

# Research in the social sciences



## Lecturer's book charts fall and rise of 'new Tories'

Sussex politics lecturer Dr Tim Bale's eagerly anticipated assessment of the post-Thatcher Conservative Party and its wilderness years was formally launched with a public lecture in London in February 2010.

Tim, a Senior Lecturer in Politics and a member of the University's Sussex European Institute (SEI), specialises in party politics in the UK and in Europe.

His critically acclaimed book, *The Conservative Party, from Thatcher to Cameron*, is based on interviews with some of the key players in Tory politics during the past two decades. The book offers political analysis alongside portraits of some of Westminster's larger-than-life personalities, as well as often brutally honest – and sometimes deliciously funny – quotes from interviews with Tory politicians and advisors.

Tim says: 'I've tried to provide the first definitive account of the years between the departure of Mrs Thatcher and the coming to power of David Cameron, at the same time as producing a book that someone from any party, in Britain and beyond, can learn



something from, even if it's what not to do! I had a lot of fun researching and writing the book – I want people to have at least as much fun reading it.'

## New research on migration investigates how it affects poverty

According to the World Bank, money sent home to developing countries by migrants in 2009 totalled more than \$300 billion, or three times the value of all development aid. The Sussex Centre for Migration Research has been awarded a £6.5-million grant (contract pending) by the Department for International Development to investigate how this flow of money, and other effects of migration, can lead to improvements in the lives of poor migrants and their communities.

The grant will support the Migrating out of Poverty Consortium, led by Sussex, and will provide evidence and practical assistance to governments and agencies around the world in order to improve policies that affect some of the world's poorest people.

**A new £6.5-million grant will enable Sussex researchers to study how migrant workers' incomes affect poverty**

## Research to reveal history of British living standards

Commenting in the late 1950s on the rise in British living standards, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan famously declared that Britons had 'never had it so good'.

Now research by two Sussex academics will use a unique record of British domestic life to chart how ordinary Britons moved from poverty to prosperity during the 20th century.

From January 2010, historian Dr Ian Gazeley and economist Andrew Newell will analyse data from government surveys of household accounts for the project – The Living Standards of Working Households in Britain, 1904-1960.

Research into living standards in Britain has been challenging because of the paucity of evidence: records exist for just three national household expenditure surveys for the period between 1904 and 1954. For each survey, householders volunteered to keep a record of their earnings and expenses. They also provided details of their household structure and the occupation of the head of household.

The complete set of records from the three surveys will allow the researchers to build a picture of living standards in the 20th century. In addition, these data have immense potential for future use, from research into obesity and smoking trends to patterns of charitable giving.

It is also hoped that the work, funded by a £1.1-million grant from the Economic and Social Research Council will help developing countries to tackle poverty issues as their own economies grow, as well as providing a web-based 'one-stop shop' for research into British living standards research.

Dr Gazeley says: 'The eradication of extreme poverty is the first of the United Nations' Millennium goals, yet we understand surprisingly little about its elimination as living standards rose in the Western economies during the 20th century.'



**New research by Sussex academics will explore British living standards in the 20th century**

'For instance, for Britain, we do not know the precise roles played by the Welfare State, self-help, education, reductions in family size, and improvements in real wages driven by technological progress.'

'Research findings and resources will be placed on the web, forming a virtual research centre that will provide policy makers, poverty agencies, public intellectuals, teachers, school children and any other interested party with the information they need to reach an informed opinion on the changing economic circumstances of working households in Britain.'