

Society NOW

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**Society Now
BY NUMBERS**
FARMING AND
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UK Research
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SUMMER 2019 ISSUE 35

Measures to manage The need for new approaches to new problems



Tax: How do we compare with our neighbours?



Impact: Showing the value of research



Work: Extra long hours increase risk of depression

Welcome

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

In this issue Professor Diane Coyle, economist, journalist and ESRC Council member, examines the role of economic and social science in changing behaviours – and why experts matter.

Helen Miller of the Institute for Fiscal Studies looks at the UK tax system and considers whether cutting taxes on income would make the UK unusual relative to its neighbours.

We showcase the work of the winners of our annual Celebrating Impact Prize and how they are contributing to policy debates in their specialist areas.

Paul Webb, Tim Bale and Monica Poletti of the ESRC Party Members Project look at how political parties campaign. And Bob Smith of the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CACHE), revisits the Housing and Town Planning Act 1919 and the lessons it has for today's housing policy.

I hope you find the magazine enjoyable and informative. Please do email us with your feedback or ideas for content.

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Paul Webb, Tim Bale and Monica Poletti ran the ESRC Party Members Project, a three-year project to study party membership in the six largest British parties.

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Poor and better off families share similar aspirations

PARENTS AND CHILDREN living in poverty have the same motivations and aspirations as those who are better off, says a recent two-year collaborative project led by the University of Leeds. “The government’s view that poverty can be solved by changing the motivations or aspirations of individuals living in poverty is fundamentally flawed because it assumes a difference that simply does not exist,” says researcher Dr Gill Main.

“Read the newspapers or listen to politicians, and you would think that families living on a low income are different to better off people,” says Dr Main. “People claiming social security benefits are portrayed as ‘troubled families’ and as feckless scroungers. Yet, in our survey of 1,000 parent-child pairs and interviews with eight families in Leeds and York, we found differences between poorer and better-off families only in terms of access to resources, not in their motivations, aspirations and interests.”

Findings reveal that while all the families in the study wanted to pursue similar interests, children and parents in poverty were limited in their ability

to do so by a lack of financial and material resources. Children from low-income households were 4.4 times more likely to miss out on social

“Children from low-income households were 4.4 times more likely to miss out on social activities than their better-off peers and 6.7 times more likely to say they had felt embarrassed or small due to a lack of money.”

activities than their better-off peers and 6.7 times more likely to say they had felt embarrassed or small due to a lack of money.

Crucially, by exploring children as active participants in the experience of poverty, researchers found clear evidence of children’s involvement, for example, in trying to add to the family income or shield their parents: less well-off children were 5.2 times more likely to have pretended to their family that they did not need something in order to spare their parents’ embarrassment.

“Poverty is a complex problem, but current policy approaches need to change,” says Dr Main. “Welfare policies that since 2010 have led to cuts in services and a 10% decrease in the incomes available to families in the

bottom 10% of the income distribution should be reversed. And rather than trying to alter the aspirations and motivations of families in poverty by

more stringent conditions and benefit sanctions, poorer families should be supported to access the full range of resources to which they are entitled.”

In future, moreover, children’s experience of poverty should be captured through national surveys. “If commitment to ending poverty is genuine, policies need to target both increasing the family incomes of poorer families and our understanding, from children’s viewpoint, of the resources they need,” she concludes. ■

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IN BRIEF

TIME OF BIRTH

Babies in the UK are born unevenly through the days of the week and over 24 hours, with births without medical assistance peaking between 4am and 6am. New research will explore the implications of this variation for midwifery and medical staffing. The study will also investigate whether serious complications of birth and death rates of children and their mothers also vary by time and day.

ESRC grant number ES/S010785/1

WATER SECURITY HUB

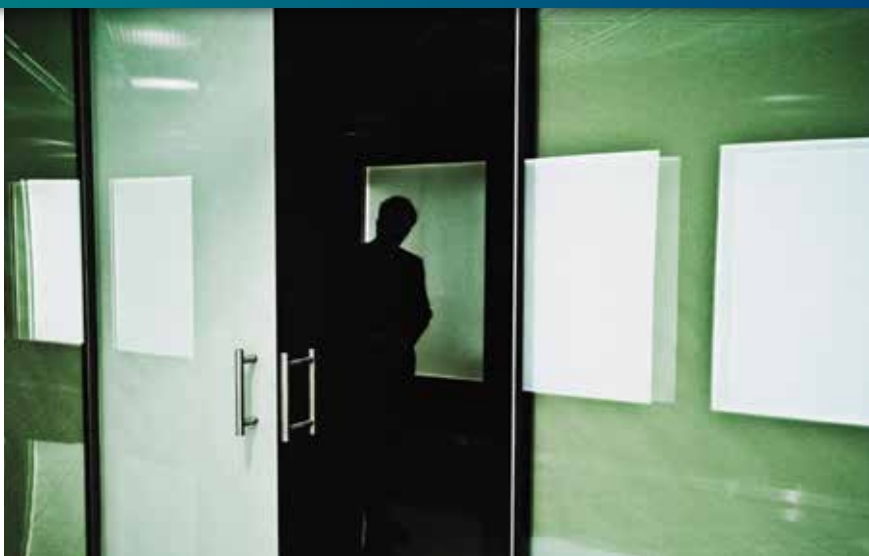
Progress towards the UN's Sustainable Development goal of available and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all is slow. Barriers range from insufficient data to fragmented water governance. A new Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Water Security and Sustainable Development Hub brings together researchers from Colombia, Ethiopia, India, Malaysia and the UK to address systemic barriers to water security.

