Global challenges
Making the case for co-operation

Data driven: Getting more out of the data we have
Brexit: The legal process is clarified
Innovation: Bringing a social science perspective
Welcome
to the Winter issue of Society Now, the ESRC’s regular magazine which showcases the impact of the social science research we fund.

This issue focuses on the pathway to Brexit, making better use of data, innovation and the Global Challenges Research Fund.

As the Government’s ambitions for Brexit become clearer, what are the next steps for the legal process of leaving the EU?

Administrative data, when linked, can tell researchers much more than simple surveys. How can the UK make better use of the data its institutions and organisations collect.

The innovation landscape in the UK is changing. We look at how the Innovation Caucus is providing research-based insights from social sciences to support innovation-led growth.

Tom Waters of the Institute for Fiscal Studies looks at the impact of the weak economic forecast on living standards, and what the chancellor can do about it.

And Sir Mike Aaronson talks about global issues, international diplomacy and the potential impact the Global Challenges Research Fund might make on the world.

Nick Stevens, Editor - nick.stevens@esrc.ac.uk

In this issue

REGULARS

3 News
14 Opinion
Are there better measures of income-related inequalities in obesity than BMI?
15 Opinion
Why over reliance on demographics could have helped lose Hillary Clinton the election.
20 The UK by numbers: Household income

FEATURES

10 Bad times ahead
Tom Waters of the Institute for Fiscal Studies examines why the weak economic forecast spells bad news for living standards.

12 Regenerating the clinic
How government initiatives are helping regenerative medicine.

16 Innovation for the nation
The Innovation Caucus aims to provide research-based insights from the social sciences that support innovation-led growth.

22 Data driven
Administrative data is a massive asset for academic research and policy development. How is the ADRN helping researchers make the most of it?

24 The Brexit bumpy ride
What are the next steps for the legal process of leaving the EU, who will be involved and how long will it take?

26 Voices: International inspiration
Sir Mike Aaronson talks about the Global Challenges Research Fund and its potential impact on the world.

CONTRIBUTORS

Catherine Barnard is Professor of EU law and Employment Law, Trinity College, University of Cambridge, and Senior Fellow, UK in a Changing Europe initiative

Martin Ince is principal of Martin Ince

Communications. He is a freelance science writer, media adviser and media trainer

Professor Tim Vorley is based at Sheffield University Management School and leads the ESRC-Innovate UK-funded Innovation Caucus

Tom Waters is a researcher at the IFS specialising in tax and benefit policy and its effect on income distribution

Andrew Webster is Professor in the Sociology of Science and Technology, and Director of SASTU, University of York

All Society Now photography © Alamy unless otherwise marked
Citizenship at school boosts later political engagement

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION, introduced into the national curriculum in 2002, can make a long-lasting impression on pupils. In particular, school-based activities promoted as part of the Citizenship curriculum, such as school councils, mock elections and debating teams, have a positive impact on youth political engagement in England, says a recent study from University College London.

“Youth civic engagement has been the subject of much debate and concern over the past two decades, both in the UK and internationally,” says researcher Dr Avril Keating. In England, much of this debate has focused on the declining rates of youth participation in activities such as voting and volunteering.

In a three-year study, researchers examined the different ways in which schooling influences youth civic engagement in Europe in the 21st century. As part of this larger project, analysis of the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS) shows that, in England, activities that give students a chance to learn about democracy through ‘hands-on’ experience (eg, school councils) have a positive impact on young people’s attitudes towards politics. And these benefits are not temporary. “Students who participated in mock elections, debating teams and/or school councils were more likely to have positive attitudes towards political participation even after they had left school,” says Dr Keating.

Findings further show that hands-on activities encourage more than just voting. Participants were also more likely to report they had taken part in non-electoral types of participation, such as signing petitions, contacting their local councillor or MP, taking part in protest activities such as boycotts or street demonstrations, and using social media for political purposes. Crucially, these positive benefits were found even after controlling for other factors that are known to boost political participation among adults such as high levels of education and high socio-economic status. In other words, it’s not just middle class students or young people who are already politically engaged who benefit.

“But we shouldn’t interpret school-based political activities as a panacea for the ‘problem’ of engaging young people in politics,” says Dr Keating. “Families, political parties, NGOs and the media must also play their role. And schools need to be given adequate support and resources, such as trained teachers, to play their part. Without these vital resources, it will be difficult to live up to the potential that different types of citizenship education can have and give youth political engagement the boost it still clearly needs.”
Social workers need support to avoid burnout

STRESS AND BURNOUT among social workers is high compared with similar professions such as teachers, police officers and nurses. Realistic workloads and ongoing emotional support are essential if social workers are to manage stress and perform their job effectively, says new research by the University of East Anglia.

In the three-year study, researchers examined the relationship between emotional intelligence (the ability to identify and manage emotions in oneself and others), stress, burnout and social work practice. Researchers developed and evaluated a two-day emotional intelligence training course for child and family social workers. While the course received positive feedback from participants, there was no statistically significant effect on stress and burnout after the training.

One possible reason is that few participants used the training tools in practice. Embedding training and follow-ups into supervision systems would be needed to improve transfer of training into day-to-day practice.

Although one-off Emotional Intelligence training may not have influenced stress, the study identified a range of effective coping strategies such as planning ahead, reframing the problem, exercise, tackling the issue, seeking support and modifying mood. The research team also devised a model for developing supportive teams called the Secure Base. This model highlights the importance of team colleagues and supervisors for building confidence and developing competence. The research team are currently working with local authorities to implement these models.

Senior managers need to acknowledge the emotional demands in social work and that strategies for managing these demands should be provided within social work training and continuing professional development. “Social workers are meant to receive reflective supervision – talking about their own experiences with an experienced practitioner to improve the way they work – but this often gets squeezed out by other demands,” says Dr Biggart.

“Estimates suggest the average working life of a social worker is eight years, much less than the average of 15 years found in similar demanding professions such as nursing,” she says. “Policymakers need to take account of the emotional demands of the social work profession, alongside workload issues, to sustain social workers in post and make the most of the economic investment made in them through training and post-qualifying experience.”

Contact
Dr Laura Biggart, University of East Anglia
Email: l.biggart@uea.ac.uk
Telephone: 01603 593591
Web: www.uea.ac.uk/emotionsatwork/social-work-study
ESRC Grant Number ES/K001914/1
CURRENT CHILDCARE provision does not cover what parents need, with around half of families using more than one form of childcare to provide appropriate cover, says a study of childcare provision and use in Britain.

Despite policies to increase the use of formal childcare, parents continue to use informal childcare to supplement their childcare needs. A study analysing several large-scale datasets, including the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents, finds high levels of informal care, almost one third of which is provided by grandparents.

“Although parents are not asked about the reasons for their choice of care in the national data sources, it seems plausible that grandparents may be covering the gaps in formal childcare provision,” says researcher Antonia Simon. “The need to use multiple sources of childcare has potential implications on the hours mothers can work because it necessitates more time taking children to and from different childcare providers,” she argues.

More than two-thirds of UK families use some form of childcare. Recent Government steps to increase the quality of childcare as well as providing some free hours are positive, but there is still a long way to go in terms of offering enough accessible, good quality and affordable childcare.

Progress must not be at the expense of decent pay for the childcare workforce, says Antonia Simon.
Local networks boost resilience

STRONG SOCIAL NETWORKS are a key source of resilience in later life for slum dwellers in Kenya, suggests a study of 2,000 over-50s living in two Nairobi slums.

Findings from the three-year study reveal that, contrary to the common Western view, close, supportive friendships and family ties actually play little or no role in supporting the ‘coping’ of older slum dwellers. In fact, these social relationships are often marked by a lack of trust and, in the case of spouses or close younger generation kin, by conflict and strain. Conversely, formal local networks can successfully mediate the impact of adversity for older slum dwellers.

Resilience in slums, researchers conclude, could be better promoted through locally run social protection schemes and inclusive community assistance organisations.

Micro-enterprises offer valued care

THE FUTURE OF social care could lie with micro-businesses, says a two-year study of micro-enterprises in social care in England. Researchers from the University of Birmingham found that micro-enterprises deliver more personalised, innovative and valued support for a similar or lower cost than larger providers.

“Prompted by the question of what size of social care provider is ‘just right’?, we compared micro-providers of care and support (employing five members of staff or fewer) with small, medium and large care providers in three areas of England,” says researcher Dr Catherine Needham.

The study involved 27 care organisations, covering a range of sizes and services, including personal care, home support and day activities. The researchers interviewed a total of 143 people, including owners, managers, employees, carers and those receiving services, including older and disabled people.

“We found many examples of micro-enterprises offering creative and holistic solutions to social care needs,” says Dr Needham. Their strengths seem to arise from having greater continuity of staff, greater staff autonomy and greater accessibility of managers compared to larger organisations.

Micro-enterprises can, researchers warn, find it harder to get started and stay in business as they often lack local authority contracts and the promotional resources of larger organisations. “To flourish, local authorities need to help them access dedicated support and social workers, and GPs need to know what is available on their patch so they can make referrals,” says Dr Needham.

CONTACT

Dr Catherine Needham, University of Birmingham
Email c.needham.1@bham.ac.uk
Web www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/micro-enterprises/index.aspx
Telephone 0121 414 3011
ESRC Grant Number ES/K002317/1

CONTACT

Professor Maria Evandrou, University of Southampton
Email maria.evandrou@soton.ac.uk
Web www.southampton.ac.uk/ageingcentre/index.page
Telephone 023 8059 4808
ESRC Grant Number ES/J018392/1
A new collaboration between UK researchers and a Chinese social research team from Peking University has conducted the first nationally representative survey of Chinese attitudes towards their healthcare. How trust affects use of healthcare services is currently not well understood. In this study, researchers examined the relationship between trust, distrust and healthcare utilisation in China, a middle-income country where distrust is seen as a major problem for the healthcare system.

