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Rural and Urban Solo Living: Social integration, Quality of Life and Future Orientations

Citation for published version:

Jamieson, L & Wasoff, F 2010, *Rural and Urban Solo Living: Social integration, Quality of Life and Future Orientations*. ESRC, Swindon. <<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-062-23-0172/read/reports>>

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL IMPACT REPORT



For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This Impact Report should be completed and submitted using the **grant reference** as the email subject to **reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk** on or before the due date.

Completion of this Impact Report is mandatory. It will not be possible to edit this Impact Report at a later date, as it is designed to provide a statement of the impacts of your project to date 12 months after your grant ends.

Please note that the Impact Report will only be accepted if all sections have been completed in full. If a section does not apply to you, please enter 'n/a'. Grant holders will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this Impact Report. In particular, the notes explain what the ESRC means by 'impact'.

Grant Reference	RES-062-23-0172		
Grant Title	Rural and Urban Solo Living: Social Integration, Quality of Life and Future Orientations		
Grant Start Date	1 Apr 2007	Total Amount	£ 288,787.67
Grant End Date	30 Nov 2009	Expended:	
Grant holding Institution	The University of Edinburgh		
Grant Holder	Professor Lynn Jamieson		
Grant Holder's Contact Details	Address	Email	
	School of Social and Political Science, 5.04 Chrystal Macmillan Building, 15a George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LD	L.Jamieson@ed.ac.uk	
		Telephone	0131 650 4002
Co-Investigators (as per project application):		Institution	
Professor Fran Wasoff		The University of Edinburgh	

1. SCIENTIFIC IMPACT

A Please **summarise** below the scientific impact(s) your project has had. [*Max 250 words*]

The project helped to establish the experience of solo living as a distinct research topic that overlaps with studies of single men and women, non-resident fathers and LATS ('living apart together') but is worthy of study in its own right.

The research unpacks the interconnectedness of solo-living at the ages of 25-44 and fertility decline and the way the trend to solo-living draws on and fuels wider social changes in gender relations and family life.

It contributes to wider debates about changing gender relationships and family life. In this 25-44 year old age group, the trend to solo-living was not a conscious turning away from couple relationships but almost always embarked on as temporary or unanticipated. However, for a proportion, hence more men than women since more men live alone in this age group, accumulating experience of doing so makes a co-resident partner become less attractive.

It addresses wider debate about social integration or social capital in urban and rural contexts, showing there was no evidence of general social disengagement. Only a very small minority, were socially isolated.

It has contributed knowledge of relevance to a number of policy domains.

It is one of a small number of studies using the Scottish Household Survey as a sampling frame combined with telephone interviewing, demonstrating both the value of this approach in effective targeting a smaller sample of a random sample and the limits in achieving confidence in a random sample because of the rate of unsuccessful contacts.

B Please outline the **findings and outputs** from your project which have had the scientific impact(s) outlined in 1A. [*Max 250 words*]

Journal Articles

2010 Jamieson L., Backett Milburn, K. Simpson, R and Wasoff F. 'Fertility and Social Change: the Neglected Contribution of Men's Approaches to Becoming Partners and Parents' *Sociological Review* 58, 3, 463-485.

2009 Jamieson L., Wasoff F. and Simpson, R. 'Solo-Living, Demographic and Family Change: The Need to Know More About Men' *Sociological Research Online* Volume 14, Issue 2/3 (May)

End of Award project seminar and circulated unpublished report

Conference presentations (mostly jointly authored but the presenter is named)

2007

European Sociological Association Glasgow

Jamieson, 'Solo living in early adulthood and mid-life in Britain: reasons for comparative research'

2008:

British Sociological Association March, Warwick

Jamieson and Simpson, 'Solo Living in Early Adulthood: Social Integration, Quality of Life and Future Orientations'

Social Policy Association Annual Conference, Edinburgh

Wasoff, 'Challenges for social policy arising from the growth in solo living amongst working-age adults'

