E-bulletin Autumn 2014

This e-briefing is from the Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management (CHASM) at the University of Birmingham to keep you informed of our latest activities.

Just like the Autumn statement we also have produced our e-bulletin in Winter!

News

Building the homes we need: A programme for the 2015 government
CHASM Deputy Director, Andy Lymer, was an invited member of a selected group from across the West Midlands region to discuss the UK Housing development market – entitled ‘Semi-detached Economy – what does the current housing shortage mean for businesses?’.
The principal objective of this roundtable discussion was to progress the work which KPMG and Shelter jointly published earlier this year. The report provides analysis of current and future housing trends and pressures and makes a series of recommendations for the next Government. Underpinning all of these recommendations is the key message that the UK is facing a housing shortage and, unless this is rectified, it will have significant negative effects for our society. The event was planned to further discussion around the report’s findings ahead of the May 2015 election - to allow for explanation on how party policies on housing are developing. The report ‘Building the homes we need’ can be found here

Colloquium on Land Value Taxation in Britain
On 15 September the Coalition for Economic Justice (CEJ) (with sponsorship from the Network for Social Change Charitable Trust) hosted a one day event in London on the future for Land Value Taxation (LVT) in the UK. The event was the first in a planned series covering ‘wealth taxes’ in the run-up to the 2015 General Election. The events are intended to examine the views of a range of UK and overseas experts on technical aspects of land tax reform, as set out in several short papers on aspects of the subject commissioned in advance. There is now a growing interest in LVT within the body politic and the purpose of this event is to explore the issues that are most often raised regarding LVT including:

- The potential revenue flow from LVT
- Impact of LVT on the national economy and on property prices
- Problems of attaching a value to land
- Development of a business model for managing data sets of land values
• Establishing owner identity

The event, whilst invitation only, included over 40 people from various property, charity and related sectors. Professor Andy Lymer, CHASM’s Deputy Director, was invited as one of the academic speakers to talk on the potential revenue flows that may be possible from an LVT — critiquing a proposal developed under funding from the NfSC by Mark Wadsworth, a tax analyst. The resulting papers and discussion is being converted into a report to be published shortly.

Global Blackness Conference November 6-8, Duke University
Ricky was invited to speak at a conference organised by the Global Inequalities Research Initiative (GIRI) based at Duke University in North Carolina. The conference, attended by academics, students, policymakers and practitioners, explored the historical emergence of and comparative cross-national analysis of the concept of ‘blackness’. Among the presentations given was an update on the National Asset Scorecard. This research project measures various indicators of wealth across racial and ethnic groups in 5 US cities. The project is collaboration between the Research Network, a consortium of universities and the Centre for Global Policy Solutions.

Ricky Joseph was also invited to attend a seminar on issues concerning Inter-generational Equity (IGE) and Public Services hosted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy on the 14th October in London.

ESRC Festival of Social Sciences 2014
November 3-8 this year was the ESRC UK Festival of Social Science. CHASM was involved in four (yes 4) events in that week under the banner of the Festival. Three of these events were sessions with School age students (14-18 year olds) and one as part of the ‘Birmingham Means Business’ Research event at the Birmingham City Council Chambers
Andy Lymer, CHASM’s Deputy Director, ran the three School events linked to the work ongoing within the Centre from its Policy Commission on Wealth Inequality published in October 2013 which can be accessed here. The title of the event was ‘Taxing our wealth – do we have it right?’ aimed to link the Policy Commission work on the public understanding of the impacts of wealth inequality in the UK at the present time, with discussions ongoing in the media and through the political conference season on possible changes to wealth taxation in the UK. These are two of the ongoing themes of CHASMs work through its various interlinked work streams.

With the aid of piles of chocolate to represent the different possible mixes of wealth in the UK (which proved to be a very tangible wealth representation for School students!) participants were asked to first pick the mix they thought presented the UK’s wealth inequality at present, then the mix they would think would be best for the UK if it were possible to achieve it, and then were shown the reality of the mix.

As was found in the fuller UK public survey undertaken by the Policy Commission team the two initial estimates each varied significantly from the reality of the wealth distribution found in the UK at present (much to the dis-satisfaction of these in the lowest 20% of the wealth owners particularly whose share of the chocolate was not substantial). While participants opted for a distribution that was skewed somewhat towards those who were willing to work harder, have more ‘natural’ talent and who have greater ‘need’, all were surprised how significantly different the reality was to their idea of what might be ‘fair’ under that reality.
The positive and negative impacts of this reality were explored with the participants, as were specifics of the tax proposals being touted in current debates – including mansion tax, extra income taxes on those with high incomes (as a proxy to a wealth tax) and adjustments to the upper banding of council tax.

Over 100 students were involved in the 3 events held at a private school for GSCE students, as an open lecture for sixth formers and at a College of Further Education.

A questionnaire exploring participants prior understanding of some issues related to wealth inequality and use of taxes on wealth was collected at the start of each event. Analysis of these responses will be provided in a forthcoming CHASM and makes interesting reading indicating how fair from reality these young people’s understanding is of the world they are inheriting.