In 2009, the Chinese government announced a major new round of reforms to its problem-ridden healthcare system. But many problems persist including unequal access to healthcare, overcrowded hospitals, weak primary care, and unethical behaviour by medical professionals working in clinics. While previous studies indicated that patient distrust is primarily due to perceptions of poor competence, this research reveals that public distrust in clinics cannot simply be explained by negative evaluations of their competence. Further research is needed to better understand the reasons for distrust in clinics.

Such knowledge, researchers argue, is relevant beyond the boundaries of China. Many features of China’s healthcare system are found elsewhere, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Working closely with the World Health Organisation target of a 25 per cent reduction in premature mortality from non-communicable diseases by 2025 can only be achieved by expanding secondary prevention of Cardiovascular Disease (CVD). Researchers used the world’s largest study of CVD incidence, mortality and risk factors – the Prospective Urban Rural Epidemiology (PURE) study – to investigate socio-economic inequality in the use of medication for secondary prevention of CVD in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Iran, Malaysia, Poland and Turkey.

In 2009, the Chinese government announced a major new round of reforms to its problem-ridden healthcare system. But many problems persist including unequal access to healthcare, overcrowded hospitals, weak primary care, and unethical behaviour by medical professionals working in clinics. While previous studies indicated that patient distrust is primarily due to perceptions of poor competence, this research reveals that public distrust in clinics cannot simply be explained by negative evaluations of their competence. Further research is needed to better understand the reasons for distrust in clinics.

Distrust strains Chinese healthcare system

Distrust in clinics appears to encourage over-use of hospitals – a major problem in China’s healthcare system.”

An important policy implication, say researchers, is that policymakers could address China’s highly inefficient patterns of healthcare use by reducing distrust in clinics. But to reduce distrust authorities will need to do more than simply improve the training of medical professionals working in clinics. In China, where distrust in clinics is high, doctors are often motivated to generate profit from their services.

In 2009, the Chinese government announced a major new round of reforms to its problem-ridden healthcare system. But many problems persist including unequal access to healthcare, overcrowded hospitals, weak primary care, and unethical behaviour by medical professionals working in clinics. While previous studies indicated that patient distrust is primarily due to perceptions of poor competence, this research reveals that public distrust in clinics cannot simply be explained by negative evaluations of their competence. Further research is needed to better understand the reasons for distrust in clinics.

Distrust strains Chinese healthcare system

An important policy implication, say researchers, is that policymakers could address China’s highly inefficient patterns of healthcare use by reducing distrust in clinics. But to reduce distrust authorities will need to do more than simply improve the training of medical professionals working in clinics. While previous studies indicated that patient distrust is primarily due to perceptions of poor competence, this research reveals that public distrust in clinics cannot simply be explained by negative evaluations of their competence. Further research is needed to better understand the reasons for distrust in clinics.

Distrust strains Chinese healthcare system

An important policy implication, say researchers, is that policymakers could address China’s highly inefficient patterns of healthcare use by reducing distrust in clinics. But to reduce distrust authorities will need to do more than simply improve the training of medical professionals working in clinics. While previous studies indicated that patient distrust is primarily due to perceptions of poor competence, this research reveals that public distrust in clinics cannot simply be explained by negative evaluations of their competence. Further research is needed to better understand the reasons for distrust in clinics.

Distrust strains Chinese healthcare system

An important policy implication, say researchers, is that policymakers could address China’s highly inefficient patterns of healthcare use by reducing distrust in clinics. But to reduce distrust authorities will need to do more than simply improve the training of medical professionals working in clinics. While previous studies indicated that patient distrust is primarily due to perceptions of poor competence, this research reveals that public distrust in clinics cannot simply be explained by negative evaluations of their competence. Further research is needed to better understand the reasons for distrust in clinics.
Building resilience to climate shocks

IN RESPONSE TO the impacts of climate change, resilience can be a game changer, says researcher Dr Christophe Béné. But what determines people’s resilience? Working in four different countries in Africa and Asia, a team of international researchers have explored the ‘psycho-social’ factors that influence individual and collective capacity to respond to shocks, like drought or fishery collapse.

Dr Béné says findings challenge conventional models of what determines household and community resilience in low-income countries. “Resilience is not simply a function of tangible factors, such as income, assets or even level of education,” he says. “Rather, perception and self-confidence about one’s own ability to handle adverse events seem key in determining whether people engage in negative coping strategies — such as selling assets — or transformative adaptation strategies — for example, investing in new economic activities.”

The implications of these findings are important for the design of resilience interventions. Most resilience-building efforts proposed so far focus on tangible activities such as livelihood diversification. “Our research demonstrates the importance of less tangible elements of resilience such as risk perception, fatalism, and self-confidence,” he says. “Future interventions should direct some of their efforts toward these more subjective elements to maximise impact and truly prepare people for the unexpected.”

Prior to the 2008 financial crash, workplace policies and practices to support Work-Life Balance (WLB) were growing in many contexts, particularly public sector organisations. What impact has financial turbulence and austerity had on this emerging work-life balance agenda?

It’s a complex picture, suggests a recent seminar series exploring the current WLB challenges for employees, employers and policymakers.

“Rather, perception and self-confidence about one’s own ability to handle adverse events seem key in determining whether people engage in negative coping strategies — such as selling assets — or transformative adaptation strategies — for example, investing in new economic activities.”

The implications of these findings are important for the design of resilience interventions. Most resilience-building efforts proposed so far focus on tangible activities such as livelihood diversification. “Our research demonstrates the importance of less tangible elements of resilience such as risk perception, fatalism, and self-confidence,” he says. “Future interventions should direct some of their efforts toward these more subjective elements to maximise impact and truly prepare people for the unexpected.”

Employers ignore fairness of work-life balance

Prior to the 2008 financial crash, workplace policies and practices to support Work-Life Balance (WLB) were growing in many contexts, particularly public sector organisations. What impact has financial turbulence and austerity had on this emerging work-life balance agenda?

It’s a complex picture, suggests a recent seminar series exploring the current WLB challenges for employees, employers and policymakers.

“This is a complex picture, suggests a recent seminar series exploring the current WLB challenges for employees, employers and policymakers.

“Rather, perception and self-confidence about one’s own ability to handle adverse events seem key in determining whether people engage in negative coping strategies — such as selling assets — or transformative adaptation strategies — for example, investing in new economic activities.”

The implications of these findings are important for the design of resilience interventions. Most resilience-building efforts proposed so far focus on tangible activities such as livelihood diversification. “Our research demonstrates the importance of less tangible elements of resilience such as risk perception, fatalism, and self-confidence,” he says. “Future interventions should direct some of their efforts toward these more subjective elements to maximise impact and truly prepare people for the unexpected.”

While some public sector organisations claim to have developed their WLB practices during the recession, researchers consider these to be largely cost-driven initiatives. By closing offices to cut costs, for example, some public sector employees have now been forced to work remotely.

“Organisations may call this a WLB initiative and say it’s good for work-life balance to be able to work from home but this won’t suit all employees and there is no element of choice,” she explains.

Post recession, an increasing number of workers are also facing no choice in terms of underemployment. This fear of ‘too few’ or uncertain working hours is a growing problem that, post recession, should now be fundamental to any understanding of work-life balance.

Overall, the key message to emerge from the seminar series is that work-life balance should take account of social justice, even in uncertain economic times. That’s good for employers as well as employees and society, say researchers.

Contact Dr Christophe Béné, International Centre for Tropical Agriculture, Colombia
Email c.bene@cgiar.org
ESRC Grant Number ES/J001782/1

Contact Professor Suzan Lewis, Middlesex University
Email s.lewis@mdx.ac.uk
Telephone 0208 411 4804
Web www.esrc-work-life-seminars.org
ESRC Grant Number ESA.000423/1
New tools support arts evaluation

THE ARTS – INCLUDING music, dance, theatre, visual arts and writing – are increasingly recognised as having the potential to support health and wellbeing. But for arts to be included in commissioning of health and social care services, there needs to be robust evidence of their effectiveness, impacts and costs.

New research from the University of the West of England provides guidance on appropriate ways of documenting the impacts of arts for health and wellbeing, including tools for evaluation and outcomes measurement.

“Artists can find it challenging to navigate the terrain of evaluation,” says researcher Professor Norma Daykin. “Our website – creativeandcredible – contains a range of materials including guidance, case studies, tools and resources that can be directly used to improve evaluation practice.”

In brief

COUNTERFEIT TRADE
Trade in counterfeit goods is growing and has been linked to the operations of transnational organised crime. A new study aims to explore the financial mechanisms that support the flow of illicit goods, particularly the financial opportunities that the internet and electronic commerce present to counterfeiters. Findings will provide an important knowledge base for law enforcement, regulatory agencies and policymakers.

ESRC grant number ES/P001327/1

DISTANCE EDUCATION
Higher education is viewed as vital to sustainable economic development. Yet the enrolment rate for Higher Education (HE) across Africa runs at only eight per cent – the lowest in the world. Distance education offers the potential to meet demand for HE which, in many African countries, outstrips supply. New research will provide valuable insight into distance education and how it can be improved.

ESRC grant number ES/P002161/1

DIGITAL POLITICS
Digital technology, many believe, offers a solution to decreasing participation and growing levels of distrust in democratic politics. This belief has led political parties to embrace new digital campaigning software. In a new study, researchers aim to explore the capacity of digital innovations to renew democracy. The study will also probe public attitudes towards parties’ use of digital campaigning techniques.