European Sociological Association: Sociology of Family and Intimate Lives Research Network Interim Meeting, Helsinki

Simpson, 'Solo-Living In Early Adulthood: Challenging Family and Household Boundaries'

BSPS Annual Conference, Manchester

Simpson, 'Men's Orientations to Partnering, Having Children and Parenting'

International Sociological Association: RC06 Committee on Family Research Conference 'Family Diversity & Gender', Lisbon

Wasoff, 'Solo-Living Age 25-44: settled lives and transitional states'

2009:

Family, Migration and Housing Conference, Amsterdam

Simpson, 'Rural and Urban Solo Living'

C Please outline **how** these impacts were achieved. [*Max 250 words*]

Conference presentations were made throughout the project. Two papers are published in peer reviewed journals. Others will follow.

At the end of the project, key academics working on living alone, studies of single men and women, non-resident fathers and LATS were invited to an end of award seminar. Some participants were invited to act as discussants responding to a pre-circulated report of the findings given to all participants. The report will be published for a wider audience in the form of a monograph to be published by Palgrave in late 2011.

An electronic network of international researchers on solo-living has been established and has a profile on the CRFR website. To date there are 63 members and there have been more than 1600 visits to the site. An unsuccessful bid for a COST network submitted stimulating further interest.

D Please outline **who** the findings and outputs outlined above had an impact upon. This can include specific academics/researchers through to broader academic groups. [*Max 250 words*]

Demographers, academic researchers across social science disciplines with an interest in

families, relationships, households, social cohesion, subjective well being, identities, gender, class, sexual orientation, urban –rural comparisons, and the nature of social change.

2. ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL IMPACT

A Please **summarise** below the economic and societal impact(s) your project has had. [Max 250 words]

It is not possible to demonstrate effects beyond detailing ways in which policy makers, practitioners and the public have engaged with the work.

B Please outline the **findings and outputs** from your project which have had the economic and societal impact(s) outlined in 2A. [Max 250 words]

Briefings

Interim Findings: Policy and Practice Seminar

After the first phase of data collection, the main round of interviewing, a range of government, local authority and voluntary practitioner organisations were invited to an interim seminar including specialists in housing policy and provision.

The briefing 'Living on your own: Social integration, quality of life and aspirations for the future' CRFR Briefing 47, 2010 Jamieson and Simpson

<http://www.crfr.ac.uk/reports/rb%2047.pdf>

A short report of the research also appeared as a news item at the top level of the university website. The research received extensive media coverage Radio Scotland, the Times, Herald, Daily Mail, Daily Express, Daily Record, Metro and some overseas papers. Jamieson also participated in Laurie Taylor's *Thinking Aloud* programme on radio 4.

C Please outline **how** these impacts were achieved. [Max 250 words]

At our Interim Findings Seminar key participants, from Scottish government General Registrar's Office, Cecilia McIntyre and from a housing NGO, Alastair Cameron, were invited to act as discussants having had prior sight of our interim report which was given to all participants at the event. The presentation of findings and discussant contributions then led into structured workshop sessions focusing on implications of findings for policy and practice.

An accessible 4 page briefing on the findings of the project was distributed through the CRFR research user network which reaches more than 400 policy makers, practitioners and academics with an interest in families and relationships. It was also press released at the time and remains accessible on the CRFR website as well through Society Today. The work of the CRFR knowledge exchange team with the university press office

achieved the extensive coverage.

Since the start of the project there have been more than 4500 visits to pages with content related to this project on the CRFR website.

D Please outline **who** the findings and outputs outlined above had an impact upon. This can be at a broad societal level through to specific individuals or groups. *[Max 250 words]*

The general public, policy maker and practitioners with concerns about population, fertility, housing, welfare, parenting following couple separation, social integration, subjective well being.

