

“Twenty years of ideas...”

**THE 2013 DEMOS RESEARCH STRATEGY**

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DEMOS

## About Demos

Demos is Britain's leading cross-party think tank. We produce original research, publish innovative thinkers and host thought-provoking events. We have spent 20 years at the centre of the policy debate, with an overarching mission to bring politics closer to people.

Demos is now exploring some of the most persistent frictions within modern politics, especially in those areas where there is a significant gap between the intuitions of the ordinary voter and political leaders. Can a liberal politics also be a popular politics? How can policy address widespread anxieties over social issues such as welfare, diversity and family life? How can a dynamic and open economy also produce good jobs, empower consumers and connect companies to the communities in which they operate?

Our worldview is reflected in the methods we employ: we recognise that the public often have insights that the experts do not. We pride ourselves in working together with the people who are the focus of our research. Alongside quantitative research, Demos pioneers new forms of deliberative work, from citizens' juries and ethnography to social media analysis. Demos is an independent, educational charity. In keeping with our mission, all our work is available to download for free under an open access license and all our funders are listed in our yearly accounts.

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## Overview

In 2013 Demos will celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> year as one of the UK's leading think-tanks. We will be marking the occasion with a series of specially commissioned events and publications that will review and celebrate the ideas and thinkers that have put Demos the heart of the UK policy landscape for the past two decades. The 2013 Demos partnership programme will involve access to all our birthday celebrations, alongside the usual mix of topical written briefings, bespoke events and networking sessions.

The Demos Research programme for 2013 has four main work streams, which are explored further in this document. They are:

1. Growth and good business
2. Welfare and public services
3. Citizenship and political participation
4. Integration and national identity

Alongside our partnership and research programmes, Demos will also continue its tradition of institution building. Over the last two years Demos has helped 'spin out' the now-independent Centre for London (CfL). CfL was established to help promote a wider understanding of the challenges facing London, and to develop long-term policy solutions for the capital. As of January 2013 CfL has successfully completed its transition to become an independent organisation.

In 2013 Demos is establishing two new ventures. The first of these is on financial services, Britain's most important industry but far from its best understood. Demos Finance, a new unit within Demos, will seek to promote informed debate – at both expert and popular level - about the future of the financial services sector, including how to maximise its contribution to the UK economy.

The second new venture for 2013 is the new Centre for the Analysis of Social Media (CASM). CASM is a collaboration between Demos and the Text Analytics Group at the University of Sussex. Its work will combine computer science with social science in order to develop social media analysis as a valid instrument of research that meets the needs of policy and decision-makers: research that is ethical, reliable and useable.

## Growth and good business

Britain's economic model is stuttering. The financial crisis revealed a series of underlying weaknesses, from an overreliance on low-paid, low-skilled jobs to an underinvestment in productive enterprise.

Policymakers are agreed that the economy must be 'rebalanced', with the help of a new industrial strategy, yet what a forward-looking strategy might look like is not yet clear. Demos will be exploring Britain's future model of growth/industrial policy with Lord Adonis. The work will examine business in the round and what helps and hinders growth: supply chains, skills, innovation, intellectual property, universities, cities and regional growth, state support and the relationship between business and finance.

The financial crisis has also prompted a new public debate about business ethics: how to align value and values. Two thirds of voters believe that companies should take account of wider social considerations. The political response to this has been an appeal for a more 'responsible' or even 'moral' form of capitalism. In 2013 Demos will be exploring how companies can do 'good business', aiming for solutions that lead to the decentralisation of power – to employees, consumers and communities – rather than simply tilting the balance from companies to regulators. As part of this Demos is also seeking funding for a major research project into low status jobs and how they can provide more job satisfaction and a sense of progression even at the lower end of the income scale.

2012 highlights:

- *Measuring Up*: a new tool to measure the social value of CSR activity
- *The Data Dialogue*: how business should respond to consumer anxiety over privacy and personal data
- *Ageing Sociably*: a report exploring the role of socially-minded businesses in tackling loneliness among the elderly

Work in progress:

- *Good Growth for Cities*: applying the Demos/PwC 'good growth' model to the UK's cities
- *Everyday entrepreneurship*: the attitudes and aspirations of would-be entrepreneurs

- Employers and income protection: the role of employers and unions in promoting financial security when incomes are squeezed

2013 plans:

- Industrial Policy: a Demos taskforce on economic growth with Lord Adonis
- Opening up: how businesses can release data to add value for consumers and society
- Good jobs: how can low status jobs be made worthwhile in modern Britain?