ESRC grant number ES/N01667X/1

Citizens vote for a greater voice in political decisions

A

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S

T

R

U

S
Bad times ahead

The UK economy has already had an extremely tough decade. If it proves right, the weak economic forecast spells more bad news for living standards – while also limiting the scope for the chancellor to do anything about it. By Tom Waters of the Institute for Fiscal Studies

For each of his final seven fiscal events, George Osborne stated within the first five minutes of his speech that the UK had grown faster than any other major advanced economy. Phillip Hammond, at his first fiscal event, stuck to the same script. But the story of this Autumn Statement was not historical economic growth, but expectations for future growth. While the Chancellor unveiled some policy changes and new fiscal rules, it is the changes in the macroeconomic outlook forecast by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) that – if they prove correct, or at least in the right ballpark – will have the biggest implications for living standards in the UK.

“The real increases that pensioners will see is now expected to be smaller than thought previously.”

Of course these forecasts come with a huge degree of uncertainty: even at the best of times the macroeconomy is very difficult to forecast, and all the more so when neither the policy environment following Brexit nor its economic effects are known with any precision. Uncertainty over both the economy and government policy implies that the path for real incomes and the public finances could be considerably better or worse than the OBR currently expects. One of the biggest challenges the Chancellor faces is how to navigate the economy and the public finances given that degree of uncertainty.

Before delving into the forecasts, remember that the UK economy has already had an extremely tough decade. Due to the deep recession and very sluggish recovery, our national income (real GDP) per capita has grown by just 1.5 per cent over the nearly nine years following its peak at the end of 2007. In large part this is due to a dismal record on productivity, which barely changed at all over the same period. Back in March the OBR had expected that this difficult season would be followed by modest growth in GDP and productivity. The OBR now forecasts real GDP to be £330 billion lower in 2020-21 than they had expected in March, corresponding to an average of £1,000 per household. Productivity growth forecasts are down by 0.3 percentage points a year thanks to lower investment. And the OBR raised their forecast for inflation, following the sharp depreciation of sterling and resulting higher import prices.

These changes to national income and prices feed through to living standards. The OBR forecast for real average earnings for those in work by the beginning of 2021 is down by 3.7 per cent relative to their March 2016 forecast. Higher inflation has some role to play in this, but weaker expected productivity growth – the key driver of earnings growth in the long run – accounts for most of the change. If the OBR is right then even by 2021-22, real average earnings will be below their 2007-08 peak – meaning well over a decade without real earnings growth. Even allowing for a substantial margin of error it is safe to say that we have not had a period of earnings growth this weak for at least the last 70 years. And looking at the external forecasts that the Treasury collects, of which 11 include real earnings growth forecasts between 2015 and 2020, they range from a fall of 1.7 per cent to growth of 5.7 per cent: in comparison the OBR actually looks relatively optimistic at 4.9 per cent.

While weaker earnings will affect working households, higher inflation will affect everyone by raising the prices they pay. We estimate that the two per cent average price increase expected as a direct result of the 13 per cent sterling devaluation since March will affect households across the income distribution about evenly, with higher vehicle, holiday and furniture costs hitting richer households more, while poorer households are more affected by rises in food, telephone, and utility costs.

The inflationary impact on people’s incomes is more complex, and interacts with government policy. The basic state pension is ‘triple locked’, to go up with the highest of inflation, average earnings, or 2.5 per cent – so under this policy it can never fall in real terms. But with average earnings growth lower than previously forecast and inflation higher, the real increases that pensioners will see is now expected to be smaller than thought previously.

For working-age benefit recipients the picture is somewhat different. Normally they are protected from inflation because their benefits are price-indexed, but the government has frozen most working-age benefits in nominal terms through to March 2020. Under previous OBR forecasts this implied a four per cent cut in the value of benefits, but higher inflation means that it now represents a six per cent cut. This is expected to affect around 11 million households by an average of £390 per year in today’s terms.
But for many low-income working-age households a bigger change is yet to come, in the form of the transition to universal credit (UC). This represents a substantial cut to in-work benefits as UC is less generous than the existing benefit and tax credit system. In his first Autumn Statement Phillip Hammond made a tweak to UC which will put about £0.7 billion per year more in the pockets of working recipients; but this only very partially reverses a more than £3 billion takeaway from essentially the same group announced at last summer’s budget. Taken together with the other tax and benefit changes the Chancellor announced – an increase to the personal allowance, another freezing of fuel duty, and an increase in insurance premium tax – the Autumn Statement’s personal tax and benefit policies represent a very small net giveaway, slightly tilted in favour of those towards the bottom of the income distribution. But they pale into insignificance relative to policies already in the pipeline for this parliament, which on average will hit low-income households hardest.

While not making extensive further changes to the tax and benefit system, the Chancellor did opt to significantly increase capital investment. His plans will take public sector net investment to around 2.3 per cent of national income – pretty much exactly Labour’s pre-crisis planned level, and well above the average over the last 30 years. Well-targeted investment should raise national income in the long run, and so the Chancellor has essentially chosen to target higher incomes in the future via stronger earnings growth, rather than higher incomes now via tax and benefit giveaways.

The combined effects of these policies and changes in economic forecasts is that the Chancellor would have had about a two-thirds chance of missing his predecessor’s fiscal targets, with the previously hoped for budget surplus of £10 billion in 2019-20 now expected to be a £20 billion deficit according to the OBR’s central forecast. But, unsurprisingly given the change in economic outlook, Mr Hammond chose to change the targets. Overall tax and departmental spending plans are broadly unchanged, but the main fiscal target is now to reduce the structural budget deficit (the bit not explained by the economic cycle) to under two per cent of GDP by 2020-21, rather than to reduce the total deficit to zero by 2019-20. The OBR gives the Chancellor a two-thirds probability of meeting this new goal.

In summary, Mr Hammond’s first fiscal event was relatively light on policy, and dominated by forecast changes. If it proves right, the weak economic forecast spells a very bad decade for living standards – while also limiting the scope the Chancellor has to do much about it in a hurry.
Regenerating the clinic

Regenerative medicine (RM) allows diseased tissue and organs to be replaced with new, healthy and specially-grown cell lines. What government initiatives are being pursued to help provide the right sort of innovation niche for RM? By Professor Andrew Webster

It’s well-known that medical and wider healthcare systems struggle to meet the demands placed on them. Reduced government funding, moves towards greater efficiency driven by the current Sustainability and Transformation Programme and more complex financial and planning structures via devolved budgets carry considerable organisational overhead.

Equally challenging is the requirement to respond to biomedical innovation – such as ‘precision medicine’, ‘pharmacogenetics’, and e-health systems, not least as these are supposed to reduce costs in the long term and so make better use of ever-tighter resources.

Government reports describe regenerative medicine as one of the ‘8 great technologies’ shaping the future.

One key area receiving considerable attention in this regard is regenerative medicine (RM), which through replacing diseased tissue and organs with new, healthy and specially-grown cell lines, is heralded as being not just therapeutic but actually curative of disease. While there has been considerable social and political controversy surrounding the use of cells, especially human embryonic stem cells, the field has seen off these earlier debates for the most part mainly because of the development of cell, tissue and gene therapies that are not derived from ‘spare embryos’. Recent government reports describe the field as ‘revolutionary’ and one of the ‘8 Great technologies’ shaping the future.

But such aspirations are yet to be realised. The current Science and Technology Select Committee Inquiry into regen medicine is exploring how to improve the regulatory and funding environment for RM. A range of government initiatives are being pursued to help provide the right sort of innovation niche for RM. These include the £55-million Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult manufacturing centre being built in Stevenage and opening in 2017, designed to bridge early and later phase development, and proposals to accelerate access to ‘transformative’ therapies through modifying appraisal, regulatory and payment models.

Despite considerable investment in the UK and indeed globally, there are few approved products in the clinic, and most are for small patient groups in rare disease areas.

Understanding the path to the clinic: the specificity of RM

So, is this just what happens with all new biomedical innovation or is there something specific about RM that makes matters more difficult? The ESRC-funded REGenableMED project, drawing on Science and Technology Studies, horizon-scanning and legal expertise (with colleagues based in York, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Sussex), shows how we need to explore these big-picture developments in much more fine-grained detail, to understand the tensions and complexities peculiar to this field. We have identified three particular challenges those working in RM need to cope with: Stabilising live tissue (the cell lines) at quality thresholds that meet clinical standards; scaling up and manufacturing the many trillions of cells for patient therapies without losing efficacy or quality; and finding the right regulatory framework for medicine beyond the conventional pharmaceutical models.

We have also identified five typical, paradigmatic pathways that are being pursued (see box below). The first and second are most active, reflecting strategic responses to these challenges by biomedical researchers, firms and, to an increasing extent, big pharma (such as GSK). The last – bioprocessing
services – provides vital infrastructure/equipment and other resources for the field.

What we also have shown through extensive fieldwork is that these pathways are linked to quite different patterns of clinical adoption – how clinicians and key stakeholders position new therapies relative to existing practice. Understanding the context here is crucial. This relates to the ‘adoption space’ – a concept drawn from a related, earlier study of a range of health technologies.

The adoption space for RM

Innovative products or therapies meet with a range of socio-cultural, organisational and wider institutional filters relating to factors such as perceived utility, novelty, regulatory burden, cost, and skill demands. Our research has clarified precisely where these fall in different pathways for emerging therapies and so where and how best to devote time and effort – and those limited resources – to best meet these demands. No therapy speaks for itself, and something that its developer regards as clearly working in a technical sense may nevertheless not be workable in an organisational sense. The project makes an important distinction between the often-heard notion of ‘technological readiness’ and the concept of ‘institutional readiness’. This refers to the capacity and willingness of institutions to anticipate and adapt to the challenges and affordances presented by a technology – some of which will only become apparent when the technology is introduced into a specific setting.

