1967: How society has changed in 50 years

Inequality and poverty: The regional disparities

Voices: Britain’s favourite expert on polling and elections

An atlas of industry
Mapping the UK’s business geography
Welcome

...to the Autumn issue of Society Now, the ESRC’s regular magazine which showcases the impact of the social science research we fund.

This issue examines a recent Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) report on the geography of income and inequality throughout Britain.

An opinion piece by Professor Jim Watson looks at the UK energy system and how it could reap the rewards of a move towards low carbon energy.

New analysis from the Centre for Economic Performance provides a snapshot of Britain’s business geography and which businesses are doing well and why.

We talk to Professor John Curtice – the media’s favourite commentator on elections – on how the UK political landscape has changed and the reasons behind recent election results.

And our main feature examines the key changes to society since 1967’s Summer of Love.

Finally, a new report by The Lancet commission finds that certain health and lifestyle ‘risk factors’ could prevent people from developing dementia. A broader approach to prevention of dementia which reflects these risk factors could potentially prevent one in three cases of dementia.

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

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The fifth ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize highlighted how ESRC researchers have made a difference to society.
A recent two-year study concludes that there is a strong case for rethinking England’s child protection strategy. “Under the current strategy 9% of families (annually) are referred to children’s social care departments but this is not adequately addressing the problem of child abuse,” says Principal Investigator Dr Lauren Devine. “In addition, there’s evidence of harm to referred families caused by the stress of referral and possible assessment. Eighty-eight per cent of referred families are not abusive or at risk of being so, but may suffer long term trauma regardless.”

Dr Devine and co-researcher Stephen Parker assessed government child abuse strategies since the Children Act 1989 using analysis of data since 1995, analysis of risk prediction, and a review of all available Serious Case Reviews. Their findings show that between 1991 and 2014 referrals increased by 311% and assessments by 302%. Over the same period, detected child abuse as a proportion of referrals fell from 24% to 7%.

The rising numbers of referrals have been driven by multiple factors including early intervention policies and responses to high-profile cases such as ‘Baby P’.

Previous NSPCC studies and the National Crime Survey report a high estimate of child abuse in society, raising concerns about unreported abuse. These factors contribute to the increased referrals. Eighty-eight per cent of these referrals conclude there was no need for the referral in the first place, or find a ‘child in need’ rather than a child at risk of abuse. This is straining resources and failing to address child abuse in an effective way.

“The current policy of conflating welfare and ‘policing’ of families in one system has resulted in increased referrals without any reported reduction in the prevalence of child abuse,” says Dr Devine. “We can’t assume that the ‘right’ children are always referred. Sometimes children who need help are missed or wrongly categorised. This strategy ignores a possible large number of abused children, and leaves many non-abused children and their families subject to a potentially very traumatising experience.”

The researchers conclude there are significant questions about how statutory social work is performed and delivered. “It’s time for change,” Dr Devine says. “The 2011 Munro Review resulted in the removal of legal protections for referred families and did not set out to address the problems we have identified. A new strategy is needed via root and branch review and reform of the system. We are now writing up our review and recommendations for reform.”
IN BRIEF

ANTIBIOTIC INNOVATION
A Tanzania-based project will develop strategies for the improved use of diagnostic tools and practices to enable more effective use of antibiotics in livestock agriculture. Researchers will work with vets, diagnostic developers, farmers and regulators to identify new pathways and possibilities for improved diagnostic practice, and trial new diagnostic tools on a series of farms.
ESRC grant number ES/P008194/1

POST-WAR EDUCATION
The 1944 Education (Butler) Act overhauled the structure of British education and made secondary schooling a mass experience. Drawing on an innovative range of sources including interview transcripts from post-1950 social surveys, researchers will provide a new social and cultural history of post-war secondary education. Unlike previous studies, the project will consider the whole of Britain and the complete spectrum of schools.
ESRC grant number ES/P010261/1

COMMUTERS’ WELLBEING
Time spent commuting has increased in recent years as have concerns about the detrimental effect of commuting on health and wellbeing. But commuting may have positive aspects such as time to read, think, or wind down. Researchers will gauge the differential effects of commuting on health and wellbeing including any differences in the burden of travel by gender.
ESRC grant number ES/P007346/1

Plastic bag fee encourages support for other charges

The introduction of a 5p charge on plastic carrier bags to cut down their use has proved so successful that it could pave the way for other measures to reduce waste, say researchers from Cardiff University.

In 2014, 8.5 billion single-use plastic bags were used by customers in British supermarkets. After the introduction of the 5p English plastic bag charge in October 2015, plastic bag use fell by almost 80%. Importantly, says researcher Professor Wouter Poortinga, the 5p charge also made people think more about the environment and become more supportive of other environmental policies.

The study shows plastic bag charges actually increased in popularity after they were introduced. In England, a majority (52%) already supported the charge before it was introduced, but support increased to 60% one month after. A similar effect had occurred earlier in Wales when it introduced charging in 2011. “One reason why people became more positive was that it is easy for them to adapt to the charge,” Professor Poortinga points out. “Shoppers quickly found new routines, such as keeping bags in the car.

He says: “Our research found that the charge was effective at breaking old habits – it acted as a ‘habit disruptor’ and made people stop and think about waste.”

Support for the plastic bag charge has ‘spilled over’ into increased support for other charges to reduce waste, say researchers. Support for a hypothetical additional 5p charge on each plastic water bottle purchased increased from 34% to 40% six months after the plastic bag charge was introduced.

Similar increases in support were found in Wales (from 44% to 50%) and in Scotland (from 25% to 34%). Similarly, support for a hypothetical 5p charge on products with excess packaging also increased.

“Plastic waste and littering in general are major issues,” says Professor Poortinga. “Now may therefore be the right time to trial other policies, such as a deposit return scheme for drinks cans and bottles or a charge on disposable coffee cups.”

The study reveals, however, that about one in 10 people still persistently buy single-use plastic bags. “Additional research is needed to find out how a more sustainable use of shopping bags can be encouraged in this group – including perhaps the phasing out of all single use plastic bags by retailers.”

Contact Professor Wouter Poortinga, Cardiff University
Email poortingaw@cardiff.ac.uk
Telephone 02920 874755
ESRC Grant Number ES/M003853/1
Public resigned to data collection and surveillance

THE BRITISH PUBLIC is uneasy with the extent of data collection and surveillance revealed in documents leaked by whistle-blower Edward Snowden since June 2013. But, there’s a widespread sense of resignation to its inevitability, coupled with confusion as to the purpose, degrees and practices of surveillance, says a two-year study of the nature, opportunities and challenges of digital citizenship following Snowden’s revelations.

Findings point to ‘surveillance realism’ – a condition in which imagining alternative ways of organising society has become increasingly difficult. “One strand of our research illustrates the extent to which the possibilities for change post-Snowden have been stifled by limited public debate and knowledge, feelings of disempowerment, and systematic reinforcement of state and corporate interests above those of citizens,” says researcher Dr Arne Hintz.

“In the project we also analysed media reporting of surveillance, impacts on civil society and technological infrastructure, and policy reform. As a result, we have developed a new understanding of digital citizenship in the era of omnipresent data collection and analysis in which citizens are increasingly profiled and categorised according to their personal data, and explored ways to address this new reality.”

Identifying bilingual language delay

CHILDREN EXPOSED TO two languages usually learn words in either language a few months later compared to children learning one language. While monolingual and bilingual toddlers have an equal chance to be born with language disorders, to date bilingual toddlers have been less easily identified since assessment tests are tailored for monolinguals. Widespread awareness that bilingual toddlers are typically delayed in their vocabulary also means they are often erroneously missed and under-referred to speech and language therapists. To help tackle this problem, child development researchers at Plymouth University’s Baby Lab, together with Universities of Bangor, Birmingham, Kent, Liverpool and Oxford, are developing a free online tool that predicts the vocabulary outcomes of bilingual toddlers and helps indicate a risk of language delay or not.
Micro-finance problems stifle enterprise

FEAR OF BORROWING, poor financial literacy, lack of micro-finance capital and harassment by authorities continue to hamper micro-enterprise growth, says a study of 821 micro-enterprises in Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia and India.

Micro-enterprises in low-income economies are critical to the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of poor people and micro-finance programmes have proliferated based on the assumption that they trigger micro-enterprise growth. But researchers say there are major concerns about access to micro-finance, its regulation and impact on poverty reduction and indebtedness. Findings highlight widely varying access to micro-finance and recommendations include better integration between informal savings/loan associations and formal finance, written loan agreements, and micro-credit and loan products that accommodate fluctuating incomes. But access to finance is one of many factors that inhibits micro-enterprise growth, and an enabling environment must also secure work space, expand social protection and improve working conditions.

Consumers care about fair rewards for farmers

MORE CONSUMERS are concerned that farmers are paid fairly than that the cost of their food is low, says a study of how consumers perceive the UK’s increasingly complex food supply chain.

Based on the 2015 British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, researchers explored what matters to people when buying food and their levels of trust in the UK’s food supply chain.

Findings suggest that in the absence of a food scare or other trigger the food supply chain is not a high priority for those surveyed. Over 80% of respondents said that when choosing food to buy, it’s the healthiness of the food which matters to them. Knowing where food comes from or that it is grown locally is rated as less important.

Trust emerged as vital in enabling people to make food purchase decisions and more people have high levels of confidence in food produced in Britain, compared with imported food. Farmers (68%) and food inspectors (58%) are widely trusted to make sure that food is safe to eat.

Only one third of respondents would trust health professionals the most, followed by scientists (30%) who were seen as having the public’s interest at heart.