3. UNEXPECTED AND POTENTIAL FUTURE IMPACTS

A Unexpected Impacts

Please note which, if any, of the impacts that your research has had were *unexpected* at the outset of the research, explaining where possible why you think this was the case. *[Max 250 words]*

Heightened sensitivity to how the trend to solo-living creates increased demand for housing and other goods and services, challenging to government's desires to reduce carbon footprints has encouraged our own thinking about 'green' family household issues and helped to stimulate the ESRC proposal 'greening of families'
(ES/H030980/1)

B Potential Future Impacts

If you have a clear idea of the impact your research is likely to have in the future please detail these below. *[Max 250 words]*

It is anticipated that the monograph *Solo Living, Identity and Belonging* (Palgrave, 2011) will deepen the academic impact.

A number of papers, as well as the book are yet to be published. These includes the planned academic paper and briefing on housing issues. In light of recent changes to housing related benefits, Jamieson & Wasoff hope to move a housing briefing higher up their writing agendas.

4. IMPACT LIMITATIONS

A Limited scientific impact

Please state below any major scientific difficulties that have limited the scientific impact of your research. The statement should refer to an effect on *impact* rather than simply detail research difficulties. *[Max 250 words]*

B Limited economic and societal impact

ESRC recognises that some of the research it funds will not have an economic or societal impact in the short term. Please explain briefly below if this is the case for your project, and refer to your grant application where relevant. *[Max 250 words]*

The aims of the project in terms of deepening knowledge and contributing to the evidence base have been successfully met but it is not clear to what extent they translate into economic or societal impact. The aims are reproduced below:

To deepen knowledge of the experiences and perceptions of adults living alone in the period of adulthood normally associated with partnership and parenting including:

- To deepen knowledge of their social capital and quality of life and expectations and aspirations for the future (with respect to partnering, parenting, employment, migration, housing and leisure and their anticipation of needs in older age, such as for income and care.)
- To explore variations among solo-living adults by rural and urban localities and by gender, as well as by different routes into solo-living.
- To contribute to evidenced-based discussion of the implications of this growing population for the well-being of rural and urban localities and for policy makers and practitioners with responsibility for devising support to individuals, households and communities

To contribute to the evidence base of social theorising about individualism, social integration, intimacy, identity, sense of risk and social change.

C No impact to date

This project has had no impact to date

Please note that ESRC projects are evaluated on the basis of their scientific and/or economic and societal impact. Grant holders are expected to report any future impacts as they occur using the Impact Record, downloadable from the ESRC Society Today website.

If you have no impacts at this stage, please give reasons below. [*Max 250 words*]

5. DECLARATIONS

Please read the statements below. Submitting this Impact Report to reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk confirms your agreement.

- i) This Impact Report is an accurate statement of the impacts of the research project to date. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.
- ii) Details of any subsequent impacts will be submitted via an Impact Record as they occur.

Thank you for completing this Impact Report. Your Impact Report will be considered along with your End of Award Report in the evaluation of your research.

You are now invited to complete the confidential Nominations form, which will assist with the evaluation of your project.

NOMINATED OUTPUTS

Please nominate a maximum of two outputs from your research which you would like to be considered as part of the evaluation.

Output type (eg journal article, book, newspaper article, conference proceedings)	Publication details (eg author name, date, publisher details)	Uploaded to <i>ESRC Society Today?</i> (Yes/No)
Journal article	2010 Jamieson L., Backett Milburn, K. Simpson, R and Wasoff F. 'Fertility and Social Change: the Neglected Contribution of Men's Approaches to Becoming Partners and Parents' <i>Sociological Review</i> 58, 3, 463-485.	Yes
Briefing	'Living on your own: Social integration, quality of life and aspirations for the future' CRFR Briefing 47, 2010 Jamieson and Simpson http://www.crfr.ac.uk/reports/rb%2047.pdf	Yes

Please email your completed Impact Report, including the Nominations section, to reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk, using your **grant reference number** as the email subject.