Clinical production and delivery

It is becoming apparent that the adoption of RM will be accompanied by changes in the hospital setting. These are likely to involve specialist centres located across the UK with new skills sets and technology platforms to build the organisational environment in which RM becomes workable.

In addition, we have explored a number of manufacturing models including microfactories located near to or on clinical sites, heralding important structural change in the role of hospitals as innovators and not merely users of innovation. This relates to logistical, quality and storage needs: It will be vital to undertake some scenario work to determine how different patient populations’ needs in distinct disease areas can be optimally met by new modes of clinical production and delivery.

Looking ahead

The project team has developed close working relations and collaboration with senior members of major UK organisations involved in shaping the RM field including NHS England, the Catapult, the ABPI and Innovate UK, as well as with a number of patient charities, such as the British Heart Foundation and Fight For Sight. A series of Policy Briefings and academic papers have been published, responses made to the European Medicine Agency’s consultations, and very recent meetings held with the All Party Parliamentary Health Group and the MHRA’s Patient Forum. The project has also submitted evidence to the Science and Technology Select Committee. These have demonstrated the contribution that social science can make in thinking through the likely shape of this emergent technology in the wider health care system and the reconfiguring of the research/clinical delivery relationship that this is likely to require.
The prevalence of obesity is a burgeoning concern worldwide. Obesity is associated with increased mortality and morbidity risks and so places a significant burden on healthcare systems worldwide. A growing number of countries and the World Health Organization have recently established policies and strategies to tackle obesity levels. UK governments have identified tackling obesity as a key priority. Recent evidence has shown that the UK not only has one of the highest obesity prevalence rates in Western Europe and the eighth highest among all OECD member countries but is one of the countries with the highest obesity growth rates in the past three decades. Socio-economic inequalities in obesity are therefore of particular interest.

"BMI is a noisy measure, which does not distinguish fat from lean body mass"

Previous studies that explored socio-economic inequalities in adiposity were limited, mainly using conventional self-reported obesity measures, such as the Body Mass Index (BMI). Typically, BMI is defined as body weight (in kg) over the square of height (in meters). These studies suggested that more socio-economically disadvantaged females experienced higher obesity levels, while this is not true for males. But these studies have a number of limitations. First, BMI is a noisy adiposity measure, which does not distinguish fat from lean body mass. Moreover, previous reports may have been biased because they rely on self-reported body weight and height values (self-report questionnaires).

A new study I co-authored, published in Social Science and Medicine, used alternative measures of obesity to unpack the link between social inequalities and adiposity. This research looked at over 13,000 adult participants in a specific health study within Understanding Society (the UK Household Longitudinal Study) and compared income-related inequalities with both the conventional BMI and a number of alternative BMI measures such as waist circumference, absolute and relative measures of body fat. These body fat measures allowed distinguishing between the fat- and lean-mass components of BMI, while waist circumference captured central adiposity. Findings indicate that the absence of income-related obesity inequalities for males in the existing reports may be attributed to their focus on BMI-based measures. This is because similar income-related inequalities are found for both males and females when authors consider alternative BMI measures such as central adiposity (waist circumference) and body fat.

Capitalising on the richness of the Understanding Society dataset, we went beyond the conventional BMI measures to use body composition and central adiposity measures, thus distinguishing between the fat- and lean-mass components of BMI. Moreover, in contrast to many of the previous studies, we used nurse-administered adiposity measures that were not subject to self-reporting. We suggested and found that previous measures focusing solely on BMI may have missed the link between income and obesity for men. Our findings have important implications for the measurement of socio-economic inequalities in adiposity and indicate that central adiposity and body composition measures should both be included in health policy agendas.

In this study, some further analysis explored the factors that lie behind the observed income-related inequalities in adiposity. Our findings also highlight the importance of schooling, as differences in education between obese and non-obese individuals explain a large part of the observed income-related inequalities in adiposity. Over and above the role played by schooling, our study also shows that the association between income and obesity may be partially driven by psycho-social mechanisms that link individuals’ perceptions of their financial conditions (such as feeling unable to manage on their income or perceived material deprivation) to adiposity.

Dr Apostolos Davillas is Senior Research Officer at the Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex

Telephone 01206 872134

Email adavil@essex.ac.uk

Web www.iser.essex.ac.uk/people/adavil
OVERAGE OF THE build-up to the US Presidential Election was dominated by reference to demographics. The Donald’s catalogue of politically incorrect outbursts was going to help Clinton sweep the ‘Hispanic vote’ and his Obama birther theories were going to mobilise African-Americans voters no end.

The most diverse electorate for a US Presidential Election meant Trump would be defeated by the reality of demographics. This proved to be exaggerated. The politically unconventional Trump and his protectionist positions went down a treat among white rural, working-class voters – helping him breach Democratic territory in the industrial, abandoned Midwest. Strong white support also paved his way to victory in key states such as Florida. For all the talk of diversity, this race for the White House reminded us that the US is still a majority-white country.

But this is not to say voting behaviour dynamics among US ethnic minorities should be ignored. There are lessons to be learnt by those who predicted a Latino meltdown for Trump. Nationwide, he won 29 per cent of the Hispanic vote. But here is the big point – there is no such thing as the ‘Hispanic’ vote. In election terms, it is nearly as redundant as referring to the ‘South Asian’ vote in the UK. In fact, polling evidence by Pulse Opinion Research showed that a good proportion of Latino respondents were supportive of tighter immigration laws and deportation measures. They were essentially ‘Trumpians’ when it comes to border security.

A deep respect for Christian faith, rejection of Clintonite social liberalism and pro-business values all played a role in vote choice. And it would have pushed voters irrespective of ethnicity towards Trump. Rolling out former Miss Universe Alicia Machado on the campaign trail seemed to have achieved little for Clinton among these voters.

As a state, Florida made a mockery of the idea of there being a ‘pan-Latino bloc’. How could the Republican-voting established anti-Castro Cuban-Americans in Florida be lumped with the newly-arrived Democrat-voting Puerto Ricans in the same state who have recently fled the island’s debt crisis? Hispanics are not a homogenous, one-dimensional, single-issue bloc – myth truly dispelled.

African-American voters again overwhelmingly voted Democrat – but not to the level of enthusiasm for Obama. Not a surprise when you consider the first black President was no longer on the ticket. In Wayne County, Michigan; Milwaukee County, Wisconsin; Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania; the Democrat vote dropped by alarming levels.

All these counties are heavily populated by black voters. It showed the ineffectiveness of anti-Trump campaigning. A Midwest tour including visits to predominantly black communities – one which included uplifting messages of economic regeneration, investment in schools, and a commitment to racial equality issues – could have made a big difference. The fact Clinton didn’t even visit Wisconsin as Presidential nominee tells a story of sheer complacency.

The election proved that ethnic minority voting behaviour in the US continues to be a complex area of research. Homogenising ethnic groups and simplifying voter considerations can lead to both ineffective political campaigns and a betrayal of academic rigour.

“The diversity of policy concerns across Hispanic ethnic groups demonstrates the need to refrain from tendencies to homogenise and treat Latinos as a monolithic voting group. For the Democrats, depressed turnout in key counties with high African-American populations shows that direct political engagement cannot be automatically substituted for slandering of opponents.

Sophisticated 50-state political strategies and academic analyses are the order of the day in light of this surprise US Presidential result which left egg on the face of many. ”

Demographic deception

Ethnic minority voting behaviour and Hillary Clinton’s over-reliance on demographics could have helped lose her the election. By Rakib Ehsan

Rakib Ehsan is a doctoral researcher at Royal Holloway. He is investigating how the ethnic composition of social networks and patterns of interethnic interactions are related to generalised social trust, political-institutional trust, and self-identification within UK ethnic minorities.
Innovation, defined in simplest terms as converting ideas into value, is widely regarded as a central engine of economic growth, rooted in and shaped by economic, social and political forces. In many ways, innovation as a field of research embodies the essence of the social sciences, attracting research interest from a broad array of disciplines. The social sciences, and the Innovation Caucus in particular, have an important role in strengthening the innovation landscape in the UK and beyond.

Now more than ever the UK’s credentials as a world-leader in innovation are central to future economic growth. Innovate UK – the national innovation agency – has a critical role in fostering the conditions for innovation and supporting organisations to grow through innovation. Businesses that invest in innovation are recognised as outperforming their counterparts, so the question for Government is how to enable innovation and stimulate investment with a view to deliver growth.

The Innovation Caucus was established to facilitate knowledge exchange and promote closer collaboration between social science researchers and Innovate UK. For the past 18 months, the Innovation Caucus has comprised five ‘thought leaders’ – Professors Tim Vorley, Iain Docherty, Irene Ng, Nola Hewitt-Dundas and Paul Nightingale – who have provided expert insight, explored different policy options and made recommendations about ‘what works’ in supporting innovation-led growth. Working with groups of policymakers, strategists, analysts and technologists at Innovate UK, the Innovation Caucus has sought to enhance the impact of social science research.