Overall, however, the research highlights significant variations in the factors that matter when buying food and people’s trust in the UK food supply chain. “Clearly, we should not assume a homogeneity in the public’s attitudes in relation to food and the food supply system,” researcher Dr Alizon Draper concludes.
Family-friendly employment rights fail female workers

omen with caring obligations who are often most in need of family-friendly working arrangements too often find themselves outside the protection of family-friendly employment rights, says new research.

The three-year qualitative project explored the experiences of women with non-standard, ‘precarious’ work arrangements such as zero hours contracts, short-term contracts and part-time work. “My aim was to investigate how well current labour law responds to these non-standard, but increasingly prevalent, work patterns,” explains researcher Dr Emily Grabham.

“Many women take precarious work because they believe it will make it easier for them to balance their commitments to care for children or elderly family members,” Dr Grabham continues. “But, as labour laws are currently framed, these women cannot take advantage of many of the family-friendly working arrangements, she suggests. “The Taylor Review (July 2017) which is the largest recent review of work law and practice failed to address the issue.”

This blind spot has arisen, the study suggests, because most UK labour law is based on the ‘standard employment relationship’ (SER) – a relic of the post-World War Two industrial era. The SER assumes that most workers are in permanent, full-time work with a single employer, and do not have any obligations to care for children or dependents.

“If Government is serious about work-life balance it must remove the 26-week qualifying period and make family-friendly rights accessible to those in a wider range of working arrangements,” she concludes.

“Crucially, Government also needs to establish an oversight body that investigates whether employers are meeting their legal responsibilities, rather than place the onus on the worker to take their case to an employment tribunal.”

Contact
Dr Emily Grabham, University of Kent
Email e.grabham@kent.ac.uk
Telephone 01227 827112
ESRC Grant Number ES/K001108/1

Complex picture of immigrant integration

Immigrant integration is a complex and dynamic process, characterised by multidimensionality, says a study of immigrant integration in the UK.

Drawing data from surveys, focus groups, and interviews, researchers show that while classic indicators of cultural integration — such as social interactions and speaking the host nation’s language — matter when talking about integration, economic, civic, political and even spatial aspects should not be ignored. Although the importance of these indicators varies with the audience surveyed (such as members of the general public or representatives from local authorities and the Third Sector), there seems to be convergence and consensus within groups.

This is especially the case when identifying barriers to integration. These barriers, say researchers Dr Laurence Lessard-Phillips and Dr Silvia Galandini, include language, community divisions, prejudice and lack of acceptance, racism and discrimination (within communities and institutions), deprivation, and feelings of being ‘left behind’.

This picture highlights the importance of nuanced views on integration and offers new opportunities for research that allow multifaceted responses to the challenges it raises. “Integration is not only complex, but also intrinsically linked to other areas, especially with regard to research and policy,” the study concludes.
WHAT COMMERCIAL farming model should African policymakers pursue? A three-year study of the different farming models in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia highlights the complex choices to be made.

“Different pathways of agricultural commercialisation will have different effects on the economy – and create different winners and losers,” says researcher Professor Ruth Hall.

“Colonialism brought large-scale farming to Africa, promising modernisation and jobs – but often dispossessing people and exploiting workers,” Professor Hall explains. Now, after several decades of independence, and with investor interest growing, African governments are once again promoting large plantations and estates.

“Large-scale colonial model returns, the future of small-scale farmers is increasingly uncertain. The search is on for alternatives to big plantations and estates that can bring in private investment without dispossessing local people – and preferably also support people’s livelihoods by creating jobs and strengthening local economies.

In this study, researchers considered the pros and cons of three farming models: large plantations or estates with on-farm processing; contract farming by small-holder farmers who produce cash crops on their own land as ‘outgrowers’ on contract to agroprocessing companies; and individual medium-scale commercial farms.

In-depth case studies across the three countries highlighted the real choices and trade-offs policymakers face. “We found, for example, that medium-scale farming is viewed by some as a ‘win-win’ solution, enabling commercial investment for global markets without dispossessing local farmers,” she explains. Large plantations and estates can also offer benefits in terms of jobs, although these are low quality and mostly casual.

What’s clear, the research concludes, is that models of agricultural commercialisation don’t always deliver what’s expected of them – in part due to differing local conditions – and policymakers must take into account local conditions in the search for more sustainable and inclusive pathways of commercialisation.

African farming models’ winners and losers
Impact of unidentified migrant bodies

In 2015, over 3,770 refugees and migrants are known to have died at sea trying to reach Europe. Most are never identified, says recent research into the policies and practices in Italy and Greece regarding the investigation, identification, burial and repatriation of migrant bodies. Findings suggest that while the EU and its member states devote huge resources to the maintenance of sea borders, they do not address the humanitarian impact of unidentified migrant bodies. “EU states have the capacity to create a system in which migrant bodies are dignified with an appropriate burial, and data collected to maximise the possibility of identifying the dead and informing their families,” say researchers Dr Simon Robins and Dr Iosif Kovras.

Survivors of past sexual violence turn to Rape Crisis centres

The majority of survivors of sexual violence requesting help from Rape Crisis services do so more than two years after experiencing the violence or abuse, says a two-year study of Rape Crisis data. Survivors of recent sexual violence can turn to Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) which provide forensic examination services. “But Rape Crisis data highlights that many people do not disclose sexual violence immediately and look for support years after,” says researcher Joanna Lovett. The number of people seeking support in relation to non-recent experiences of sexual violence underlines the important role played by Rape Crisis centres, which are primarily charity/grant-funded.

Demand for Rape Crisis services – counselling, helplines, young people’s and family groups, advocacy, education and training – outstrips supply. Based on more than 30,000 cases between 2004-2015, findings highlight the wide range of survivors turning to Rape Crisis: a high proportion of services users are unemployed, at least one third have a disability, and one in ten are from black and ethnic minority groups. Three quarters of survivors experienced sexual violence in childhood, and one third in adulthood. “Rape Crisis is working with a complex range of different needs at a time when many centres are struggling with long-term underfunding,” says Joanna Lovett.

Farming Futures

The UK agri-food system is one of the sectors most seriously affected by Brexit and how agricultural policy is formulated in the wake of Brexit has implications for everyone – from farmers to supermarket shoppers. Researchers will bring together information on imports, exports, supply, demand and prices to explore how UK agriculture and wider agri-food system can be helped to thrive.

ESRC grant number ES/R001928/1

Social Integration

Many immigrants are not socially integrated into their new country which creates segregated societies: a potential breeding ground for prejudice, discrimination and intergroup conflict. The key challenge is to encourage positive intergroup contact to improve intergroup tolerance. Extending a previous study of more than 10,000 adolescents, researchers will explore possibilities for increasing social integration among the next generation.

ESRC grant number ES/P000533/1

Return to Industry

Can Britain’s traditional industrial regions develop new types of high-tech, advanced manufacturing? Researchers will examine geographical, organisational and economic dynamics of four key manufacturing industries: electrical, computing and optical equipment, aerospace, Pharmaceuticals, and motor vehicles. They aim to identify and discuss the potential for a regional manufacturing renaissance.

ESRC grant number ES/P003923/1
M OST ANALYSES OF income inequality and poverty in Britain focus on the national picture: how unequal is the country as a whole? How has the overall income poverty rate changed over time? But the latest of IFS’s annual flagship reports on living standards, poverty and inequality looks beyond the overall national picture at the geography of inequality and poverty in Britain.

The geography of inequality

As one might expect, differences in the average income of different regions of Britain are substantial. Median net household income in the richest region (the South East) is 25% higher than in the lowest income region (the West Midlands). When income is measured before accounting for housing costs (BHC), there is, in broad terms, a North-South divide: average incomes in London and the South East are over 10% higher than the GB average, roughly equal to the GB average in East Anglia, the South West, and between 5 and 10% lower than the GB average in the remaining regions of England and in Wales.

Within England and Wales, the North-South divide in average income (measured BHC) has widened slightly over the last 40 years. During this period average income in most regions in the South of England grew faster than the national average, while median income growth in northern English regions and Wales lagged behind. Income growth in the Midlands was particularly weak during this period with the result that median income in these regions is now substantially below average (almost 10% below in the case of the West Midlands), having been slightly above average in the mid 1970s.

When incomes are measured after housing costs (AHC), the biggest impact is on the relative position of London. While median BHC income in the capital is 11% higher than the median income across the whole of Britain, median AHC income in London is 1% lower than the national average. The large difference in average BHC and AHC income in London does not solely reflect the higher cost of housing in the capital. It also reflects differences in the mix of renting versus owner-occupation (including outright home ownership, where there are no mortgage payments), as housing costs vary substantially between the different tenures. For example, while half of those in London live in rented accommodation, the figure is only 36% across the whole of Britain. Despite these differences in average incomes between regions, the vast majority of income inequality in the UK is explained by inequality within regions. For example, if all regions of Britain had the same level of mean income, overall income inequality would fall by less than 5%.

One way to measure inequality within regions is the 90:10 ratio. This shows how many times greater the income of the person with an income higher than 90% of the population in their region is compared to the income of someone with an income higher than only 10% of the population in their region. Most regions of Britain have 90:10 ratios (of BHC income) between 3.4 and 3.7, which indicate broadly similar levels of within-region income inequality. The two exceptions are the South East and London, which are substantially more unequal with 90:10 ratios of 4.1 and 4.4 respectively. These are the most unequal regions largely because they contain relatively large numbers of high-income households. While around a third of the total GB population live in London and the South East, more than half of those in the top 10% of the income distribution live in those two regions.
It is perhaps unsurprising that London is the most unequal part of Britain. But what is more remarkable is just how sharply income inequality has fallen in the capital since the financial crisis, from a peak of 5.6 in the years before the recession to 4.4 in the latest data. Why has inequality fallen so dramatically in London? At least part of the answer is that increases in employment and falls in real earnings have been particularly pronounced in the capital. The employment rate rose by 5.2 percentage points (ppts) between 2007 and 2016 (compared with an average increase across the UK of 1.5ppts), while real median earnings fell by 10.2% over that period (compared with a UK average fall of 5.5%). Falls in earnings reduce the incomes of high-income households more than low-income households (as more of their income comes from earnings rather than benefits), while rising employment in recent years has boosted incomes towards the bottom of the distribution.

