written by two economists who would go on to win Nobel prizes – Jan Tinbergen and Lawrence Klein. “I was fascinated that you could build an empirical model of the economy in the same way you could build a model aircraft that flew,” he says. He went on to the London School of Economics to complete an MSc in 1967 and PhD in 1970.

Much of his work, which has led to scores of peer-reviewed articles and several important books, revolves around a key theme that the reality of what economists seek to model is immensely complicated. Because data are the outcomes of millions of decisions by people with different objectives that can change it is hard to create a model that is sustainable. “The world keeps evolving and it’s a never-ending process, like trying to extract a view of what’s happening around you from a moving car.”

His research led to a 1978 paper on economic modelling with colleagues James Davidson, Frank Srb and Stephen Yeo, known by the acronym DHSY derived from the authors’ initials, consolidated in the book Dynamic Econometrics published in 1995. An important breakthrough was to understand that economic data are not ‘stationary’ which means that while today may look very similar to yesterday, both continual and abrupt change mean that today will look very different from 25 years ago. “The other aspect is that everything is inter-related,” he says. “It’s like a waterbed where a push in one place sends the water moving everywhere.”

The key to a good model is to acknowledge that economies do not develop on a linear path and are what economists call ‘non-stationary’. This takes account of the time lags between decisions and their impacts, and between those that cause small effects which die out, and large which do not. “The key difficulty has been to develop methods that are general enough to tackle all these issues jointly, since if you leave any one determinant out, it contaminates what you learn about the others.”
Hendry’s research highlighted that the main problem with making economic forecasts was unanticipated shifts in the distribution of possible outcomes. “It was what Harold Macmillan called ‘events, dear boy, events,’” he says. He points to the explosion of inflation in the mid-1970s that saw the annual rate hit 25 per cent. “That was unimaginable in 1970 and was simply not something anyone would have thought of then,” he says.

The Holy Grail in modelling must be to find a way to forecast structural breaks

He uses the example of the Apollo space missions: while missions 12 and 14 landed on the moon within seconds of their predicted time, Apollo 13 never made it there because of an exploding oxygen cylinder. The point this shows, according to Hendry, is that the disaster did not refute Newton’s laws of physics or even NASA’s algorithms. But while NASA could see at once what was happening and amended their forecasts, economists can continue getting forecasts wrong “for years”.

“One big breakthrough we have made is how to avoid systematic forecast errors, where a model will stay wrong unless economists change the way forecasts are made after shifts.” Hendry says he was visiting the Bank of Japan in March 2009 when new data showed a 40 per cent year-on-year fall in exports. His hosts, who expected a swift reversion to normal, were stunned when he said exports would probably also fall 40 per cent in the next few months. In fact they fell 70 per cent.

Hendry has helped to make modelling methodology more accessible, particularly through publicly available software packages, for more than 45 years. Since 1969 he has embodied his
methodology in a suite of computer programmes. He is the originator of PcGive, now in its fourteenth version, and co-author with Jurgen Doornik of OxMetrics, which implements general-to-specific modelling. This has culminated in an automatic selection algorithm, Autometrics, which Hendry believes could also be used productively in nowcasting.

Autometrics is used by a wide range of econometricians and forecasters in the public and private sectors, including more than 20 central banks and international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and the Federal Reserve Board. “It allows investigators to tackle all the key problems and learn from the evidence while retaining their theoretical insights, yet is highly labour saving.”

Hendry sympathises with complaints by a growing number of student bodies that they are only being taught traditional neoclassical ‘dynamic equilibrium’ macro-economics. He is finishing an introductory textbook on macro-econometrics that covers the main topics for undergraduates so they can understand empirical evidence – much of which contradicts currently ‘conventional’ macro-economics, as data exhibit many unanticipated shifts.