ESRC grant number ES/S008179/1

PLASTIC POLLUTION

The UK government highlights pollution of the world's oceans by plastic as a key environmental problem requiring urgent action. Researchers will use a case study of eight North Atlantic nations to develop and test a framework for identifying the benefits of international cooperation in reducing marine plastic pollution. Findings will include estimates of the marginal costs of reducing plastic 'emissions' to the sea.

ESRC grant number ES/S002448/1



Whistleblowing at risk

SOCIETY IS NOT doing enough to support whistleblowers who, while protected in theory by law in the UK, can lose their jobs after speaking up, says a study of whistleblowers' post-disclosure survival strategies.

Whistleblowers perform a vital role in society, alerting the public to financial fraud, abuse in institutions and potential environmental disasters. "Yet fewer and fewer whistleblowers will come forward if the current situation in which many find themselves without a source of income and with little prospect of sourcing further work in their chosen career does not change," says researcher Professor Kate Kenny.

In an 18-month study researchers interviewed 58 whistleblowers and 17 experts, and gathered quantitative data from a survey of 92 whistleblowers to measure and quantify the personal costs for people who leave their role as a result of speaking out.

"We found that whistleblowers can incur significant tangible and intangible costs after disclosing wrongdoing," says co-researcher Professor Marianna Fotaki. Two-thirds of those surveyed reported a reduction in income; 40% spent over 1,000 hours working on their disclosure, while many also suffered physical and mental illness as a result of retaliation through bullying, demotion, isolation and harassment.

The study highlights six recommendations to ensure that those who sacrifice much for society's protection are better supported. Whistleblowers, for example, should receive assistance with the financial

costs (such as legal fees and income foregone) incurred as a direct result of speaking up as well as support such as personal and family counselling to reduce the intangible (often health-related) costs. Assistance should also be available for engaging with media, legal and political supporters. Schemes to support such assistance could include national whistleblower funds gathered from fines levied at organisations found guilty of crimes related to whistleblower disclosures.

Further recommendations include the provision of appropriate and targeted career rehabilitation schemes to support whistleblowers' return to employment and the development of a network to enable whistleblowers to connect with others internationally and across sectors.

Lastly, researchers recommend measures to drive social and attitudinal change around whistleblowing. "The current inability or unwillingness of societies to support whistleblowers is likely related to a wider ambivalence and lack of knowledge," says Professor Kenny. "There is a need to reform perceptions of the whistleblower image so that they are seen as an asset and their role in organisations and society normalised." ■



Professor Kenny's book *Whistleblowing: Toward a New Theory* examines whistleblowing in financial services.

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ESRC Grant Number ES/N007085/1

Web improves sex workers' safety

THE INTERNET HAS reduced the number of violent attacks against sex workers and made the job safer, says recent research into the impact of digital technologies on the sex industry.

The three-year study from the universities of Leicester and Strathclyde explored a previously under-researched area: the working practices, regulation and safety of Internet-based sex work in the UK. More than 80% of the 641 sex workers surveyed stated that online and digital technologies had made their work safer.

The project included a further survey with 1,300 customers and police officers from 16 forces, and has generated an invaluable data resource to inform sex workers, policymakers, the police and health services through safety resources, good practice guides and briefings.

Researchers are also working with National Ugly Mugs, an organisation which receives reports of crimes and allows sex workers to check phone numbers to see if a potential client has been reported. Together they are raising awareness of the need for alternative regulatory models more appropriate to today's sex industry. For example, reforms that allow sex workers to legally work together to address safety issues and labour rights through models of decriminalisation. ■

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Interactive atlas charts fertility decline

A THREE-YEAR PROJECT to map human fertility and its decline during the Victorian period is leading to a better understanding of the geographical and socioeconomic factors that affect birth rates.

Researchers from the Universities of Cambridge and Essex used individual-level data from the British censuses of 1851 to 1911 to calculate age-specific fertility rates across England and Wales for the first time.