The geography of poverty

As well as differences in average incomes across regions, there is also significant geographical variation in the prevalence of income poverty. Differences in absolute poverty rates at a regional level largely mirror differences in average incomes, with higher-income regions having lower poverty rates. The absolute AHC poverty rate is 9ppts higher in the most impoverished region than in the least (at 26% in Greater London compared to 18% in the South East). However, the magnitude of income inequality within regions tells us that regions include very diverse areas. This means that differences in regional poverty rates may disguise substantial variation in the concentration of poverty at a smaller scale. It is therefore perhaps more interesting to examine the extent to which poverty is concentrated in deprived local areas. Ranking local authorities according to official measures of deprivation reveals a bigger difference in poverty rates: the absolute AHC poverty rate is 16ppts higher in the most deprived 10% of local authorities than in the least deprived 10% (31% compared to 14%). The most deprived local authorities include Blackpool, Glasgow and Islington, while the least deprived include Guildford, Fareham and West Oxfordshire.

Looking at the geography of poverty in this way reveals that poverty is more concentrated in deprived areas for children and working-age adults than it is for pensioners. Whereas the most deprived 10% of local areas contain almost a quarter of all children in (absolute AHC) poverty, they contain only 13% of pensioners in poverty. The key reason for this difference is that earnings from employment are the principal source of income for non-pensioner households, and job opportunities and levels of pay vary markedly across the country. By contrast, the most important income sources for low-income pensioners are state pensions and pensioner benefits, which are both set at the national level.

Conclusion

Headline measures of income inequality and poverty in Britain provide important information on the changing distribution of income across the country as a whole. However, national measures disguise differences in income and poverty across different areas of the country and do not tell us which regions have fared better and worse over recent decades. Looking at these geographical differences directly reveals that income gaps between regions are large and that certain areas of the country – particularly the Midlands – have experienced relatively sluggish growth in average income growth over the past four decades. However, income differences within regions are greater than those between them: the vast majority of inequality in the country as a whole is due to differences in income within regions. Perhaps a more helpful way to think about the geography of inequality and poverty is to focus on pockets of local deprivation – nearly a quarter of all poor children live in just the 10% most deprived local authorities. However, the bigger picture is that the sluggish growth in household incomes over the past decade has been felt both across the income distribution and across the country, and it is that slowdown in income growth, not regional disparities, that is the biggest challenge facing a government looking to raise living standards.

Agnes Norris Keiller is a research economist at the IFS working in the Income, Work and Welfare sector.

The full IFS report is available at: www.ifs.org.uk/research_areas/73

www.ifs.org.uk/people/profile/3765
The Late 1960s were a period in which young people were taken seriously as never before. In 1969, they gained political power as the voting age in the UK was reduced to 18, and they got something to listen to as the BBC launched Radio 1. Five decades later, the youth of that era are today’s pensioners. What remains of the values they espoused and the changes they wanted to see?

The Summer of Love was a youth revolution with a soundtrack of strange new forms of music. (The Beatles’ canonical Sergeant Pepper appeared that year.) But one central character was 47 at the time. Roy Jenkins, then Home Secretary, had a mission to make the UK a more civilised place. He pursued reforms ranging from the abolition of capital punishment to the disappearance of theatre censorship.

The innovation for which he will be most remembered is the 1967 decriminalisation of most male homosexual activity. The Sexual Offences Act 1967 was the culmination of a decade-long debate over the growing number of men prosecuted for consensual sexual activity. The police and many judges disliked these cases, and the threat of blackmail that it involved for many men.

Fifty years on, it is impossible to imagine this reform being reversed, in a country which has same-sex marriage and where every city has its Pride march. But Jeanette Cossar, senior lecturer in the School of Social Work at the University of East Anglia, sees the Act as “a staging post rather than a watershed moment.” She points out that since 1967, numerous parliamentary moves have been made to undermine the standing of gay culture and practice. Most notable was Clause 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act 1988, which forbade the ‘promotion’ of homosexuality in schools and deterred educators from discussing these issues. The 1980s moral panic over HIV and Aids also encouraged and revealed deep societal reservations about homosexuality.

Cossar’s own research involves young people in care. They have grown up long after the 1967 reform of the law, but she found that any young person with a minority sexual orientation or gender identity is still at risk of being stigmatised. In turn, she says, “This stigma can lead to physical and mental health problems.”

Society’s apparent acceptance of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) lifestyles conceals many subtle distinctions. As Cossar sees it: “LGBT is a useful umbrella term, but it is important not to collapse the differences it contains. Sexual orientation and gender identity are different issues. Trans young people we spoke to do not have the language to make sense of their identity, compared...
with LGB young people. Several thought, ‘I must be gay’ before going on to explore their gender identity in later adolescence”. She adds that given the current media interest in transgender status, this may change in the next few years.

Cossar thinks that the irreversibility of progress on sexual and gender identity cannot be assumed, but also sees an opening-up of new possibilities. “There is now a proliferation of identities. Some young people identify as pansexual, a term relatively unheard of a few years ago.” This could suggest greater acceptance of diversity in sexual and gender identity, but these new possibilities coexist with the reality that young people still have to negotiate homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

‘A defence for two doctors’

The second parliamentary landmark of the Summer of Love was the 1967 Abortion Act. And Ellie Lee, director of the Centre for Parenting Culture Studies at the University of Kent, makes it clear that like the Sexual offences Act, this new law was the culmination of a lengthy process. Contrary to popular belief, she says, the Act did not decriminalise abortion, which to this day is a criminal offence under the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act. Instead it made it legally permissible for an abortion to be performed where two doctors agree this can be the case.

For Lee, this step “changed everything” about women and their place in society, saying that it is “impossible to overestimate its significance.” For her, the ability of women to regulate their fertility is a vital “underpinning of a civilised society.”

In practical terms, the Act vastly reduced infanticide and unsafe backstreet abortions, as well as the number of tragic cases in which women concealed their pregnancy, damaging their own health and that of an unborn child.

Lee points out that rather than reflecting feminist claims for women’s right to choose, the 1967 Act was about social justice. Rich women had long been able to get abortions by paying doctors to testify to the supposed psychological damage they might suffer. It was also regarded as a contributor to family stability and family health. And there was the hope, which seems condescending today, that poorer mothers might parent more effectively if they had more control over family sizes. Women’s rights were not a big part of the argument. As Lee points out, this was an era in British history when the contraceptive pill was initially available only to married women.

She adds that in the intervening years, there have been numerous attempts to reform the Abortion Act in a restrictive way, although none have been successful. But earlier this year, for the first time, a liberalising 10-minute rule bill introduced by Diana Johnson MP was passed, to remove abortion from the criminal code. Abortion has remained controversial, Lee thinks, because it does, after all, involve deciding that a biological life should not end in birth. The move to decriminalise abortion is partly to do with technology, which has moved on so that most abortions are now done early in pregnancy using medication that induces miscarriage rather than by surgery.

‘Everyone was thin’

But abortion is only one of many ways on which our relations with medical technology have changed since the Summer of Love. Carol Propper, professor of economics at Imperial College, London and an expert on health economics, points out several more.

One key issue, she says, is that the young lovers of 1967 are now “healthy 65-70-year-olds.” And they are having a huge effect on the way the National Health Service operates. “When they were young,” she explains, “the model for the NHS was that you got ill and got treated. Now these people have a variety of long-term conditions that are complex and expensive to treat.”

She adds that if you look at the pictures of the Summer of Love, “everyone is thin”. Now, a quarter of young women are overweight or obese, and so are plenty of men, women and children of all ages. This drives diabetes and other conditions. “We all live a lifestyle which puts us at risk of chronic disease.”

Another key difference between 1967 and 2017, Propper adds, is that the parents of the beautiful people of that time generally retired when old and died soon after. Now older people retire early, often with disability brought on by work, and live a long time. This costs the health system a large part of its budget, although she adds that this situation will not continue indefinitely. These are probably the last generation to work in dangerous factories, mines and other hazardous settings.
Another key change that Propper thinks dates from this era is a vast growth in choice and consumer knowledge that kicked off in 1967. This affluent generation, she says, wanted choices in areas such as health, education and housing. This trend was seen at its height in the 1980s, with the distinctly uncool Thatcher government and its decision to sell council houses. Part of the attraction, thinks Propper, was the idea that the “council housing officer could no longer knock on your door and tell you what to do.”

In healthcare, says Propper, a huge amount of information on treatments and providers is now available, and people do make use of it. She sees this as “a huge sea change in the politics of public service delivery and the role of the consumer.” And it has come at the right time, because she also envisages growing pressure for people to manage their own illnesses and conditions. “The Summer of Love was about not doing what your parents did, whether in sex, clothes or music,” she says. “Now we need a new change in terms of people being active in managing their own lifestyle. They are ceasing to be passive ‘patients’ and they understand that their health is the outcome of choices they have made. They are under more pressure to own the decisions they make, for example on risky behaviours.”

Finally, the late 1960s saw the abolition of another, less talked-about, British practice that remains extant in many countries around the world. Capital punishment was abolished for five years in 1965 and permanently in 1969, although it remained unused on the statute book for some specific offences such as piracy until the Human Rights Act of 1998.

Philosopher Nigel Warburton, formerly of the Open University, says that this step acknowledged the reality that punishment for crime should not be retributive, as well as the reality that guilty decisions in court can never be 100% accurate. “There are many cases in murder trials of false confessions and other ways for things to go wrong.” A recent opinion poll found that 48% of the population still supports capital punishment, the lowest figure ever but still substantial. For Warburton, this is a reason for preferring parliamentary democracy to referendums and other direct decision-making.