A series of projects has been undertaken in addition to the advisory role of the Innovation Caucus. These include the development of a business model innovation toolkit to support businesses to innovate, and the creation of a new tool designed to help businesses engage and forge links with universities. The thought leaders have also conducted an experiment to examine...
Professor Tim Vorley is leading the ESRC and Innovate UK-funded Innovation Caucus. Based at Sheffield University Management School, Tim is a Professor of Entrepreneurship and Co-Director of Centre for Regional Economic and Enterprise Development. Telephone +44 (0)114 222 3486 Email tim.vorley@sheffield.ac.uk Web www.innovationcaucus.co.uk @innovcaucus

A central challenge remains how to translate scientific excellence into innovation

as supporting the work of the ESRC to encourage social scientists to engage more with businesses. The Innovation Caucus will also be looking to take on four doctoral interns over the next 18 months, as well as funding a series of independent pieces of research on innovation-led growth. Changing Times

The UK is at a critical juncture in terms of innovation-led growth. The innovation landscape in the UK is changing, and 2017 will see a number of developments. The Dowling Review mapped the complex research and innovation landscape, and the emphasis now needs to be on making the system accessible and effective as opposed to simplification per se. Social science researchers have an innate understanding of innovation and are supporting our work to shape the future of the innovation ecosystem.

In 2017 the recommendations of the Nurse review will continue to be taken forward, with a view to the creation of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). This represents an opportunity to be more strategic in identifying research and innovation priorities, and thereby strengthen the innovation system in the UK. UKRI aims to improve collaboration between the research community and the commercial sector, and will help innovation flourish by bringing together universities, businesses and intermediaries. To this end the Innovation Caucus is working with Research Councils and Innovate UK to foster business innovation, and will continue to support efforts to enhance quality of evidence on the UK’s research and innovation landscape.

Another major change on the horizon in 2017 concerns the introduction of loans, as Innovate UK is set to unveil a number of ‘new innovation finance products’ intended to support business innovation. The need for new funding models reflects the tightening of Government spending, while also acknowledging that the costs of innovation should not be entirely underwritten by the public purse. A number of countries have piloted the introduction of loans, and this will be an area where the Innovation Caucus will continue to work closely with Innovate UK to develop and evaluate the evidence base.

**Geographies of innovation**

Despite the accelerating devolution agenda in England, and across the UK, responsibility for innovation has continued to be nationally led. While there is no push to devolve innovation funding or policy, there is a need to understand the nature of local and national priorities and how they relate. This is increasingly important as local economies are striving to deliver innovation-led growth, both at the Local Enterprise Partnership and city scale. A key question for the Innovation Caucus is how to ensure the coherence of local and national priorities to deliver economic growth.

Universities remain important anchors of the innovation system in the UK, and are major beneficiaries of innovation funding. But a central challenge remains how to translate scientific excellence into innovation, and with it leverage economic impact and growth. The Innovation Caucus is working to identify effective ways of achieving this transfer, which is critical to the future of innovation-led growth. Given the strength of the UK’s research base, there is a need to ensure that the innovation ecosystem builds on this foundation.

The primary focus of the Innovation Caucus is the UK, but innovation is a global game. Increasingly, innovation, like academic research, is becoming more collaborative and geographically dispersed. This poses new challenges for how best to support innovation, but if the UK is to remain competitive as an innovation-led economy this needs to be understood by all stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem. There is a need to recognise that innovation is central to economic growth, and if the UK does not engage and invest like its international counterparts we will fall behind.
Feature: Festival Focus

The end of 2016 was marked by the ESRC with our largest ever Festival of Social Science, which saw more than 270 events exploring a huge range of subjects running across the UK.

A huge, diverse range of social science was on demonstration at the 2016 Festival with themes focused on exploring anything from dyspraxia and autism, surviving a 7-1 loss in football, Reggae music, the history behind the Blitz, living with robots, and biotechnology.

Now in its 14th year, the focus of the 2016 Festival was to help wide audiences discover how social science shapes public policy and contributes to making the economy more competitive, as well as offering a better understanding of 21st-century society.

And to meet this need, events arrived to audiences in all manner of forms. For example, in Northern Ireland, among their 23 events, an artistic display gave people a deeper understanding of the Belfast peace walls.

Held at Ulster University’s Belfast campus, ‘Re-imagining Belfast; sharing the peace walls’, gave audiences the first ever opportunity to appreciate the work of artist David Turner and architect Michael Wilkinson, who have been working for 18 months on a cross-disciplinary, multi-faceted project – ‘The Theoretical Re-development of Belfast’.

The urban regeneration project aims to help people reinterpret the architecture of the walls, reimagine the City of Belfast and use the artwork as a catalyst to promote good design throughout the Province of Ulster.

Across the water in Scotland there were 30 events, looking at a range of topics and involving various formats: The University of Aberdeen hosted a 2km walk, catching Pokémon on the Pokémon GO app; a spoof lecture at Glasgow saw the ‘lid lifted’ on a zombie skull as they explored the neuropsychology of zombies; and in Edinburgh an event questioned how digitisation can improve legal services and whether robots could make better lawyers.

Politics was high on the agenda in Scotland too with events focused on the result of the US Presidential election, social media use in politics, the impact of the reduction of voting age in Scotland, Brexit, and the potential of Scottish independence.

Scottish politics also made an appearance in the Festival in England. The University of Sheffield welcomed Nicola Sturgeon MSP to host a keynote lecture focused on Brexit and the potential options for Scotland staying in the EU trade zone. The Scottish First Minister also spoke about the potential for a second independence referendum, which she described as “entirely reasonable”, following Brexit.

Elsewhere in Yorkshire Festival participants were testing out the latest in polling software to explore how the county might be better prepared – and protected – from flooding.
Technology was a key theme throughout the week as social scientists explored how it is affecting our day-to-day lives. A one-day ‘hackathon’ in Manchester encouraged coders, data enthusiasts, graphic designers, project managers and end users from all sectors to hunt down, crunch and open data relating to the Manchester region.

In Birmingham, smart energy was explored over a two-day seminar where guests learned how smart technology could help us have more comfortable homes and healthier indoor environments. And in Kenilworth social scientists from Coventry University explored their research on how electric vehicles are being used in rural areas – looking specifically at how even small, rural businesses can save thousands of pounds in a short space of time.

This event was not alone in tackling issues faced in more rural areas. In Canterbury there was a public presentation to discuss how the lives of farmers, and farming in Kent, have changed over the last 50 years. And food was the topic in St Ives as researchers showcased their studies on the impact of sustainable food tourism on Cornwall.

Also in the south-west, the Exeter event ‘An app a day keeps the doctor away’ explored the psychology of eating behaviour, what a healthy diet looks like and how we can train our brain to make healthier food choices.

The Festival of Social Science demonstrates how social science affects our day-to-day lives. This is often best expressed by highlighting key research on our health and wellbeing, and what happens to us as we age.

This was a common theme over the week with other events including: ‘Disability on screen’, ‘Healthier together’, ‘Help yourself to be healthy’, ‘Older people’s health and wellbeing: who decides?’, ‘The role of social sciences in HIV research’, ‘High-tech dementia: transforming care and the home’, ‘Age of choice? Rethinking life after 50’, and much more.

The 2016 Festival saw more than 25,000 audience members, nearly five million people potentially reached on social media platforms, a record 1,417 academics involved in events and over 200 mentions in the press.

Sue Haydock, ESRC Communications Officer, runs the Festival. She said: “The Festival this year was amazing. I am constantly surprised by the inventiveness of the researchers in how they bring the social sciences to a wider audience and the feedback I receive from the audiences shows how much their hard work is appreciated. I am looking forward to 2017 as it will see us celebrating 15 years of the Festival – and it will be even bigger and better than ever!”

For more information, see: www.esrc.ac.uk/public-engagement/festival-of-social-science
### Households

**SINGLE, AGED 25, NO CHILDREN, WORKS FULL TIME AT THE WAGE FLOOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£12,800</td>
<td>£14,080</td>
<td>£1,270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SINGLE PARENT, AGED 30, WITH ONE CHILD, SINGLE EARNER WORKING FULL TIME IN LOW PAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£11,010</td>
<td>£12,740</td>
<td>£1,730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COUPLE, BOTH AGED 35, WITH TWO CHILDREN, DUAL EARNERS WORKING FULL TIME AT MEDIAN WAGE AND PART TIME IN LOW PAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£28,520</td>
<td>£28,560</td>
<td>£40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Households Total Net Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£12,800</td>
<td>£14,080</td>
<td>£1,270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Households Benefit Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£11,010</td>
<td>£12,740</td>
<td>£1,730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Households Percentage Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£28,520</td>
<td>£28,560</td>
<td>£40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Total average weekly household expenditure in 2014 was £531.30**

- **Transport** had the highest average spending in 2014, at £74.80 per week, accounting for 14% of household spending.
- **Package Holidays UK & Abroad**: £23.10
- **Recreational & Cultural Services**: £20
- **Other Recreational Items**: £11.70
- **Audio-Visual & Info Equipment**: £5.80
- **Newspapers, Books & Stationery**: £5.40
- **Other Major Durables**: £2.10
13.5 million people, 21% of the UK's population, are living in poverty.

Insecurity for renters has risen since 2010, with the number of evictions by a landlord rising from 23,000 in 2010/11 to 37,000 in 2015/16. Over the same period, mortgage repossessions have fallen from 23,000 to 3,300.

Almost three quarters (73%) of people in the bottom fifth of the income distribution and living in the private rented sector (PRS) pay more than a third of their income in rent. This is compared to 28% of owner-occupiers and 50% of social renters with similar income levels.

Half of children living in rented homes (46% in the PRS and 52% in the social rented sector) live in poverty.

Once account is taken of the higher costs faced by those who are disabled, half of people living in poverty are either themselves disabled or are living with a disabled person in their household.

The 16-64 employment rate is at the highest level ever, at 74.5%, and the number of unemployed people has fallen to 1.6 million people, the lowest since 2007.

The number of children living in a workless household has continued to fall and is now at 1.4 million, the lowest figure on record.

62% of people in employment in 2016 are in full-time employee jobs, the same percentage as in 2010.