Birmingham Means Business Research Showcase

The Birmingham Means Business showcase was held to demonstrate how our academic research can help businesses and voluntary organisations in the region take advantage of a booming local economy. The event, held at Birmingham Council House on Wednesday 5 November, included keynote speeches from Lord Digby Jones and Professor Simon Collinson, Dean of Birmingham Business School at the University of Birmingham.

Part of this year’s ESRC Festival of Social Sciences, the event reflected on the dynamic and changing Birmingham business environment and the ways in which research can help businesses to succeed. Participants were able to explore the opportunities and challenges of working with academia.
Housing and Communities Research Group
We have just launched an exciting new programme of work on the future of social housing, led by David Mullins and James Gregory, who has just joined the Housing and Communities Research Group as a Senior Research Fellow. This programme is funded by Webb Memorial Trust, encouraging us to go back to first principles of why the state first intervened in housing.

In the first year we are undertaking two projects, both supported by the Webb Memorial Trust. The first project will look at the historical evolution of allocations policies and frameworks in England, with a particular emphasis on the purpose of social housing and its allocation- “who gets what, and why?” Our second project will examine the role of social landlords as ‘hybrid’ institutions, occupying a space between state and market. What is the scope for and limits to the ability to offer housing services to a wider range of households and to cross-subsidise social housing from commercial income? This raises potential alternatives to further residualisation of social housing and dwindling state funding.

We have a number of plans for additional research projects which we hope will be of interest to academic colleagues and partners in the housing sector. These include potential projects on housing and social care, race and social exclusion, and housing and asset-based welfare. We look forward to discussing these projects with a broad range of colleagues from the within the university and beyond.

Rehabilitation Revolution? Young Prisoners Experiences of Re-integration and Resettlement
Lindsey Appleyard with Kate Gooch (Law) ran a workshop at The Bond in Birmingham on 15th October to explore the challenges and issues faced by young male and female prisoners (18-30 years old) on release from custody. It considered the impact of recent welfare and resettlement reforms to young people’s experiences. Speakers included: Max Rutherford (T2A Barrow Cadbury Trust), Kimmet Edgar (Prison Reform Trusts), Claire Frodsham (Social Worker), Dr Paul Jones (Liverpool John Moores University), Briegue Nugent (University of Edinburgh). As a result of the event, Lindsey and Kate are keen to establish a network for those interested in these topics. If you are interested in finding out more about this, please contact Lindsey via email l.j.appleyard@bham.ac.uk

Forthcoming events open to all
Members of this email list may be interested in the following seminars:

20th January, ‘Poor wretched Outcast! I will weep for thee’: reflections upon funeral costs, state support and responsibilisation
Lee Gregory, School of Social Policy, Room 111, Business School, 12.30-1.15

17th March, Mind the (housing) gap: patterns of family wealth past, present, future
Ricky Joseph, CHASM, Room 111, Business School, 12.30-1.15
5th May, Can lending and borrowing be responsible?
Lindsey Appleyard, CHASM, Room 710, 7th floor, Muirhead Tower, 12.30-1.15

7 July, TBC
Andy Lymer, CHASM, Room 710, 7th floor, Muirhead Tower, 12.30-1.15

Further information on our events may be found [here](#).

If you would like to attend any of these events, please contact Helen Harris to confirm your place [h.m.a.harris@bham.ac.uk](mailto:h.m.a.harris@bham.ac.uk)

New briefing papers

- [UK household food security: A review of existing research](#)
- [The child welfare implications of problem debt](#)

All our briefing papers are available on the [CHASM website](#)

Current Research

**Responsible lending and borrowing**
The social policy stream on responsible lending and borrowing has, so far, produced some important findings comparing the Australian regulatory system with the British system, to learn lessons about how to reform the regulation of the high cost credit industry in Britain. It has shown that a variety of measures are needed together to improve people’s access to responsible and affordable forms of credit. The Financial Conduct Authority has confirmed that it will introduce a cap on the cost of credit in January 2015.

We are currently writing a report for the Archbishop’s Task Group on Responsible Saving and Credit exploring the potential impacts of instituting a time-delay on access to credit on consumers. We are also drafting a number of publications on responsible lending and borrowing.

Lindsey Appleyard was invited to a number of Conservative party fringe meetings. The Centre for Social Justice held a roundtable event chaired by Chris Pond, and attended by Lord Freud and practitioners to discuss ‘Reforming Credit Unions and Expanding Community Finance’. DEMOS held an event on regional access to finance and local banking.

For more information on this project, please visit [here](#)

Feedback
If you would like to find out more information on CHASM please visit our [website](#)
Keep up to date with the latest news, research and events happening at CHASM by joining our mailing list by contacting chasm@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Should you wish to unsubscribe please send an e-mail with 'unsubscribe' in the title to chasm@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Best wishes,

The CHASM Team

www.birmingham.ac.uk/chasm
https://twitter.com/UoBCHASM