“I feel that the discipline has become overly concentrated on a specific free market view that is neoclassical with very strong assumptions about economic agents’ knowledge in a world where both agents and economists manifestly make serious mistakes. We need to develop a more empirical disequilibrium economics that takes on board the limited knowledge people have of what’s happening, and may happen in future.” Fortunately, Hendry seems to have developed a range of tools to do so.

One big breakthrough we have made is how to avoid systematic forecast errors

Why could no-one predict the collapse of Lehman Brothers bank and the onset of a global recession?


Phil Thornton is lead consultant, Clarity Economics. He was previously economics correspondent at the Independent
News briefs

NEW TOOLS TO CAPTURE THE FULL VALUE OF NATURE

UK researchers provide new information and tools to help decision-makers in Government, local authorities, land managers and businesses to understand the wider values of our ecosystems and what they offer us. In 2011 the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UK NEA) concluded that the natural world and its ecosystems are important to our wellbeing and economic prosperity. Yet they have been consistently undervalued in conventional economic analyses and decision-making.

The UK National Ecosystem Assessment Follow-On (UK NEAFO) project was commissioned to address this problem by developing tools for decision-makers to make use of the research from the UKNEA and carry out new research to understand and capture the shared cultural values of the natural environment.

Our interactions with natural spaces can be experienced in a number of ways but it has been difficult for land managers to capture what value people place on these experiences outside of the monetary value. This new research found that by using a range of approaches we can understand the strength and depth of feelings that people hold about a natural space. By understanding an individual’s spiritual connection, identity and the aesthetic values that they place on nature, land managers will be able to have much fuller picture of the total value of the decisions that they make in financial terms and the value that people place on these decisions.

The findings and tools developed from the UK NEAFO project provides a useful resource for policymakers and practitioners with advice on which methods and tools are best for a given situation, how they should be used, and in which combination.

The UK NEAFO has been a collaborative effort between the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the ESRC, the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the Welsh Government.

WHAT WORKS SCOTLAND TO HELP TRANSFORM PUBLIC SERVICES

The ESRC and the Scottish Government have jointly awarded just under £1 million to the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh for a new What Works Scotland (WWS) initiative. The Centre will help policymakers and practitioners in the public services in Scotland transform the way they work. It will be led by Professor Nicholas Watson, Chair of Disability Studies at the University of Glasgow and Professor James Mitchell, Professor of Public Policy at the University of Edinburgh.

Over the next three years WWS will work closely with Community Planning Partnerships and other stakeholders. It aims to:

- Support service performance and improvement underpinned by data, evidence and the application of improvement methodologies
- Build on the strengths and assets of individuals and communities, rather than only focusing on perceived deficits
- Develop services which are shaped and co-produced by both service providers and the citizens and communities who receive and engage with those services.

WWS will develop a close working relationship with the other What Works Centres in the rest of the UK and use their research in its work as appropriate.

CHANGING THE FACE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

The ESRC has announced the 13 successful grants of the second Transformative Research call. The call aims to provide a stimulus for genuinely transformative and ground-breaking research ideas at the frontiers of social sciences, enabling research which challenges current thinking to be supported and developed.

Transformative research involves pioneering theoretical and methodological innovation, the novel application of theory and methods in new contexts, and/or research based on the engagement of unusual disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. While it can be seen as high risk, it provides the possibility of high reward or research that is carried out with the expectation that it will produce a broad base of knowledge and new insights.

One successful project from Sheffield is concerned with devising comprehensive methodological and theoretical strategies for the capture and interpretation of social media image data, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Researchers are interested in finding ways to enable the study of images to become a more central focus within social media and Big Data research and will investigate how such a shift in focus may affect key stakeholders and end-users.

Another example from Warwick will look at three different cases to understand how dashboards are integrated into a range of situations and for different purposes. They will study civil servants in Government Digital Services who have built and are using dashboards to visualise and ‘open up’ the performance of Whitehall departments. They will also study the Digital Action Lab, a civic activist organisation, as they develop and release a ‘crowdsourced’ dashboard which provides a range of indicators on prosperity, equality and environment in Britain. Finally, they will study the personal use of dashboards on phones and tablets, where dashboards visualise and arrange data flows in ways that make them intelligible and actionable for individuals.