### **Welfare and public services**

In an age of austerity the question is how Britain affords the services that people need and expect. Budgets are shrinking yet demand for services like education, health and social care is rising. Policymakers must establish what people's real priorities are – and learn to do more with less. Demos will be exploring those priorities through research on public attitudes to key areas of the welfare state: what do people value most and how should finite resources best be put to use? Where and how should the boundaries between individual responsibility and social provision be drawn? Demos will also be exploring alternative models of funding for services, from the use of housing equity to cover social care costs to new forms of insurance and risk pooling within the family and through the public and private and cooperative sectors.

The best public services will continue to be built on good relationships – with professionals between service users. This requires the transfer of power away from large bureaucracies and towards the frontline. Demos has argued for ideas like personal budgets, which allow service users to put together the forms of support that make sense to them. As these ideas become mainstream, Demos will be asking what comes next after user choice is taken for granted. This will mean a greater focus on how institutions like schools, hospitals and universities involve service users in key decisions, beyond an initial choice between one provider or another. What are the incentives, technologies and organisational structures that will amplify the public voice in public services? And how can systems of mutual and family support be encouraged and rewarded by government?

## 2012 highlights

- *Poverty in Perspective*: a ground-breaking study looking at the ‘multidimensional’ nature of poverty in the UK
- *The Data Dividend*: a report setting out an agenda for transparency and open government
- *Rebalancing Risk and Responsibility*: how government can ‘nudge’ citizens to take more responsibility for their own wellbeing

## Work in progress

- Attitudes to welfare: is the UK going through a generational shift in attitudes to welfare – and if so, what are the causes?
- Personalising services: how can new payment technology, such as prepaid cards, help make services more personalised and responsive to their users?
- Public health and the labour market: what are the effects of unemployment and public health?

## 2013 plans

- Funding social care: how can Britain best look after its elderly without discouraging personal thrift and mutual support?
- Family welfare: how are families acting as units of mutual support and exchange as welfare entitlements change and home ownership slips out of reach?
- Reshaping the NHS: healthcare is increasingly community driven but people value their local hospitals – how can local conversations help square the circle?

## **Citizenship and political participation**

Britain continues to experience declining public trust and participation in formal politics. This presents a bigger problem than ever, at a time when governments must make fundamental decisions, from spending priorities in austerity to Britain’s relationship with key institutions like the EU. Over the next twelve months, Demos will continue its tradition of work on democratic renewal, exploring how trust can be rebuilt in the institutions that still hold great power to shape society.

While the formal structures of democracy have suffered from declining legitimacy, the role of civil society has grown in importance. Britain must find new answers to social problems, such as the rise of loneliness, depression and social isolation. Many of these problems have their roots

in a growing sense of social distance that is the product of globalisation and a more individualised society. In 2013 Demos will explore the ideas and institutions that can help bring together a more fragmented society, from third sector organisations, to faith groups and socially minded businesses.

2012 highlights:

- *European Populism*: a series of Demos pamphlets exploring the views of supporters of populist European parties, using Demos' innovative social media research methods
- *Faithful Citizens*: exploring the relationship between faith, politics and civic participation
- *Feeling the Effects*: research into the transmission of alcoholism from one generation to the next

Work in progress

- Political populists: what are the new populist movements on the Left and Right of politics?
- EU and democracy: what do today's youth think of the European Union?
- Youth participation: an evaluation of the impact of scouting on young people's job prospects

2013 plans

- The accountability gap: are local newspapers dying and what will replace them?
- Civic contribution across the lifespan: when are people most engaged in community-based work and why?
- Tackling loneliness: what new technologies and institutions can address Britain's loneliness epidemic?

### **Integration and national identity**

Until recently questions of national identity tended to be taken for granted. Now they are all around us, from questions about Englishness and the future of the Union, to appropriate responses to historically high levels of immigration into the UK. Too many debates in the field of culture and identity are dominated by the assumptions and interests of a mobile, secular graduate political class, which usually favours loose commitments and has generally benefited from globalisation. The challenge is to close the gap between the ordinary voter and the political

class, through an informed debate and genuine sense of dialogue about how we live together.

Over the next year Trevor Phillips, former head of the Equalities Commission, will head a new Mapping Integration research programme aimed at improving our understanding of this complex and poorly understood process: we are already underway with a project looking at 'white flight' with academics from Birkbeck College and have several other projects we are seeking funding for.

2012 highlights:

- *A Place for Pride*: exploring public opinion and national identity
- *St George's House*: a two-day conference on the politics of integration
- *Interculturalism*: a debate with Ted Cattle

Work in progress:

- 'White flight': the changing face of Britain's cities
- Mapping integration: what should we know about social integration in UK and how can we measure it?

2013 plans:

- Minority report: boosting the recruitment of minorities into everyday authority jobs, from the police to social work, teaching and the army.
- After educational success: what progress are young Muslims making into the professions?
- New neighbours: what would Scottish independence mean for England?