



Institution: London School of Economics and Political Science

Unit of Assessment: 19: Business and Management Studies

Title of case study: Costly, problematic proposals for identity cards scrapped

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

LSE research played a key role in shaping the political and public debate around unpopular and ill-founded plans to introduce identity cards in the UK, showing the proposals to be unsafe, ineffective and costly. Plans for national biometric identity cards were scrapped by the coalition government in May 2010.

Former Home Secretary David Blunkett described the detailed, cross-disciplinary report from academics at LSE as having “changed the culture and atmosphere around, and attitudes towards, the scheme and its intention”. An alternative, privacy-friendly identity policy is being developed in



Impact case study (REF3b)



A. The LSE Identity Project played a key role in shaping the parliamentary debates about The Identity Cards Bill, by highlighting that the scheme was technically unsafe, expensive, untested and lacked public trust. These concerns were reflected in the election manifestos of both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, and, when the coalition government came to power, the proposals were scrapped.

There were over 200 explicit mentions of LSE reports during the 56 days of Parliamentary debate of the Bill. For example, in speech during the House of Commons Committee stage, the then Shadow Minister for Home Affairs, Conservative MP Edward Garnier, said:

"My hon[orable] Friend the Member for Newark has, quite properly, referred on a number of occasions to the valuable work done by the team at the London School of Economics. They have spent some time looking carefully at the subject and have reached a number of conclusions. I make no claims of originality; I am relying heavily on the findings of the LSE report." [Hansard, 12 July 2005 Column 229]

The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee inquiry into 'Identity Card Technologies: Scientific Advice, Risk and Evidence' [8] noted "the central role that the LSE reports have played in the debate regarding identity cards" (§63) and shared the LSE's concerns about "the validity of costs produced at this early stage [2006]" (§ 105).

Edgar Whitley was called to give oral evidence to the Science and Technology Select Committee and to the Public Administration Select Committee. The LSE Identity Project also submitted written



The ongoing influence of the LSE work is not limited to the UK. A recent report about India's identity scheme (UID) proposals noted that as LSE's research is "very much relevant and applicable to the UID scheme, they should have been seriously considered" [16, Section 6].

Dr Whitley has also been working with the InterAmerican Development Bank in facilitating a series of high level policy workshops for governments in Latin America and the Caribbean including Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Jamaica.

Why the Impact Matters: identity card schemes are costly and need to command public consent. LSE research persuaded the UK government not to spend up to £20 billion on an ill thought out scheme.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

All Sources listed below can also be seen at: <https://apps.lse.ac.uk/impact/case-study/view/33>

[8] Science and Technology Select Committee (2006) Identity Card Technologies: Scientific advice, risk and evidence *House of Commons* Sixth report of Session 2005-06 Archived at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmsctech/1032/1032.pdf> Source file: <https://apps.lse.ac.uk/impact/download/file/1530>

[9] Whitley EA (2007) Submission to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee inquiry into