SUMMER 2014 SOCIETY NOW 29
People

QUEEN’S BIRTHDAY HONOURS 2014
A number of prominent social scientists and ESRC grant holders have been honoured in the Queen’s Birthday Honours 2014. We are pleased to offer our congratulations to everyone honoured.

Knights Bachelor – Knighthoods
Professor Cary Cooper, CBE, Distinguished Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health, Lancaster University; former ESRC grant holder. For services to Economics and Social Science.
Professor David Greenaway, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nottingham; former ESRC Council member and grant holder. For services to Higher Education.
Commanders of the Order of the British Empire
Professor Nicholas Francis Robert Crafts, Professor of Economic History, University of Warwick; Director of the ESRC Research Centre on Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy. For services to Economics.
Professor Hilary Graham, Professor of Health Sciences, University of York; current ESRC grant holder and member of the ESRC Research Committee. For services to Social Science.
Professor Denise Lievesley, Professor of Statistics and Head of School of Social Science and Public Policy, King’s College London; former ESRC grant holder, including Director of the UK Data Archive from 1991-1997. For services to Social Science.
Professor Alan Walker, FBA, Professor of Social Policy and Social Gerontology and New Dynamics of Ageing Director, University of Sheffield; Director of the New Dynamics of Ageing Programme and former Director of the ESRC Growing Older Programme. For services to Social Science.

PRIZE FOR IFS DEPUTY RESEARCH DIRECTOR
Rachel Griffith, Co-Director of the ESRC Centre for the Micro-economic Analysis of Public Policy, has been awarded the prestigious Birgit Grodal Prize by the European Economic Association (EEA). The prize is given to a European-based female economist who has made a significant contribution to the Economics profession.

Rachel Griffith is Deputy Research Director at the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Professor of Economics at the University of Manchester. She currently holds an ESRC Advanced Grant on the Micro-economic Analysis of Prices, Food and Nutrition.

WHAT HAS SOCIAL SCIENCE DONE FOR US?
In 2015 the ESRC will be celebrating 50 years of funding research in economic and social issues.

We need your help to identify the most important social science achievements over the last 50 years in the UK or abroad. For example, Research on wage-related state pensions led to the Pensions Act of 1959. Please complete the online suggestion form to send your ideas. There’s a free ESRC goody bag for the first 20 suggestions. See: fs3.formsites.com/esrcforms/form45/index.html

RESEARCHERS FUNDED FOR COLLABORATIVE CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS
Fifteen million Euros has been awarded to 15 research projects that will allow academics in Europe and the US to collaborate on a range of exciting projects that will push the boundaries of our understanding of individual and social behaviour and influence policy.

The grant has come from the Open Research Area Scheme (ORA). National funding organisations from across the continent and the US fund the ORA plus programme to strengthen international co-operation in the social sciences.

The scheme was set up to minimise bureaucratic obstacles and restrictions usually associated with international funding.

This is the third round since the scheme launched in 2010 and the first round with the US as a partner.

SOCIETY NOW READERSHIP SURVEY
Whether you’re a Society Now subscriber or read it only occasionally, we would like your views on the style and content of the magazine. What do you think of the way it’s written? Is the design easy to read? Are there topics for articles that you think we should cover? Would you prefer a digital version and, if so, on what platform?

We would be grateful if you would complete the online readership survey. The survey should take no longer than five minutes, and will give us valuable information on how to improve the magazine and develop digital versions for readers who prefer to view content on smartphone, tablet or PC. See: www.surveymonkey.com/s/societynow2014

ESRC 2013-14 ANNUAL REPORT PUBLISHED
The ESRC 2013-14 Annual Report has been published and is now available to download from the ESRC website.