(source for all: JRF)
In the era of big data, you may think that IT giants such as Google and Facebook hold all the cards. But think again. Public bodies in the UK have been collecting data for years, and some for centuries.

Called administrative data, this material is a massive asset for academic research and for policy development. And ESRC is now helping researchers to make the most of it, by setting up the UK-wide Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN) which includes the Administrative Data Service (ADS) and Research Centres in universities across each of the devolved nations and England.

Tanvi Desai, co-director of the ADS, explains that the aim is “to create secure pathways to access administrative data and to facilitate original research that makes use of it to provide evidence-based, original research that leads to public benefit.” The data involved can be economic (on incomes, taxation or social security, for example), or might be to do with health or education. But she stresses that the ADS holds no data.

All the material it has access to remains with the originating organisation. Instead, the ADS works with ethically-approved research projects to deliver bespoke data – after all the information which could directly identify you or me has been removed. It is made available to trained social and economic researchers in a controlled manner through the secure data facilities of, for example, the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex. Any results that a user takes away, says Tanvi Desai, are “checked by a human” before they leave the building. This established process removes the need for individual academics to take on the forbidding and potentially very costly task of negotiating for data with individual government departments.

Desai says that the ADS has thought long and hard about the ethics of reusing data in this way. “We apply a test of whether an average member of the public would see a benefit from any proposed use of data, even a highly specialised one,” she says.

The data resources available to the ADRN grow continuously. A recent success is the addition of data on university admissions from UCAS, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, a rich source for research into educational behaviour. But Desai admits that some arms of government are slower than others when it comes to making data available. “It is not trivial for a government department to extract data and formulate it into a useful resource,” she says. “My big wishlist item is for more data to become available, but many government departments have vacancies for numerate posts and understaffed statistical sections.” A specific issue is UK tax body HMRC, which she says is not allowed to hand over data for public benefit. It can only use the data it holds for its own purposes. Material on incomes and taxation would be a fascinating extra resource for ADS.

Desai says: “It is hard to run society without data or evidence or knowing the full picture, and we need to get out there and make this point. There is a tendency for data users to try to remain under the radar and live in fear of a data breach, but in fact data use is a huge positive for society.” Administrative data, she explains, covers the whole population while surveys, the standby of social research for decades, are poor at getting information from excluded groups. “They are also expensive,” she says, “whereas administrative data is already there and using it saves money.”

The biggest insights, however, come not from applying a single set of data to a specific problem, but from linking administrative data from a range of sources. And this is where the potential for public benefit starts to make itself apparent. An example is criminal reoffending. Gaining
insight into it involves data on employment and on education, held by different government departments, as well as on offending itself. As Desai sees it, “It may be possible to use linked data to show the impact of existing policies on reoffending, and to recommend new ones. We might be able to find the trigger for action which keeps people from becoming serial offenders.”

**Information on everyone**

Professor Peter Smith is director of the ADRN as a whole and of the English Administrative Data Research Centre (ADRC). He is careful to distinguish between ‘big data’ and the kind of material ADRN serves up. The key issue for him is that big data is not representative of whole populations. He says: “Data collected via Twitter misses out people who do not use it.” Likewise health data can be poor at capturing information on young men, who do not go to the doctor very much. But linked administrative data can get close to complete population coverage.

He points out that current administrative data already allows ‘quasi-experiments’ to be carried out on policy interventions. Deep analyses of small subgroups of the population can be created, for example on the effect of the economic recession on mental health. Another possibility, he says, is to look at the economic consequences of diseases and of health intervention. “We can see the effect of a disease, or a treatment such as a transplant, on people’s income or benefits, their subsequent income and their benefits claims. Or we can find out about the link between poor health and living in a deprived area. Do poor areas make you less healthy, or is the connection the other way round?”

Professor Smith adds that as well as linking different forms of administrative data, it is possible to link this data with survey findings to produce deep insights which can inform government policy. That can mean benefits for society as a whole, but also at a ‘micro’ level: “It might be possible to use census data to gather background data on people before a survey is carried out,” he suggests, “making the survey less burdensome for the respondents.” But he adds that this process, like all ADRN activities, has to have high standards of acceptability and confidentiality. “We have a series of safe procedures for the deidentification of data and we train researchers in the legality and ethics of what they do.”

---

**ADMINISTRATIVE DATA RESEARCH CENTRE (ADRC) PROJECTS AROUND THE UK**

The national ADRCs for the four nations of the UK each support a lively range of research. A list of 34 English projects reveals a strong emphasis on methodology, as well as work on fields as varied as mental health and the link between air pollution and child cognitive development.

The Scottish centre has taken on topics as varied as end-of-life care, and the effects of attaching conditions to the receipt of state benefits, a growing recent trend whose effects deserve detailed analysis. (See: app.box.com/s/pqve4s8tzy02vcnul13e3eszffsq4i6)

The ADRC for Northern Ireland has 17 approved projects in progress, many relating to public health, and five ongoing methodological projects. But Dr David Wright, research fellow at the Centre, points to education as an example of what linked administrative data can do.

He says: “Our project explored factors associated with decreased representation in Higher Education. In collaboration with researchers from the Northern Ireland Department for the Economy we used data from the 2011 Census and property valuation lists to generate information on households, using house values as a proxy for accumulated wealth. Then we used data from HESA (the Higher Education Statistics Agency) to look at student enrolment and see which students entered higher education.” This approach revealed a strong association between household wealth and access to university.

Dr Wright says: “Policymakers in Northern Ireland are especially interested in educational differences linked to religion, and we showed that Protestants were 30 per cent less likely to enrol in higher education than Catholics from a similar economic background. But it turns out that social class and whether families own their own home or are in rented or social housing has a stronger relationship with enrolment in higher education.”

The current project portfolio for ADRC-Wales ranges across areas including poverty, educational attainment, health and wellbeing, disability employment and the highly sensitive areas of child sexual exploitation and suicide prevention. It works with Welsh Government departments on many of its projects, which helps build the policy impact of the Centre’s work, and with bodies including South Wales Police, the Ministry of Justice, Sports Wales, Local Authorities, NHS Wales and third sector organisations.

Jon Smart, Programme Manager for ADRC Wales, says: “One of our projects involves assessing Supporting People, a Welsh Government programme that provides housing-related support to help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible. We are utilising data from Wales’ local authorities, each of which has a nominated Supporting People data lead.”

This three-year project was approved by the Welsh Government after a successful initial pilot project. Carl Sargeant AM, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, said “I was pleased to learn about the Supporting People Data Linkage study. It uses innovative techniques to help us understand the impact of the Supporting People Programme on the lives of those who receive support, and how it helps them to engage with health services in more appropriate ways.”
When the electorate voted to leave the European Union on 23 June 2016, the political and legal worlds collided. Lawyers were forced to address the political reality of the situation; political scientists had to become lawyers very quickly. Everyone is now an expert on Article 50 TEU, the rudimentary provision which governs the process of taking the UK out of the EU. This has been the subject of hours of political and legal debate, and now a momentous decision of the High Court and Supreme Court in the Miller case.

Triggering Article 50: who can do it?

It is the national constitutional traditions of the UK which determine how and when to trigger Article 50. But what are those constitutional traditions? In a country such as the UK with an unwritten Constitution, this was uncharted territory. The UK government argued that it should have been able to trigger Article 50 due to its executive or ‘prerogative’ powers. These are the powers by which it makes and unmakes international Treaties. By contrast, the claimants in the case brought by Gina Miller and others argued that, because the consequence of triggering Article 50 is to take the UK out of the EU, and thus to deprive UK nationals of key rights such as the right to free movement, then this is something over which Parliament should have its say through an Act of Parliament. The High Court agreed with Gina Miller, as did the Supreme Court, albeit on somewhat different grounds. However, the Supreme Court made it clear that an Act of Parliament was necessary to authorise the triggering of Article 50. The legislation is called the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill 2017.

Article 50 and timing

EU politicians have made it abundantly clear that there are to be no negotiations without notification. In other words, no formal or informal soundings can take place until Article 50 has been triggered. This is more problematic than first appears, due to problems with timing and sequencing. If, as the Prime Minister Theresa May, has said, Article 50 will be triggered by the end of March 2017, this allows two years for the negotiations, unless that period is extended by unanimous agreement – which is thought unlikely. But that two years includes the period of the French and German elections, when key politicians are distracted by domestic issues, not least the time that will be needed to form a German government.

Also factored into that period is the time for discussion with the UK devolved administrations and consideration of any draft deal by the European Parliament, not to mention the time that will be spent dealing with any unexpected crises that arise during that period. Guy Verhofstad, the Brexit lead for the European Parliament, estimates that the negotiating period will in fact only be 15 months. And there are some major issues to be discussed in that period. First is the question of money: UK budgetary contributions and the cost of the divorce, and then there are pension liabilities for British civil servants working in Brussels. After that comes the question of the position of EU nationals living in the UK, and the moving of EU agencies currently based in the UK; research funding; and the UK’s position in respect of its obligations entered into by the EU on behalf of the Member States with third countries, to name but a few.

And this says nothing about the future relationship between the UK and the EU. Article 50 does not provide the basis for concluding any such agreement; this will have to be done by using the powers laid down in Article 207 and 218 TFEU which allow the EU to negotiate international agreements with non-Member States. Any such agreement is likely to be a ‘mixed agreement’ which means it will require the unanimous agreement of the 27 Member States, the consent of the European...
parliament and the agreement of 38 national and regional parliaments, including Wallonia in Belgium which initially blocked the EU’s deal with Canada (CETA). And, at the moment, the EU is insisting it will not begin negotiations on its future relationship until the UK becomes a ‘third country’ – i.e., only after the divorce is completed. However, Article 50 does make clear that the divorce negotiations must take ‘account of the framework for [the UK’s] future relationship with the Union’. This would indicate that there should be some agreement on the direction of travel for the UK and probably some transitional arrangements.

