

Special Audio Clip with Lorna Unwin, Editor of the [*Journal of Vocational Education & Training*](#) on the recent rioting on the streets of many UK cities from the point of view of an academic Journal Editor

As a researcher in the ESRC-funded Centre, [LLAKES](#), the recent riots in English cities have raised many questions for me and my colleagues and the same will be true for anyone involved in the social sciences. We started the research centre under the previous Labour government and then came the 2008 financial crisis, and in 2010 we had a new government elected – so in a short time we’ve seen a lot of changes in social and economic policy. We’ve had big cuts to the public sector as well as continuing problems in the economy. There’s almost a million young people unemployed, we’ve had riots and looting in English cities in August, and we know many people are very worried about their futures.

So as researchers we have to try and think how do we reflect and research such a dynamic situation. As I’m speaking to you now we don’t know, for example, whether there are going to be more riots, whether they’ve been contained, so we have to think do we try and capture this, or is it dangerous to just simply try and react to instant happenings in society, because it might not be possible to do robust research. As an Editor of a journal which focuses on the role of vocational education and training we’ve got a strong focus on changes to the world of work and to the preparation for work, so the continuing economic crisis in the UK and other countries is very central to our concerns. The journal’s editorial board wants to see robust contributions that can help develop our understanding of how vocational education and training is affected by and also is helping to shape changes in the economy and society more generally.