For Roy Jenkins, the abolition of hanging had another benefit. The Home Secretary had a blackboard in his office showing the names of those condemned to die. A noted bon viveur, he had it replaced with a drinks cabinet.

Jeanette Cossar is senior lecturer in the School of Social Work at the University of East Anglia
Email jeanette.cossar@uea.ac.uk
Ellie Lee is director of the Centre for Parenting Culture Studies at the University of Kent
Email E.J.Lee@kent.ac.uk
Carol Propper is Professor of Economics at Imperial College, London
Email c.propper@imperial.ac.uk
Nigel Warburton is a Philosopher, formerly of the Open University
Email nigelwarburton@aol.com
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28 November
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1 December
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5 December
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To find out more or to book please visit our website: www.rss.org.uk/public-courses
The atlas of industry

New analysis from the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) uses data on firms to provide a comprehensive analysis of Britain’s business geography that challenges the prevailing wisdom in the UK. By Anna Valero, Richard Davies and Sandra Bernick

Britain is a place where people worry about the geographic spread of industry. While UK employment is at record levels, British workers are far less productive than their counterparts in countries such as France, Germany and the US. Growth in real wages has been poor since the financial crisis, insecure working arrangements are on the rise, and there are significant disparities in economic activity and opportunity across the country.

Concerns that some regions are falling behind others, and that the location of companies helps explain this, are longstanding, but determination to adopt policies that address regional disparities has ebbed and flowed. There are signs that the 2017 Parliament could see an intensification of efforts to ‘drive growth across the country’. This is likely to be a key theme in government’s new ‘Industrial Strategy’, set for launch over the coming months.

Despite the rising interest in addressing the UK’s uneven economic performance, no one has published a comprehensive analysis setting out the latest facts on Britain’s business geography. New analysis from the ESRC-funded Centre for Economic Performance begins to fill that gap, using data on firms as the basis of a comprehensive mapping of UK Industry. Ten stylised facts stand out, many of which challenge the prevailing wisdom in the UK.

**FACT 1: The three patterns of industry.** The location of business activity in Britain varies considerably by industry, and follows three broad patterns:

- **Uniform.** Some industries are fairly evenly spread around the country, with a similar concentration of activity in most locations. Often, these industries provide products or services that must be sold locally; for example, retail services includes firms such as hairdressers and gyms. Outside large cities, agriculture is spread relatively evenly across the UK. More surprisingly, manufacturing is relatively evenly spread outside London.

- **Scattered.** In these industries, activity is concentrated in a number of locations, creating a scatter of strong dots across the country. This includes firms operating in science and technology sectors and mining and quarrying. The fact that finance is scattered across multiple hubs is a challenge to the belief that banking only occurs in the South East.

- **Single hub.** In these industries there is one location where activity seems to be concentrated.

**FACT 2: Firm size distribution.** Firm size matters for industrial performance: larger firms tend to invest more and have higher productivity. However, UK industry is dominated by small firms with around 99% of firms being classed as ‘small’ (0-49 employees). So-called ‘non-employing’ businesses (firms where the owner-manager is the only worker) are the largest category making up around three-quarters of firms in all regions. CEP maps show that mid-sized firms (50-249) are relatively evenly spread across the UK; large firms are very sparsely spread: currently, only 55% of local authorities have 10 or more large firms. More encouragingly, maps showing the increase in mid-sized firms show that this growth is relatively evenly spread.

**FACT 3: Business demography.** The rate at which firms start up and go bankrupt is relatively evenly spread, with maps showing that these ‘births’ and...
‘deaths’ are equally likely across UK regions. This suggests that the ease with which a company can be established and wound up are unlikely to be explain regional productivity differences.

**FACT 4: The spread of productivity.** The output per hour of a British worker varies considerably by location. At the bottom of the productivity scale is mid Wales; the countryside around Brecon is an area with little industry and agriculture as the main employer. At the other end of the scale there are three high-productivity hubs: the oil industry around Aberdeen, the area around Greater Manchester and a band of productivity in the South. Contrary to popular belief the high productivity of London does not spread into the South East but rather spreads west along the M4 towards commuter towns like Reading and Slough which have their own high productivity companies.

**FACT 5: Leader and laggard sectors.** The highest productivity sectors – real estate, mining and utilities – are small employers and so play little role in aggregate performance. Of the high employment sectors that drive national productivity the leading sectors are finance, information and communications, construction and manufacturing. Professional, scientific and technical services vary within and across regions – this sector houses some very high productivity firms together with much weaker ones. However, it is important to consider high employment sectors with weak productivity, such as retail and wholesale trade, administrative services and accommodation and food services. Raising average productivity in these sectors could have a large aggregate effect due to their high employment shares.

**FACT 6: Innovation in the regions.** Data on research and development (R&D) expenditure and patents allow a comparison of innovation across regions. In absolute terms, London and the South East dominate, accounting for nearly a third of business spending on R&D. However, in terms of R&D as a percentage of GDP, the East of England stands out. At a more disaggregated level, Britain’s most innovative NUTS2 regions (equivalent to grouped counties, unitary authorities or districts) are East Anglia, Cheshire and Hertfordshire; reflecting the impact of Cambridge University, chemicals firms located along the River Mersey and pharmaceuticals and life sciences firms located in and around Hertfordshire.

**FACT 7: Unbalanced exporting.** Britain has a sizeable current account shortfall at 3.4% of GDP (Q1 2017). Only 11% of firms export and those that do are most likely to be based in London, the South East or the East.
in finance and business services. Understanding the local impacts of Brexit through changes to trade (together with immigration, Foreign Direct Investment and innovation) will be crucial for policymakers developing an industrial strategy with region-specific elements.

**FACT 8: The UK’s coastal malaise.** A number of maps outline concern about the economic performance of Britain’s coastal towns. Maps of survival rates show that firms located near the coast are more likely to go out of business than those further inland. These areas also tend to specialise in accommodation and food services, which tend to be low productivity industries with a high churn of businesses. Other research shows that skills are particularly weak in these areas, perhaps reflecting the demands of the local labour market.

**FACT 9: The power of a single firm.** Some of the patterns in the regional data indicate local domination by single firms. For example, the high productivity in north Lancashire, Derby and Brentwood is influenced by the major plants of BAE Systems, Rolls Royce and Ford, respectively. Further examples are Tata Steel in Port Talbot and Airbus in Broughton (Flintshire), both in Wales. The same can also be true for service sector firms, for example Sky in parts of Scotland. The local impact of losing or gaining a large company can be large.

**FACT 10: The German benchmark.** It is well-known that the UK’s aggregate productivity is far behind that of its key comparator countries. The CEP research compares the economic performance of British regions to those in Germany. The resulting maps are concerning, showing that Britain’s best performing regions (with the exception of Central London) are far behind the German average. Germany stands out as a multi-hub country, with around 10 identifiable high-productivity areas: by contrast in the UK the South East dominates. Whilst Germany also faces regional challenges, with longstanding poor performance in East Germany, these poor performing regions are catching up. Whereas in Britain, the laggard regions appear to be falling further behind.

**Next steps**

The UK has good quality firm-level data, and it is crucial that this is put to best use in guiding policy. The LSE Growth Commission made a series of recommendations to strengthen the institutions governing industrial strategy. A key component here would be the publication of an annual ‘Industrial Strategy Report’ on the state of British business akin to the UK’s other regular publications (for example the Bank of England’s Inflation Report). The CEP paper provides some of the types of analysis that could be usefully included and built upon in such a report.

While CEP analysis provides a snapshot of the current state of play, it remains unclear what the optimal distribution of industry is, and therefore what the ultimate goal of regional policy should be. Industrial policy has to proceed cautiously, in full knowledge of facts on the ground and ensuring that government resources are used effectively. Broadly, the evidence suggests that area-based initiatives can lead to displacement rather than aggregate gains, though it is possible to design policies that deal with these issues. Moreover, there are tensions between ‘jam-spreading’ (spreading resources across locations) and the ability to build up successful hubs that exploit network effects. It is increasingly recognised that greater local control is important: more space for local authorities to experiment with different types of policy. This, together with improved data collection and evaluation should increase the chances that policies can deliver both improved aggregate performance and a more balanced economy.
Investing in energy

What can the government do to encourage further investment in innovation to make the UK’s energy system more flexible? By Professor Jim Watson

The UK energy system is changing fast. Coal, the fuel that powered the industrial revolution, is in rapid decline and low carbon technologies now generate over 50% of the UK’s power. Energy demand has fallen since the mid 2000s, driven by energy efficiency improvements and economic restructuring.

These trends mean that the UK has comfortably met its statutory targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions so far. However, meeting carbon targets from the early 2020s will require much policy action. For example, there is very little certainty for investors in low carbon power technologies such as offshore wind beyond 2020. There are also significant gaps in energy efficiency policy, where new incentives to replace the failed Green Deal are required. The government’s overdue Clean Growth Strategy will need to address these gaps.

Energy and climate change policy had a low profile during the 2017 General Election campaign. Despite the urgent need for further policy action to drive the transition to carbon energy, the only significant debate was how to implement a cap on energy prices. The Conservatives, Labour and the SNP all proposed price caps in their manifestos.

What often got lost in the debate about price caps is that consumer bills have actually fallen. Analysis by the Committee on Climate Change showed that average annual household bills for electricity and gas fell by £115 between 2008 and 2016. This is because any rises in prices were offset by improvements in energy efficiency.