Can the Article 50 process be stopped? Two situations are envisaged. The first is where, in a general election before the completion of the negotiations, a party is elected on the ticket of stopping the Article 50 process. The second is where the negotiations are going so badly for the UK that shortly before the end of the two-year process the UK government decides it wants to stop the process. Can this be done? The answer is no one knows for sure and it would ultimately be for the Court of Justice to decide; a crowd-funded case has already been launched in the Irish court aimed at testing this point1. There is strong expert evidence that the Article 50 process can be stopped in the first situation2; little thought has been given to a more strategic attempt to stop Article 50 during/following unfavourable Brexit negotiations.

The Great Repeal Bill

So far we have focused on the question of what is happening at EU level. At the domestic level, the (misnamed) Great Repeal Bill will be working its way through the parliamentary process. Intended to repeal the European Communities Act (ECA) 1972, the Act that took the UK into the EU, it will in fact expand the volume of legislation on the statute books since it will provide a UK footing for all EU legislation, in the name of legal certainty. But that legal certainty is undermined by the huge uncertainty generated by having to replace more than a hundred EU agencies and other bodies which currently service, for example, the EU financial services regulation, with British equivalents and the costs and logistics of setting up these new bodies.

It’s going to be a bumpy ride. And the civil service, at its smallest since the second world war, and Parliament are going to have their work cut out.

Catherine Barnard is Professor of EU law and Employment Law, Senior Tutor, Trinity College, University of Cambridge; Senior Fellow, UK in a Changing Europe initiative
Telephone 01223 339915
Email csb24@cam.ac.uk

An earlier version of this article appeared in:
1 uk.businessinsider.com/jo-maugham-on-article-50-brexit-legal-case-irish-court-2016-12
2 It is also testing the question whether a further parliamentary vote is needed to trigger Art. 127 which will take the UK out of the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement.
In view of your lengthy global experience, I am going to start by asking you: just how much trouble is the human race in?

It’s certainly a troubling moment. The [Brexit] referendum result was a wakeup call to people like me who have spent their working life trying to build international co-operation; it felt like a slap in the face. But it reflects major problems in the way our society has adapted to globalisation, that need to be recognised and addressed. We must also change the perception of expertise, which became something of a dirty word in the campaign;

“ It is troubling that scientists have had such a hard time getting a reasonable case heard”

we have since seen a continuing tendency to rubbish the views of ‘experts’ – for example the opprobrium that was heaped on the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) for daring to try to put a figure on the financial cost of Brexit. But society needs expert knowledge; we have to make expertise respectable again.

Do you regard the interests of children as a valuable lens through which to view today’s global issues?

Yes, because children are more dependent than adults and there is a moral imperative to give them the best possible start in life. They suffer disproportionately if the families, communities, and societies in which they live are under stress. Take our society’s current aversion to migration. If ‘foreigner’ or ‘migrant’ are allowed to become dirty words, if migrants are wrongly blamed for the UK’s economic ills, or if fear of the ‘other’ replaces compassion as a response to hardship, children especially will suffer. The UK can be proud of its historic role in shaping international law and affirming our common humanity. We must not let current pressures cause us to abandon this high ground.

So what’s the solution?

It’s counterproductive to put up barriers, and as we have seen, it doesn’t work. But migration does need to be properly managed and we have to accept that this is one area where Europe – which includes us, by the way – has failed. There are no easy answers, but we have to do better.

Do you think our current concern with climate change has taken over the debate about the future to too great a degree?

Absolutely not. It is an important scientific issue, and it is troubling that scientists have had such a hard time getting a reasonable case heard. There is no doubt that climate change will hit the poorest hardest.

And what is the importance of old-fashioned international diplomacy in addressing today’s global issues?

Jaw-Jaw is still better than War-War, as Churchill understood, but over the past 20 years our own Diplomatic Service has been subjected to huge cuts; it’s a neglected machine that needs new muscle. In particular we need to recognise the importance of language and area expertise. How can we intervene effectively in other countries if we do not understand them? We intervened militarily in Libya in 2011 with very little knowledge of the forces this would unleash. Early on in Syria we took the simplistic position that ‘Assad must go’ and then let the crisis spin out of control. Our first duty in what was essentially an internal political crisis was to prevent it becoming a humanitarian one – which is exactly what happened.

What are the limits of military intervention in all this?

My own research at Surrey takes a broader view of international intervention, challenging the notion that it is necessarily about the use of force. Lord Dannatt [former head of the British Army] said about our intervention in Basra [Iraq], you get a better reception at someone’s house if you knock on the door rather than kicking it down and walking in. So we need to be very clear about the likely consequences of intervening coercively. It may be the right thing to do, but we should
understand the implications, not just for ourselves but for local people.

In the context of these concerns, what are your hopes for the GCRF in terms of the UK’s place in the world?

My ambition for the GCRF is for its impact to be so persuasive that it becomes a permanent feature beyond the initial five years for which it is now funded. To do this, we need to inspire academics, who are focused on the REF and the need for papers in Q1 journals, to believe that their research can have an international development impact; we must attract the very best early career researchers. Our own universities must learn to work in true partnership with researchers in the Global South, and to understand the importance of engaging with NGOs, the private sector, and other actors including government, again in both North and South.

Our own universities must learn to work in true partnership with researchers in the Global South

Academic research and international development are two things that the UK does well. This is a great opportunity to build on these strengths and for these two communities to work together more closely.

What are the GCRF’s first big challenges?

The big challenges are already identified in the UN’s Global Goals for Sustainable Development (the ‘SDGs’). But they can only be tackled if we break out of traditional silos, whether they be academic disciplines, or researchers, policymakers, and practitioners all operating in their own separate worlds. If the GCRF is going to do something different – rather than just rebadging existing research – researchers must learn to work together in new and transformative ways. We need to see real involvement of local partners in defining the issues, a commitment to capacity-building in the South, and imaginative ways of translating research into sustainable impact. The Research Councils and the other delivery partners will need to frame individual calls to reflect these core criteria as well as addressing the knowledge areas that will be particular to each call.

Is the GCRF a chance for the physical sciences and technology to work more effectively with the social and human sciences?

Yes, definitely. Northern-based scientists and technologists may not appreciate how their ideas could benefit the South. But at the same time, technology is never the complete solution. What matters is how people use it, which means understanding the economic, social, and cultural constraints. The classic example is the drinking water well; there are brilliant technologies for getting water out of the ground but unless issues of community responsibility are addressed, a well is unlikely to be of general or lasting benefit.

I am very aware of the power of technology. Take the mobile phone. It has transformed how people relate to each other in difficult situations where communication is vital. In 1999, when Kosovar Albanians fled into refugee camps in Macedonia, Save the Children set up a tent with mobile telephones for people to contact their families and tell them they were safe. This would have been unthinkable only a few years earlier. The person who can predict the next great innovation like this is the one we want to apply for funding from the GCRF.

As the interview ends, both our phones sound the alert and Sir Mike takes a look. “The Russian Ambassador to Turkey has been shot dead,” he says. “Not good.” Proof if it were needed of the complexity of the global world the GCRF inhabits.
News briefs

**ADRN CONFERENCE 2017**
This year, the Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN) is inviting colleagues from outside the ADRN network – researchers, policymakers and practitioners – to attend a two-day conference on making the best use of administrative data as a resource for social science research.

Hosted by ADRC-Scotland, the two-day conference takes place on 1-2 June at Surgeons’ Hall, Edinburgh. It is aimed at researchers (including PhD students) who are using, developing methods for the use of, or are researching the environment around administrative data, and policymakers and practitioners who work in areas of service delivery or policy development, with an interest in administrative data and how it can be used to answer important research questions.

Talks, posters and workshops are planned on all areas of administrative research including:
- The substantive value of administrative data research
- Methodological challenges and innovations
- The law, ethics and public acceptability of using administrative data for research
- Technical aspects of administrative data processing

In addition, this year, two specialist sessions will be sponsored by the Census & Administrative Data Longitudinal. Studies Hub (CALLS-HUB):
- Mortality and health inequalities – international perspectives using longitudinal census studies and population register data
- Migration – international perspectives using longitudinal census studies and population register data.

For more information or to register, see: hwww.adrn2017.net

![Administrative Data Research Network](image)

**ESRC IMPACT REPORT: OUT NOW**
The annual Research Performance and Impact Evaluation Report from ESRC has been published, presenting impact highlights and case studies from 2015-16. Highlights include:
- Investing £159 million on research and infrastructure, and £45 million on skills and training
- Leveraging £25 million in additional income from industry, government departments and other public sector organisations
- Partnering with over 432 organisations who engaged in our research and training activities
- Supporting collaborations with 183 organisations through newly funded grants
- Funding 17 new and 57 existing Knowledge Transfer Partnerships with businesses and social enterprises
- Supporting 24 Impact Acceleration Accounts, helping researchers to increase the impact of their work
- Reaching the public through 243 Festival of Social Science events
- Recognising 13 outstanding impacts through the 2016 ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize
- Engaging with 188 schools and 601 participants in the 2016 photographic competition ‘Focus on Society’.

See the 2015-16 impact report at: www.esrc.ac.uk/rpei

**PROJECTS ANNOUNCED UNDER GCRF STRATEGIC NETWORKS CALL**
We have announced funding for 22 new research projects under the ESRC Strategic Networks call with £3 million funding allocated from the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) – a £1.5 billion fund announced by the UK Government in 2015 to support cutting-edge research that addresses the challenges faced by developing countries.