The Annual Report is published and laid before Parliament annually. It covers our activities from 1 April to 31 March, a review of the year from the Chair and Chief Executive, outstanding features of the year and facts and figures at a glance. It also contains the ESRC’s full accounts for the year. Instead of publishing a separate Vital Statistics document, we have this year included a full analysis of our research and training expenditure, and our research portfolio in the Annual Report. For more information or to download a copy, see: www.esrc.ac.uk/news-and-events/publications/annual-report/index.aspx

The survey should take no longer than five minutes, and will give us valuable information on how to improve the magazine and develop digital versions for readers who prefer to view content on smartphone, tablet or PC. See: www.surveymonkey.com/s/societynow2014

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Publications

Education for Citizenship in Europe: European Policies, National Adaptations, and Young People’s Attitudes

This book presents an interdisciplinary mixed-method analysis of the role that education has played in the European citizenship project from 1949 to the present day. It explores key questions such as: What is European citizenship and how have European institutions sought to transmit this idea through education? How have nation-states responded? And what impact has European citizenship had on young people’s citizenship attitudes?

Small Nations in a Big World: What Scotland Can Learn

Small northern European states have been a point of reference in the Scottish independence debate. For nationalists, they have been an ‘arc of prosperity’ while in the aftermath of the financial crash, unionists lampooned the ‘arc of insolvency’. This book looks at the experience of small independent states in Northern Europe and analyses what it is that makes them succeed and fail — and the lessons that Scotland can learn from them, irrespective of the outcome of the referendum in September.

Informal Education, Childhood and Youth: Geographies, Histories, Practices

This collection of original chapters brings together cutting-edge research on learning practices that emphasise dialogue and learning through everyday life. Through a range of examples from the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and from a range of geographical contexts, the authors explore the relationship between history, geography and practice in the field of informal education.

Urban Economics And Urban Policy — Challenging Conventional Policy Wisdom

This book illustrates the insights that recent economic research brings to our understanding of cities, and the lessons for urban policymaking. The authors present new evidence on the fundamental importance of cities to economic wellbeing and to the enrichment of our lives. They also argue that many policies have been trying to push water uphill and have done little to achieve their stated aims; or, worse, have had unintended and counterproductive consequences.

EVENTS

7 AUGUST

Scotland in the National Institute’s Global Econometric Model (NiGEM-S)

The National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) will present its Global Econometric Model for Scotland (NiGEM-S) in Edinburgh on 7 August. NiGEM-S is based on the National Institute Global Econometric Model, a widely used large-scale structural macro-econometric model of the world economy. NIESR has been developing NiGEM since 1987 and it is used by many global policy institutions (including the IMF, OECD and Bank of England). niesr.ac.uk/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=61

5 SEPTEMBER

Taxing remuneration: principles and practice (IFS residential conference)

Every two years the IFS holds a residential conference, aiming to facilitate high-level knowledge exchange between practitioners, policymakers and academics on key areas of policy and practice. The next conference will consider the different ways in which individual earnings are taxed and ask how tax policy and administration can and should respond to changing patterns of work and pay. www.ifs.org.uk/events/1023

5 SEPTEMBER

The Leicester Hate Crime Project Conference

For the past two years the Leicester Hate Crime Project has uncovered new and significant insights into victims’ experiences of hate and prejudice. The findings from the research will be outlined at this special one-day conference. www2.le.ac.uk/departments/criminology/news-and-events/the-leicester-hate-crime-project-conference

23 SEPTEMBER

The Politics of Wellbeing, Seminar 3

There has been a dramatic rise of international and national policy interest in wellbeing, quality of life and happiness research. The Politics of Wellbeing seminar series is an ESRC funded interdisciplinary project aiming to identify and communicate the distinctive contribution the politics discipline can make to the wellbeing debate and policy development in the UK and beyond. politicsofwellbeing.group.shef.ac.uk
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.

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