Since the election, two related elements of the government’s energy strategy have become clearer. First, the Helm review has been launched to identify options for minimising the cost of energy. There has been some concern that such a quick review, which has to report within two months, will simply focus on short-term measures to reduce policy costs. But the terms of reference for the review emphasise that any recommendations must be made in the context of the UK’s carbon targets, and the need to maintain energy security.

It is also welcome that the terms of reference specify a systems approach. This creates the potential for innovation to deliver lower bills for consumers. Such innovation could include support for cost reductions in individual generation technologies (eg, through further contract auctions), plus innovation to make the electricity system smarter and more flexible. It is also important to take into account the large scope for cost effective energy efficiency measures so that consumers don’t need to use as much energy for the same service.

Second, there are more details on how the shift towards a smarter, more flexible electricity system could be achieved. Whilst the government’s plan to phase out petrol and diesel vehicles by 2040 grabbed the headlines, this was one of a series of announcements designed to accelerate this shift. Much needed regulatory reforms have been proposed to make the electricity system more flexible. While it remains to be seen whether these will be enough, recent UK Energy Research Centre research has shown that such flexibility is critically important if the costs of integrating intermittent renewable technologies into the grid are to be minimised.

In addition, funding for a new £250-million Faraday Challenge on energy storage has been announced as part of the Industrial Strategy. A key aim is to support a national electric vehicle industry, including attracting a leading global battery company to the UK. A positive feature of the Challenge is that it is not just focused on basic R&D, but also includes activities on commercialisation. Such an approach could address the age-old UK problem of having a world-leading science base, but a poorer track record of commercialising products.

As with the integration of a greater share of renewables, the impact of a shift to electric cars on the electricity system could be modest if implementation is accompanied by much more flexibility. There is very likely to be an increase in peak electricity demand, and significant investment will be required in some electricity distribution networks too. But contrary to some newspaper headlines about a very large impact on peak demand, recent National Grid scenarios show that shifting 90% of vehicles to electricity could increase peak demand by 6GW: only a 10% increase from the current position.

Overall, the government’s focus on the role of innovation and regulatory reforms to meet energy policy objectives is welcome. But turning ambitions into practice will require much more political attention and policy action. Amid the uncertainty of the Brexit process, the transition to low carbon energy offers the prospect of significant benefits – both to consumers and to UK plc.

Jim Watson is Director of the UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC). The UKERC has now published its briefing on energy efficiency with the Centre for Innovation and Energy Demand (funded by EPSRC and ESRC): www.ukerc.ac.uk/news/unlocking-britains-first-fuel.html
We present an at-a-glance overview of key topics. This issue our focus is on pay and employment. Statistics from the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Numbers employed (March to May 2017)

£32.01 Million
people in work, 175,000 more than for December 2016 to February 2017 and 324,000 more than for a year earlier.

74.9 Percent
The employment rate was 74.9%, the highest since comparable records began in 1971.

1.49 Million
unemployed people not in work but seeking and available to work, 64,000 fewer than for December 2016 to February 2017.

8.83 Million
people aged from 16 to 64 who were not working and not seeking or available to work, 57,000 fewer than for December 2016 to February 2017.

0.7 Percent
Average weekly earnings for employees in Great Britain in real terms fell by 0.7% including bonuses.

UK Employment rates (aged 16 - 64), seasonally adjusted

The employment rate was 74.9%, the highest since comparable records began in 1971.

For March to May 2017:
- People worked, on average, 32.1 hours per week, less than the previous year.
- People working full-time worked, on average, 37.5 hours per week in their main job, less than the previous year.
- People working part-time worked, on average, 16.2 hours per week in their main job, less than the previous year.

Public and private sector

5.42 Million
There were 5.42 million people employed in the public sector for March 2017. This was the lowest since June 1999.

26.53 Million
There were 26.53 million people employed in the private sector for March 2017. This was 115,000 more than for December 2016.

Median weekly private sector earnings for full-time employees were £517 in April 2016, compared with £594 for the public sector.
**The gender pay gap**

In April 2016 men working full-time earned more than women on average (£578 per week compared with £480). The gap between men’s and women’s gross weekly earnings has remained consistent from 1997 to 2016, at around £100, but this corresponds to a faster rate of increase for women than for men over this period (an 81% increase compared with 62% respectively), meaning that the gap has been closing in percentage terms.

**£578 per week**

Average for men working full-time.

**£480 per week**

Average for women working full-time.

In April 2016 men working full-time earned more than women on average (£578 per week compared with £480). The gap between men’s and women’s gross weekly earnings has remained consistent from 1997 to 2016, at around £100, but this corresponds to a faster rate of increase for women than for men over this period (an 81% increase compared with 62% respectively), meaning that the gap has been closing in percentage terms.

**£503 per week**

Average total pay (including bonuses) for employees in Great Britain was £503 per week before tax and other deductions from pay, up from £494 per week for a year earlier.

**Average pay**

For May 2017 in nominal terms (that is, not adjusted for price inflation):

**£473 per week**

Average regular pay (excluding bonuses) for employees in Great Britain was £473 per week before tax and other deductions from pay, up from £463 per week for a year earlier.

**£503 per week**

Average total pay (including bonuses) for employees in Great Britain was £503 per week before tax and other deductions from pay, up from £494 per week for a year earlier.

**£539 per week**

Median full-time gross weekly earnings and percentage change from previous year, by region, UK, April 2016

In April 2016, London topped the regional list for median earnings for full-time employees by place of work, at £671 per week. Employees here earned £105 more per week than the next highest, the South East (£566).

**£539 per week**

Median for the whole of the UK.

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**Graduate employment**

88.0% of postgraduates and graduates were employed.

In 2016, working age (aged 16-64) graduates earned on average £9,500 more than non-graduates.

**70.4%**

of non-graduates were employed.

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**Labour disputes**

- **108 days**
  - Education
  - Transport & Storage
  - Manufacturing
  - Other
  - 30 days

- **106 days**
  - Other

- **28 days**

There were 50,000 working days lost from 10 stoppages.

10,000 people took strike action. Although the number of working days lost (50,000) is the highest since July 2016, it is a historically low figure when looking at the long-run monthly time series back to the 1930s.
Politics, polling and potatoes

For 38 years Professor John Curtice has been commenting on general elections, helping journalists, politicians and the public understand the results. He talks to Martin Ince about trends in British politics, which politicians impress him, and his interests outside politics.

Professor John Curtice is British TV’s favourite academic expert on elections. He arrives for our interview fresh from a meeting of the (ESRC-supported) All-party Parliamentary Group on the Social Sciences, and is happy to summarise the message he gave. “I told both Conservative and Labour that the people who vote for them now are not the ones who voted for them in the past, and they had better get used to it.”

Curtice’s election-night balcony appearance on the BBC made him almost as big a winner from the event as Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. And unlike political commentators in the media, he insists that there are precedents for the apparently extraordinary general election of 2017. The result surprised Prime Minister Theresa May. But two 1970s elections in which power moved between Edward Heath and Harold Wilson, of the Conservatives and Labour respectively, were in a similar league.

Curtice reminds me that in 1970, Harold Wilson suddenly called an election when the polls looked good, but lost to Heath. As he says: “That was also one of the first elections in which the polls were judged to be wrong.” Four years later, Wilson had his revenge. Heath called the February 1974 election in the middle of a coal miners’ strike, on a ‘Who Runs Britain?’ theme. This time, says Curtice, “The polls looked OK for Heath, but it was Wilson who squeaked in.” Like the 2017 election, which was meant to increase May’s majority, “these elections were both called suddenly and did not end as the prime minister had intended.”

The key problem with the 2015 polls was oversampling Labour voters.

Despite these precedents, Curtice’s believes that the ability to choose the date of a general election gives prime ministers too much power. He favours fixed-term four-year parliaments, adding that “five years is too long.”

Polling crisis?

Nor does the 2017 election suggest to Curtice that the polling industry itself is in a terminal crisis. As he says, polls during the campaign caught the falling Conservative lead, and such key variables as the different voting intentions of different age groups. Some even got the right result. “The key problem with the 2015 polls was oversampling Labour voters. This time, the culprit looks as though it will be found in the various attempts that the pollsters made to correct this problem via weighting and filtering their data. A particular pitfall was the apparently increased turnout of younger voters. In polling, it is always easier to find people who are older, more politically engaged, more inclined to vote Labour, and more middle class. The key challenge that remains is how you should compensate for these biases.”

As he sees it, the polls were showing by election day that the Tories had got no more than the 7% lead they would likely need to get to a similar majority to 2015, but were also showing that Labour could not win. A hung parliament or a modest Conservative majority were both on the cards.

He also thinks that two other recent votes billed as global shocks were in fact well within the bounds of polling possibility. One was the UK Brexit referendum. “During the referendum there were 17 polls suggesting a leave result, 15 for remain and two for a dead heat. The internet polls split 50/50 from September 2015 onwards. The problem was that nobody believed them. Everyone thought the voters would opt for the status quo once they got into the polling booth, but in fact the polls were about right.”
The same applies, he thinks, to Donald Trump’s success in the US election. “On average, the polls put Hillary Clinton 3% ahead, and she won the popular vote by 2%,” he says. “It was obvious that she had to win one or more of the four key swing states, and she never had a solid lead in any of them.”

Brexit blame game

Now the UK has to face the complex task of negotiating its departure from the European Union without a majority government. Curtice looks at Brexit from the standpoint of an expert in public opinion. For him the question is simple. ‘Who gets the blame if it goes pear-shaped?’

“Politicians have got where they are via university, think tanks and policy adviser roles,” he says. “So far we have seen a collapse in sterling and the revival of inflation. But we are three months into the negotiations and not much has happened yet. If the negotiations are not a success, there are plenty of contenders to take the blame. Remainers might think that a tough deal proves that leaving is a bad idea. Leavers might say it shows exactly why the EU is not an organisation we should belong to. At the same time, Labour will claim they could do better than the Tories at getting a deal.” Either way, it will remain an issue on which the UK is heavily divided.