The successful projects will support novel, interdisciplinary and international collaboration between researchers and non-academics to identify substantive research agendas and shape the future direction of GCRF funding. The high-quality networks funded through this call have strong potential to benefit the economic development and welfare of developing countries.

Strategic networks will bring together novel combinations of perspectives to identify key areas for future research, inform thinking on how these might be addressed, and build the capacities and relationships required to support this.


**COPING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS**
The ESRC, the Natural Environment Research Council, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council have funded 29 projects that will help communities in some of the poorest regions of the world understand, prepare for and manage a range of natural and manmade environmental hazards.

The Building Resilience research programme will take an interdisciplinary approach to understanding what causes environmental dangers like droughts, land degradation, volcanoes, earthquakes and flooding, and build in preparedness to help countries cope.

The projects, worth around £5.4 million, are funded under the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF).
People

NEW YEAR HONOURS 2016
Prominent social scientists and ESRC grant holders were honoured in the New Year Honours list.

Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)
Professor Paul Cheshire, Professor of Economic Geography, London School of Economics; ESRC grant holder. For services to Economics and Housing.

Professor Michael Depledge, Chair of Environment and Human Health, University of Exeter Medical School; Former ESRC grant holder. For services to the Environment and Human Health.

Professor Janice Kay, Provost and Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Exeter; Former ESRC grant holder. For services to Higher Education.

Professor Jill Pell FRSE, Henry Mechan Professor of Public Health, University of Glasgow; ESRC grant holder. For services to Public Health Research.

Professor Carol Smart, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, University of Manchester and lately Co-Director, Morgan Centre for the Study of Relationships and Personal Life; Former ESRC grant holder. For services to the Social Sciences.

Professor Anita Thapar, Clinical Professor, Institute of Psychological Medicine and Clinical Neurosciences, Cardiff University, ESRC grant holder. For services to Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)
Professor Claire Callender, Professor of Higher Education Policy, Birkbeck University of London and Professor of Higher Education Studies, UCL Institute of Education; ESRC grant holder. For services to Education.

Professor John Furlong, Emeritus Professor of Education, Oxford University and Expert Initial Teacher Education Adviser for Wales; Former ESRC grant holder. For services to Research in Education and Government.

Professor Susan Hunston, Professor of English Language, University of Birmingham; Former ESRC grant holder. For services to Higher Education and Applied Linguistics, English Language Teaching.

Professor John Van Reenen, Economist; ESRC grant holder. For services to Economics and Public Policymaking.

Professor Teresa Ridge, Professor of Social Policy, University of Bath; Former ESRC grant holder. For services to the Social Sciences.

Professor Sally Wheeler, Professor of Law and Head of the School of Law, Queen’s University Belfast; ESRC grant holder. For services to Higher Education in Northern Ireland.

Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG)
Professor Kevin Bales, Director, Founder and Trustee, Free the Slaves, Antislavery International, Freedom Fund, Walk Free and International Cocoa Initiative. Professor of Contemporary Slavery, University of Nottingham; ESRC grant holder. For services to the global antislavery movement.

In Memoriam

Professor Andy Furlong
Professor Andy Furlong, who died on 30 January, held academic posts at the Universities of Edinburgh and Strathclyde before joining the Sociology Department at the University of Glasgow.

Following an internal move to the Department of Management, where he was Professor of Sociology, Professor Furlong was subsequently appointed as Professor of Social Inclusion and Education in the Department of Education at Glasgow in recognition of his broader work on social class and social inclusion.

In 2014 he was appointed Dean of Research in the College of Social Sciences.

Professor Furlong had long and deep connections with the University of Leicester. He studied sociology there, obtained his PhD and was also awarded a DLit by Leicester in 2012. He was appointed an Academician of the UK Academy of Social Sciences and a member of the Research Methods and Infrastructure Committee of the ESRC. He also held Professorial positions at the University of Newcastle, New South Wales and the University of Melbourne.

Professor Anthony King
Professor Anthony King died on 12 January. Professor King was one of the University of Essex’s longest serving members of staff, joining in 1966 just two years after the University opened.

He initially taught at Magdalen College, Oxford, before transferring to Essex.

From 1969, he was Professor of Government at Essex. He also taught at Princeton and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

He regularly appeared on election results programming and analysed their implications. For each UK General Election from 1983 to 2005, he was BBC television’s analyst on their election night programming. Each month, he analysed political opinion polls on voting intentions for The Daily Telegraph.

Professor King also wrote many books on politics and was co-editor of the Britain at the Polls series of essays and, in 2008, The British Constitution.
SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL

This book, in the STEPS Centre’s Pathways to Sustainability series, looks at how countries could build innovation systems to provide sustainable energy for poor people.

Despite decades of effort and billions of dollars spent, two thirds of people in sub-Saharan Africa still lack access to electricity, a vital precursor to economic development and poverty reduction.

International policy commitments seek to address this, but there has been a lack of both empirical research and the theoretical perspective to inform such transformative policy aims.

Sustainable Energy for All demonstrates the value of a new theoretical perspective based on Socio-Technical Innovation System Building. It goes beyond a purely academic critique to detail exactly how a Socio-Technical Innovation System Building approach might be operationalised in practice, facilitating both a detailed plan for future comparative research as well as a clear agenda for policy and practice. These plans are based on a systemic perspective that is more fit for purpose to inform transformative policy ambitions like the UN’s Sustainable Energy for All by 2030 initiative and to underpin pro-poor pathways in sustainable energy access.

This book will be of interest to academic researchers, policymakers and practitioners in the field of sustainable energy access and low-carbon development more broadly.

Sustainable Energy for All by David Ockwell and Rob Byrne. ISBN 9781138656932, (paperback), 214pp @ £25.99. For more information see: www.routledge.com

PSA AWARDS FOR FOUR ESRC INVESTMENTS

The ESRC is delighted that the Political Studies Association (PSA)’s Annual Awards has recognised several investments and researchers that we have supported.

Now in its 15th year, the PSA Awards pay tribute to those that have made outstanding contributions to politics. At a ceremony held in Westminster, four ESRC-funded projects and academics were among the 16 award winners.

These include:
- Best use of evidence: Lord Stern of Bradford – Chair of CCCEP
- Democratic innovation: Democracy Matters Citizens’ Assembly
- Political studies communicator: Professor Anand Menon – UK in a Changing Europe initiative

For more information, see: www.psa.ac.uk/psa-annual-awards

RENOWNED EXPERT IN MENTAL HEALTH APPOINTED ESRC FELLOW

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Louise Arseneault, Professor of Developmental Psychology at King’s College London, to the new role of Mental Health Leadership Fellow.

Throughout the three-year fellowship, Professor Arseneault will play a vital role in championing the role of the social sciences in mental health research. She will provide intellectual leadership and strategic advice on how social science research can best address the challenges that mental health poses for our society, communities and individuals. In addition to the leadership element of her role, Professor Arseneault will also be investigating the impact of social relationships, in a contemporary Britain, on mental health and wellbeing.

Professor Arseneault’s work at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN) at King’s College London, focuses on topics such as violence victimisation, mental disorders and antisocial behaviours and their development.

EVENTS

21 MARCH

Talking socio-economic inequalities in childhood test scores

There are sizeable and persistent inequalities in children’s cognitive and educational test performance in the UK. This event showcases contemporary data and research findings and explores the opportunities for policy formulation and social change. It will provide a forum for both academic and non-academic researchers to interact with key stakeholders in the policy community and third sector organisations.


29 MARCH

Personal well-being data user event: Showcasing data and research

Personal well-being data have been collected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for over five years. This is part of their wider Measuring National Well-being programme which aims to measure what matters most to people in the UK. This half-day event, organised by ONS and the UK Data Service, brings the data producers and users together to share updates on the data and to showcase research that is being carried out using the data. The programme contains a mixture of presentations from data producers, policymakers and researchers who use data from the ONS four personal well-being questions. www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/news-and-events/eventsitem/?id=4887

4 MAY

Liability v innovation: unpacking key connections, Seminar 5

The Medical Innovation Bill’s solution in its various iterations still works within the confines of received wisdom: fault-based liability; full compensation; the patient’s best interest as a governing principle to determine whether offering the innovative treatment is negligent.

Seminar five will question this received wisdom and examine the case for strict liability towards patients injured from innovative treatments, and the case for and against determining and reducing the physician’s liability based on benefits to others.

For more information email: liabilityvinnovation2016@keele.ac.uk

WINTER 2017 SOCIETY NOW 31
Making sense of society

The ESRC magazine *Society Now* aims to raise awareness of our research and its impact. It addresses a wide range of readers, from the MP to the businessperson, the voluntary worker to the teacher, the public through to the social scientist, and is published four times a year (spring, summer, autumn and winter).

*Society Now* offers a readable, intelligent, concise overview of current issues concerning society.

To subscribe to the magazine, please send an email including your full name and address to: societynow@esrc.ac.uk

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funds research into the big social and economic questions facing us today. We also develop and train the UK’s future social scientists.

Our research informs public policies and helps make businesses, voluntary bodies and other organisations more effective. Most important, it makes a real difference to all our lives.

The ESRC is an independent organisation, established by Royal Charter in 1965, and funded mainly by the Government.

Web: www.esrc.ac.uk

@ESRC

Economic and Social Research Council
Polaris House
North Star Avenue
Swindon SN2 1UJ
Tel: +44 (0)1793 413000
Fax: +44 (0)1793 413001

EDITOR IN CHIEF Jacky Clake jacky.clake@esrc.ac.uk
EDITOR Nick Stevens nick.stevens@esrc.ac.uk
SUB-EDITOR AND RESEARCHER Debbie Edginton debbie.edginton@esrc.ac.uk
INFOGRAPHIC Tidy Designs