As a professor in Glasgow, Curtice enjoys his ringside seat in the lively debates on Scotland’s future in the UK and the EU. The Scottish National Party came through the 2017 election with fewer seats than before, but remains much the biggest in terms of Scots MPs at Westminster. He says: “The SNP remains the most popular party but is unable so far to achieve its raison d’être of independence. The polls show a consistent level of support for independence at about 43-45%. The other parties would like to return to left-right politics rather than talk about independence, but that is just not happening.”

But Curtice is clear that Scotland is lucky in one key aspect of its politics. Its two leading politicians, first minister Nicola Sturgeon and Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, are both individuals he admires, as is Sturgeon’s predecessor Alex Salmond. And he is not impressed with many current politicians.

He regards these three as exceptions to a dismal crop of contemporary political leaders in the UK. He says that in all parties, there are “lots of intellectually able people who are interested in policy and are capable managers and tacticians.” But most cannot communicate with the public, which he regards as a vital skill for a minister or MP. This is partly because they have got where they are via university, think tanks and policy adviser roles, not by political argy-bargy with an engaged audience. Curtice says; “These people have too little life experience to draw on. And they are not used to facing the public, partly because of security concerns, so they never have to face down a heckler or think on their feet.”

The 1960s and 1970s crop of MPs – often former teachers, academics and journalists – had better communication skills and higher levels of professional knowledge gained outside politics. But in his opinion, empathetic political communicators are not extinct. Curtice points to foreign secretary Boris Johnson, a born communicator, and Jeremy Corbyn, an authentic figure who can talk to normal people.

Having berated today’s politicians for their lack of what might be termed ‘hinterland’, Curtice can hardly escape being asked about his own. It comes, he says, in two halves. One is his – and importantly, his wife Lisa’s – allotment. They can be found in it all year, even in the uninviting Glaswegian January.

The other activity they take seriously is the role of self-confessed culture vultures, with an emphasis on ‘high culture’ such as opera, classical music, theatre and film. “We try to go to something at least once a week,” he says, “except during elections.” He also likes traditional Scottish music, including work in the Scots, Gaelic and Doric traditions. And the Curtice operation tends to come to something of a halt when the Edinburgh festival is on.

But he admits that his taste in high culture has one gap: literature. Most of the year, he is simply too busy to stay in touch with current novels. This interview took place in July, when Curtice anticipated that the imminent holidays might allow him time to remedy this omission. That, of course, would involve Theresa May’s government staying in power a little longer.
ESTIMATES SUGGEST THAT the cost of dementia is USD 818 billion a year and that there are around 47 million people living with dementia globally. The number of people affected is set to almost triple to 131 million by 2050, with the number of cases increasing most in low and middle-income countries.

But one in three cases of dementia could potentially be prevented if brain health is improved throughout life, according to a new report by The Lancet commission on dementia prevention, intervention and care.

The commission, which received funding from the ESRC, has identified nine health and lifestyle ‘risk factors’ that could prevent people from developing dementia. These include continuing education in early life, reducing hearing loss in mid-life, and reducing smoking in later life.

For the first time, researchers have modelled the impact of risk factors at all stages of life and quantified the potential contribution of hearing loss and social isolation as risk factors for dementia.

The report was presented at the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference 2017 on 20 July, and combines the expertise of 24 international experts to provide a comprehensive review of the disease – including 10 key messages to help improve dementia care.

The report’s lead author is Professor Gill Livingston, Professor of Psychiatry at University College London. She said: “Acting now will vastly improve life for people with dementia and their families, and in doing so, will transform the future of society.

Although dementia is diagnosed in later life, the brain changes usually begin to develop years before, with risk factors for developing the disease occurring throughout life, not just in old age. We believe that a broader approach to prevention of dementia which reflects these changing risk factors will benefit our ageing societies and help to prevent the rising number of dementia cases globally.”

The report attempts to understand how nine health and lifestyle factors occurring at various stages in life can alter your chances of developing dementia. They are: staying in education until over the age of 15 years old, reducing high blood pressure, obesity and hearing loss in mid-life (45-65 years old), and reducing smoking, depression, physical inactivity, social isolation and diabetes in later life (over 65 years old). The estimates show the proportion of all dementia cases that could be prevented if the risk factors were fully eliminated would be one in three cases of dementia (35%).

Comparatively, finding a way to target the major genetic risk factor, the apolipoprotein E (ApoE) ε4 allele, would prevent less than one in 10 (7%) cases.

Of the 35% of all dementia cases that could be prevented, the three most common risk factors that could be targeted were: increasing education in early life (estimated to reduce the total number of dementia cases by 8% if all people continued education until over the age of 15); reducing hearing loss in mid-life (reducing the number of cases by 9% if all people were treated); and smoking in later life (reducing the number of cases by 5% if all people stopped smoking).

Not completing secondary education in early life may raise dementia risk by reducing cognitive reserve – resilience in the brain made by strong networks, which can continue in later life.
life, stopping smoking will be important to reduce exposure to neurotoxins, and improve cardiovascular health which, in turn, affects brain health.

To help reduce dementia risk, the researchers suggest public health interventions, including building cognitive reserves by increasing the number of children who complete secondary education and in later life engaging in mentally stimulating activities such as engaging in a hobby, going to the cinema, restaurants or sporting events, reading, doing volunteer work, playing games and having a busy social life. In addition, protecting hearing and treating hearing loss in mid-life may be an important way to prevent dementia, but it is not yet clear if hearing aids counteract the cognitive damage caused by this.

Other interventions likely to benefit are increasing physical activity, reducing smoking rates, and treating high blood pressure and diabetes. The researchers note that such interventions are already available, safe and have other health benefits, but in order to have the greatest impact they should be incorporated into society.

Co-author Professor Lon Schneider, Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California, USA said: “Society must engage in ways to reduce dementia risk throughout life, and improve the care and treatment for those with the disease. This includes providing safe and effective social and health-care interventions in order to integrate people with dementia within their communities. Hopefully this will also ensure that people with dementia, their families and caregivers, encounter a society that accepts and supports them.”

While interventions for these risk factors would not delay, prevent, or cure all dementia cases, there is much to gain, with other studies suggesting that dementia prevalence would be halved if its onset were delayed by five years and that a 10% reduction in the prevalence of the seven health and lifestyle factors could reduce worldwide dementia prevalence by more than a million cases.

The authors note some limitations within their estimates, including that they do not take into account diet and alcohol intake, and some estimates could not be based on global data as such data were not available. They also note that some risk factors may also have an impact during other stages of life, for instance lifelong learning (beyond childhood education) may also be beneficial.

Professor Martin Prince, King’s College London, said: “Dementia selectively affects the old and frail, women, and the socioeconomically and educationally disadvantaged. It dims the voices of those living with the condition, just when they most need to be heard. The dementia epidemic will be concentrated in low- and middle-income countries where awareness is low, and resources to meet the demand are fewest. Equity requires that all those affected should be acknowledged as having equal status and value, and accorded equal access to diagnosis, evidence-based treatment, care, and support. We are a long way from achieving equity. The WHO Global Action Plan, with its emphasis on the inalienable human rights of those affected, special attention to low- and middle-income countries, and accountability for achieving universal coverage of health and social care, promises much for the future - if it can be delivered.”

What is dementia?
Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain. Diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease cause nerve cells to die, damaging the structure and chemistry of the brain. There are lots of other causes and no two types of dementia are the same. In different types of dementia there is damage to different parts of the brain.
Other types of dementia include:
- Vascular dementia (caused by problems with blood supply to the brain)
- Mixed dementia (usually Alzheimer’s disease and vascular dementia)
- Dementia with Lewy bodies
- Frontotemporal dementia (including Pick’s disease)
Alzheimer’s disease tends to start slowly and progress gradually. Vascular dementia after a stroke often progresses in a ‘stepped’ way. This means that symptoms are stable for a while and then suddenly get worse.
Everyone experiences dementia in their own way. Lots of things can affect this, including the person’s attitude to their diagnosis and their physical health. Other factors include the relationships they have with friends and family, the treatment and support they get, and their surroundings.
Dementia often starts by affecting the short-term memory. Someone with dementia might repeat themselves and have problems recalling things that happened recently. But dementia can also affect the way people think, speak, perceive things, feel and behave.
Source: www.alzheimers.org.uk

ESRC and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) jointly fund a £20-million dementia social science research initiative on interventions and care.
For more information on The Lancet commission report, see: www.thelancet.com/commissions/dementia2017
The fifth anniversary of the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize was marked with an awards ceremony on 21 June, highlighting how ESRC researchers through outstanding work have made a difference to society.

The IMPACT PRIZE celebrates outstanding ESRC research and success in collaborative working, partnerships, engagement and knowledge exchange activities that have led to significant impact in business, policy and society more widely.

“This year the standard and breadth of applications was excellent,” commented ESRC Chief Executive Jane Elliott. “By encouraging and supporting social scientists to maximise the impact of their work, we ensure that independent, high-quality research informs decisions across a wide range of policy areas, and helps make a genuine difference at the local, national and international level.”

The awards event was hosted by science communicator and broadcaster Dr Emily Grossman, with speakers including Kelvin Hopkins MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Social Science and Policy; Dr Irene Guijt, head of Oxfam GB’s Research Team; and Anna Leach, head of Economic Intelligence at the Confederation of British Industry.

A total of 13 winners and finalists were awarded prizes at the event, including five categories for outstanding impact and an Impact Champion category for supporting others to achieve impact. The winners were each awarded a prize of £10,000 to be spent on knowledge exchange, public engagement or other communications activities to promote the economic and social impact of their research.

The five winners for outstanding impact were:

- **Outstanding International Impact**: Professor Lucie Cluver, University of Oxford
  
  Every year 170,000 adolescents in Southern and Eastern Africa become infected with HIV – in most cases girls from poor families who have unprotected sex with older men to provide for the family. In 2014 a research team led by Professor Lucie Cluver showed that social welfare grants combined with parenting support and free schooling were effective in removing the need for a ‘sugar daddy’. This evidence led to the rollout of ‘Cash plus Care’ support packages, cutting HIV risks among teenage girls by 60%. The United Nations has taken up Cash plus Care as a key HIV prevention policy. The scheme has been introduced in several countries, including Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

- **Outstanding Impact in Society**: The Migration Observatory – Ms Madeleine Sumption, Dr Carlos Vargas-Silva
  
  The Migration Observatory, led by Director Madeleine Sumption, has shifted thinking on contentious migration issues by providing the first UK source of independent high-quality evidence and analysis aimed at public audiences. Evidence and analysis from the Migration Observatory is frequently cited by policymakers and parliamentarians in parliamentary debates, reports and briefing notes, and Observatory researchers regularly meet policymakers. Migration Observatory experts have featured in 1,000 high-profile media stories, reaching diverse radio, TV and press audiences, and prompting more nuanced media coverage on polarised issues.
Outstanding Impact in Public Policy: Professor Amina Memon, Royal Holloway, University of London

Professor Amina Memon’s research into eyewitness memory underpinned the shift by police during the 1990s from an accusatory to investigatory way of gathering evidence – using interview techniques to help vulnerable witnesses provide reliable information. She took the lead in evaluating and adapting a tool for eliciting detailed eyewitness information which now forms part of the national training for all police officers and is advocated in 20 countries worldwide. In 2016, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Professor Juan Mendez, cited the UK investigative interviewing approach as an example of good practice and proposed its global use.

Outstanding Early Career Impact (in partnership with SAGE Publishing): Dr Harriet Thomson, the University of Manchester

Research by Dr Harriet Thomson has provided the EU with a new fuel poverty measurement tool and focused attention on the 54 million European households struggling to heat and power their homes. Noticing the lack of Europe-wide figures on fuel poverty, she devised a simple, visual, colour-coded country ranking system of fuel poverty at the household level.

Her highlighting of substantial gaps in knowledge helped change how fuel poverty is addressed in the EU. Since 2014 the EU has invested more than €1 million in defining and measuring the problem. Dr Thomson established the EU Fuel Poverty Network, now a leading online platform for information about fuel poverty.

Outstanding Impact in Business and Enterprise: Professor Monder Ram, Birmingham Business School

Ethnic minority businesses contribute an estimated £25.32 billion to the UK economy annually, but face challenges in accessing finance, markets and business support. Insights from Professor Monder Ram’s research on supporting minority networks informed the development of the Enterprise and Diversity Alliance (EDA), a unique network of corporations, banks, professional associations and academics providing practical support. Between 2011 and 2016 the EDA ran 30 workshops for members on access to finance and markets. Partnerships between EDA and banks including Barclays and NatWest have led hundreds of ethnic minority-owned businesses to receive bespoke financial advice and mentoring.

Impact Champion of the Year

Professor Anand Menon, King’s College London, won the Impact Champion prize through his work with the research team in the UK in a Changing Europe initiative.

In 18 months, Professor Anand Menon and his team created the go-to place for authoritative and impartial information and analysis on the UK’s relationship with the EU. From its 2015 inception the ESRC’s UK in a Changing Europe initiative has been built up to being cited by The Guardian and The Economist as a key source for impartial research-based information on UK-EU relations – recognised by policymakers, journalists, businesses, civil society organisations and educational institutions.

Professor Menon has developed a network of contacts across government and the civil service as well as in the devolved administrations and assemblies, the media, campaigners and other stakeholders, and organised a range of activities with the research team to engage with a wide audience.
A bigger picture of wellbeing

The What Works Centre for Wellbeing and the Happy City charity have developed wellbeing indicators to give local councils a much better picture of the state of the community and citizens, and a benchmark to compare with other local authorities. By Arild Foss

Back in 2010 Prime Minister David Cameron put wellbeing on the agenda by committing to measure ‘general wellbeing’ in the UK. “It’s time we admitted that there’s more to life than money and it’s time we focused not just on GDP but on GWB – general wellbeing,” he announced. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) followed up by developing a set of national wellbeing indicators used to give an overall picture of the level of wellbeing in the UK.

Going down to a local level, however, there was still a lack of indicators that could help local councils and organisations to get a good overview of wellbeing in their area.

Researchers from the ESRC-supported What Works Centre for Wellbeing, and the Happy City charity have now developed wellbeing indicators for use in local communities. Commissioned by the Office for National Statistics and Public Health England, the team carried out a review of nine major reviews and studies of wellbeing.

The new indicators are grouped within seven domains – personal wellbeing, economy, education and childhood, equality, health, place and social relationships. Building on the Happy City Index which uses around 60 indicators for individual wellbeing, the researchers provided two sets of indicators – an ‘ideal’ set based on a core of 26 indicators, and a ‘currently available’ set of 23 indicators, leaving out those that are not yet available at a local level.

The local indicators will complement the 43 national wellbeing indicators covering areas such as health, personal finances, natural environment and crime. They make it possible to coordinate the way that local authorities and public health officials collect and use wellbeing data and metrics.

Sara MacLennan, head of evidence and analysis at the What Works Center for Wellbeing, explains: “It would be difficult to use the national indicators to make decisions at a local level because every area is different, with different needs and priorities. That’s why we included a ‘core’ set but also a set of ‘deep dive’ indicators – with the idea that authorities can reflect their own priorities using the data.”

“A lot of local authorities felt the unifying element of the local wellbeing indicators was useful, in that having one definitive set of indicators would helpfully bring together disparate datasets,” the researchers point out in their report ‘Understanding local needs for wellbeing data’. “Most local authorities already collect this data in some shape or form, so agreeing one set of indicators nationally would offer a useful benchmark to measure trends and compare across local authorities.”

The team identified 14 key determinants, particular factors that influenced wellbeing. These were economic deprivation; unemployment; job quality; health; close relationships; social capital; giving and volunteering; governance; autonomy; pollution; crime and personal security; physical activity and green space; education and learning; and children’s wellbeing.

With the new wellbeing indicators local councils can get a much better picture of the state of the community and its citizens. Instead of being limited to traditional metrics such as unemployment and income, they can gather data on things like anxiety levels, social isolation, job quality, access to green space and physical activity.

MacLennan adds: “In some cases, it was surprisingly difficult to identify indicators that could show data consistently across the country, split at a local authority level. For example, we were surprised that there was no local level split of volunteering data; there was only information on the number of conservation volunteer organisations! We’d love for people to get in touch if they know where data exists to improve the indicators. We will be publishing a ‘local wellbeing snapshot’ for each local authority over the next few weeks, and are holding an in-depth roundtable on 15 September to discuss the priorities and next steps.”
News briefs

2017 ESRC FESTIVAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

The ESRC Festival of Social Science is a celebration of the social sciences. It began life in 2003 as Social Science Week – a collection of around 25 events, mainly seminars aimed towards an academic audience. Over the years Social Science Week has grown to a much larger and more inclusive ‘festival’ of activities, aimed at policymakers, business, the public and young people alike.

Our Festival of Social Science offers a fascinating insight into some of the country’s leading social science research and how it influences our social, economic and political lives – both now and in the future. It is a key element of the ESRC’s science in society strategy and its commitment to promoting awareness of UK social science research to new audiences.

You may be surprised at just how relevant the Festival’s events are to society today. Discover how Social science research shapes public policy and contributes to making the economy more competitive, as well as giving people a better understanding of 21st century society. From big ideas to the most detailed observations, social science affects us all everyday – at work, in school, when raising children, within our communities, and even at the national level.

Everyone – from school children to politicians – can take part in and hear about social science research in the Festival’s many engaging events.

This celebration of the social sciences takes place across the UK – via public debates, conferences, workshops, interactive seminars, film screenings, virtual exhibitions and much more. 2017 will be the fifteenth Festival of Social Science and each year the Festival has gone from strength to strength.

This year the Festival will take place from 4-11 November.

Follow @esrc on Twitter or check #esrcfestival for Festival news and updates.

To view the events programme, see: www.esrc.ac.uk/public-engagement/festival-of-social-science

18 MILLION EURO FOR TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCH ON INEQUALITY

With €18 million from the research programme ‘Dynamics of Inequality Across the Lifecourse’ (DIAL), NORFACE will fund 13 transnational research projects that will start in 2017-2018.

The 13 teams with 56 investigators will be researching topics ranging from inequality and its consequences in education, child development, health, populism and LGBTQ citizens, to employment and working life. In these projects, researchers from a wide variety of disciplines are working together across Europe, from Portugal to Finland and the Czech Republic to Ireland, and will look beyond Europe too.

Twelve of the funded projects include researchers from UK institutions. For more information see: www.norface.net/2017/07/03/18-million-euro-for-transnational-research-on-inequality-across-the-life-course

DIRECTORY OF LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME LONGITUDINAL POPULATION STUDIES LAUNCHED

A Low and Middle Income Longitudinal Population Study Directory (LMIC LPS Directory) has been launched by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). The Directory has been developed on behalf of the ESRC, the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Wellcome Trust, and aims to provide a valuable resource for researchers, funders and those interested in understanding changing socio-economic and health circumstances and to enhance opportunities for international and interdisciplinary research collaboration. Its development has been supported by the Global Challenges Research Fund, which funds cutting-edge research addressing challenges faced by LMICs.

The LMIC LPS Directory currently contains over 170 Studies and is open to the inclusion of other existing LPSs, or new LPSs as they are developed. It is searchable by geographic location and topic and provides a summary of the details of each LMIC LPS included, as well as a link to individual study websites, where further information can be found.

For more information see: www.ifs.org.uk/tools_and_resources/longitudinal

KENYAN COMMUNITIES WIN AWARD FOR INNOVATIVE PROJECT

An ESPA-supported (Ecosystems for Poverty Alleviation) community conservation initiative has won the prestigious Equator Prize 2017. The prize is awarded to ‘outstanding community and indigenous initiatives that are advancing nature-based solutions for local sustainable development’. The winning project, Mikoko Pamoja (‘mangroves together’) is an initiative of two communities in Gazi Bay, Southern Kenya. Since 2013, they have been running the world’s first community-based mangrove conservation project funded by selling carbon credits.

The sustainably-managed mangroves yield 2,250 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year. Revenues from the sale of carbon credits are invested in providing clean water access to 3,500 community residents, educating schoolchildren and the public on the importance of mangroves, and ensuring the mangrove forest remains protected. Ecotourism provides a further source of income for this initiative, which is in the process of being replicated in other regions in Kenya and other countries.
People

**PROFESSOR CAROL PROPPER RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD**

Professor Carol Propper and two US academics have received the International Health Economics Association’s (iHEA) 25th Arrow Award, which recognises excellence in the field of health economics.

The researchers were awarded the prize for a paper demonstrating that allowing for competition and also permitting patients to choose where they are treated substantially increased hospitals’ incentives to improve quality of healthcare. ‘Free to Choose? Reform, choice and consideration sets in the English National Health Service (NHS),’ was judged the best health economics paper published in 2016.

Professor Propper and her US colleagues examined the impact of a reform in 2006 which allowed patients in England to choose among a minimum of five alternatives where they received inpatient care.

They found that once restrictions were lifted on where patients were treated, hospitals had a greater incentive to compete for patients. As well as raising standards and reducing waste, the introduction of choice and competition saved lives.

**GUY GOODWIN TO CHAIR UK DATA FORUM**

The chief executive of the National Centre for Social Research, Guy Goodwin, has been announced as the new chair of the UK Data Forum.

Guy takes over from Professor Tim Holt as chair, who is stepping down after four years in the role.

The UK Data Forum is a joint UK Statistics Authority and ESRC initiative. Its remit is to identify the national and international data resources required to meet the future needs of social and economic researchers. The Forum is made up of experts from across government, the research councils, universities and other research organisations.

Guy Goodwin said: “We want to inspire and enable a new generation of researchers to improve our lives by making the best and safest use of the vast amounts of data available to them as well as new and exciting data sets, such as big data. ESRC and the UK Statistics Authority are pivotal organisations in this and the UK Data Forum can help ensure we benefit fully from the opportunities offered by technology and the data revolution.”

**PROFESSOR TONY MCENERY APPOINTED INTERIM ESRC CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Professor Tony McEnery has been appointed as the interim Chief Executive of the ESRC.

Professor McEnery is currently Director of Research at ESRC.

He joined ESRC in October 2016, on secondment from Lancaster University where he was Director of the ESRC Centre for Corpus Approaches to Social Science (CASS).

Professor McEnery has worked with scholars from a broad range of subjects, including accountancy, criminology, international relations, religious studies and sociology.

Tony was also Dean of Arts and Social Sciences at Lancaster, and before that Director of Research at the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Professor McEnery will serve as interim Chief Executive until a permanent CEO is appointed. The recruitment process for this is ongoing and an announcement will be made by ministers in due course. The new CEO will become the organisation’s first Executive Chair from 1 April 2018, when the ESRC becomes part of UK Research and Innovation.

**RICHARD BLUNDELL WINS NEMMERS PRIZE IN ECONOMICS**

IFS Research Director, Professor Sir Richard Blundell, has been awarded the Erwin Plein Nemmers Prize in Economics for his ‘important contributions to labour economics, public finance and applied econometrics’.

The Nemmers Prize is awarded for achievement and work of lasting significance in the field of economics. In particular, the prize recognises major contributions to new knowledge or the development of significant new modes of analysis. Recipients are selected in even-numbered years, and as a condition of the award, spend several weeks in residence at Northwestern University interacting with students and faculty.

Blundell is the first British winner of this prestigious prize, often considered second only to the Nobel prize. His work covers the empirical microeconomic study of consumer, savings and labour supply behaviour. He has developed micro data-based models for intertemporal decisions over labour supply, human capital and consumption.

Blundell also has analysed family labour supply behaviour and the interaction between consumer and labour supply behaviour, while developing new microeconometric tools for the study of dynamic panel data models and the nonparametric analysis of individual decisions.

**LSE ECONOMIST APPOINTED UK HEAD OF GLOBAL FINANCIAL RESEARCH PROJECT**

LSE financial economist Dr Jean-Pierre Zigrand has been appointed UK principal investigator of a world-first global project to analyse high frequency financial data.

Dr Zigrand, co-director of the ESRC-funded Systemic Risk Centre at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), will work with colleagues in the UK, France, Germany, Finland and the US to improve the security of financial markets which have been radically altered over the past decade due to vastly improved trading speeds.

The ‘Digging into High Frequency Data’ project has been made possible thanks to funding from the ESRC, the AHRC and 14 other international research bodies as part of the Trans-Atlantic Platform for the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Dr Zigrand’s team will create a transatlantic securities market database, allowing researchers to better analyse high frequency data generated by automated trading.
Publications

The Routledge Handbook of Census Resources, Methods and Applications

This book provides a comprehensive and authoritative guide to the collection, processing, quality assessment and delivery of the different data products that constitute the results of the population censuses conducted across the United Kingdom in 2011. It provides an introduction to the collection, processing and quality assessment of the 2011 Census, together with guidance on the various types of data resources that are available and how they can be accessed.

The Routledge Handbook of Census Resources, Methods and Applications edited by John Stillwell. ISBN 9781472475886, (hardback), 474pp @ £175.00. For more information see: www.routledge.com

Family background and university success

Why do fewer teenagers in England from disadvantaged backgrounds go to university than young people from better-off families? At university, how well do poorer students fare compared with other students? After university, who secures better jobs and higher pay? What has been the impact of increases in tuition fees in 2006 and 2012? What should governments, universities, and schools do to reduce the gaps in university entry and success?

Family background and university success: differences in Higher Education access and outcomes in England by Claire Crawford, Lorraine Dearden, John Micklewright and Anna Vignoles. ISBN 9780199689132, (hardback), 176pp @ £25.00. For more information see: global.oup.com

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDS: CALL FOR EVIDENCE

ESRC is gathering evidence on the priority knowledge and skills that the social sciences need to provide to ensure the world-leading status of UK social science research and the continued competitiveness of the UK economy.

This call will run between September and October 2017 and the inputs used to inform discussions about the actions ESRC might take to address priority needs, and to inform a range of ESRC activities.

The ESRC plays a central role in supporting and investing in highly skilled people via our general policy and funding, and directly through specific skills interventions, supporting the next generation of social scientists and increasing the UK’s capacity and capability in the social sciences. In recent years specific skills interventions have included Doctoral Training Partnerships, Centres for Doctoral Training, Internships, Fellowships, New Investigator schemes, and the National Centre for Research Methods which supports methodological innovation and training.

The call is looking for evidence of the need for high-level social sciences knowledge and skills, including interdisciplinary or those where disciplines intersect. Although academia is the sector where most postgraduates find employment, the knowledge and skills acquired through social science studies are used in many types of employment. For this reason, the scope is not limited to academia or restricted to the traditional ‘researcher’ or principal investigator (PI); it includes the high-level social science knowledge and skills required in the whole research team, and all specialist staff that support and deliver social science research. Undergraduate level and earlier knowledge and skills are out of scope. All other career stages are within scope, from PhD students to senior academics/professionals and from early to late stage careers.

The call will help identify and consider the different models of interventions beyond the more commonly-funded ‘training’ approaches. Evidence can be submitted to ESRC using the online form at: https://fs3.formsite.com/esrcforms/form96/index.html

EVENTS

16-20 OCTOBER

UK-South Africa Workshop on Mental Health

The MRC, ESRC and the South African MRC will be launching a joint call for research proposals through the Newton Fund focusing on Mental Health in South Africa. The partners will be holding a workshop for researchers in Cape Town to explore UK-South African opportunities for collaboration in this area. The upcoming call for proposals will focus on research into mental health of relevance to South Africa. www.mrc.ac.uk/about/events/uk-south-africa-workshop-on-mental-health/

16 OCTOBER

Webinar – A new data resource

Presented by Professor Stephen Farrall and organised by the UK Data Service, this webinar will introduce new survey datasets, now available for download from the UK Data Service under SN7875, which bring together multiple years of data from each of the British Social Attitudes Surveys (1983-2012) and the Crime Survey for England and Wales (formerly the British Crime Survey) (1982-2012). www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/news-and-events/eventsitem/?id=5141

17 OCTOBER

Webinar – A new data resource

The workshop will provide a forum for participants to discuss the opportunities and barriers to gaining meaningful insights from ‘data’ – their own data, data from other organisations and the wider data landscape. Join peer organisations to help shape ways of managing and sharing data ethically, analysing data, and gaining insight to develop impact from these rich data resources to promote your work. www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/news-and-events/eventsitem/?id=5058

28-29 NOVEMBER

Creating shareable research data: Managing and archiving social research data

This two-day workshop, aimed mainly at ESRC grant holders and researchers, will help improve knowledge and skills on creating shareable social science research data, and the managing, archiving and publishing of that data at the end of your research project. www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/news-and-events/eventsitem/?id=5129
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
EDITORS AND DESIGNER Nick Stevens nick.stevens@esrc.ac.uk
INFOGRAPHIC Tidy Designs