Findings suggest that falling fertility in the Victorian era was due to women of all ages reducing their fertility. "Such findings will contribute to knowledge

about current and future fertility decline in other parts of the world," explains researcher Dr Alice Reid.

The project's interactive website www.populationspast.org offers researchers as well as schools, local and family historians and the wider public the opportunity to explore the past demography and socioeconomic structure of their local area but within a broader regional and national context. ■

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IN BRIEF



Photo: Mark Mallett

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

The benefits of autonomous vehicles could be large but only if users are prepared to adopt the technology. Using virtual reality technologies, researchers aim to explore and then model users' acceptance of Fully Autonomous Vehicles (FAVs). Findings will inform discussions on the adoption and diffusion of FAVs and potential policy incentives that could be given to foster this market.

ESRC grant number ES/S006885/1

WORKPLACE CONFLICT

Workplace conflict in the UK leads to 370 million lost working days every year. Such conflict is not only widespread but inhibits productivity by tying up organisational resources. New research will trial training interventions designed to develop the conflict resolution skills of line managers in private and public sector organisations and assess their impact on managers, employees and organisational productivity.

ESRC grant number ES/S012796/1

EDUCATION PLATFORM

Pakistan faces a serious learning crisis with several market failures limiting the ability of schools to expand, including lack of access to financial resources and affordable educational inputs such as better textbooks, teacher training and teaching aids. To alleviate these constraints, researchers will build a web platform that connects schools with providers of both finance and educational products tailored to their needs.

ESRC grant number ES/T000392/1

IN BRIEF



NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE

Despite recent concerns that cuts to neighbourhood policing have contributed to a surge in serious crime, there is little evidence that neighbourhood policing is effective in tackling these issues. In a new study, researchers aim to develop a greater understanding of how neighbourhood policing works and whether this type of policing can be used effectively to tackle serious violent crime.

ESRC grant number ES/S010629/1

VOTER PERCEPTIONS

While almost one in five people in the UK have a disability, the numbers are much lower among politicians. Researchers will explore how voters perceive disabled election candidates and whether this influences their vote choice. Potential prejudices among voters may prevent disabled candidates from running and parties from nominating them. Findings will improve understanding of the barriers faced by disabled people to elected office.

ESRC grant number ES/S015469/1

KINDNESS MATTERS

Although people often start with the best of intentions they frequently struggle to achieve their goals. A new study aims to explore why this happens and identify ways to help. Self-criticism and self-blame are common reactions to setbacks in pursuing one's goals. Researchers will examine whether more self-compassionate responses to lapses in goal pursuit help people not to abandon their goals.

ESRC grant number ES/S005692/1

Text changes could help older readers

SIMPLE VISUAL CHANGES to text such as providing sufficient space between letters could be of enormous benefit to older readers, suggests a new study.

Research examining the eye movements of young (aged 18-30) and older adults (aged 65+) during reading has revealed that, overall, older readers of English are slower than young adults, and adopt a risky strategy of guessing upcoming words.

Consequently, older readers often jump past words without looking at them, but also frequently make backwards movements to

reinspect words when these guesses are wrong.

Findings from this three-year study indicate that older adults have difficulties in processing visual information during reading. Hence, simple, practical changes to the appearance of text could help people read well in later life. ■

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Political ambition in select hands

OVER THE LAST 30 years the House of Commons has been dominated by a group of middle class, highly-educated, largely male and largely white individuals. The same can be seen on local councils. A University of Bath study asks why more diverse people do not put themselves forward to be politicians.

Based on a survey of more than 10,000 British respondents via the online survey platform YouGov, the two-year study provides the most in-depth look to date at levels of political ambition in Britain. Findings reveal that only 10% of British people have ever considered running for political office. And those who are politically ambitious are unlike their fellow citizens in many important ways.

"We identified some age-old biases working against the development of political ambition among certain groups of the population and working in favour of others," says researcher Dr Peter Allen. For example, a bias against women (men were more than twice

as likely as women to have considered running for political office), lower class and lower status occupations, and ethnic minorities (South Asians were least likely to have political ambitions), and in favour of citizens from the south over the north. Individuals with a university degree were three times more likely to have political ambitions than those who failed to finish secondary school. Those earning in excess of the average UK annual salary of £27,600 were also more likely to consider running for office than lower earners.

"We don't anticipate that our political institutions will collapse if political ambition is further concentrated in an even more limited group of citizens, but failure to tackle lack of diversity in the political class may lead to an intensification of anti-political feeling," says Dr Allen. ■

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Deep-sea mining debate ignores its human impacts

DEEP-SEA MINING (DSM) is being promoted as the next frontier of resource extraction. As the race to mine the deep-sea has begun, now is the time to tackle the political challenges this poses, says new research from the University of Lancaster.

Increasing global demand for economically and strategically important resources such as gold, copper, rare-earth metals and phosphates, coupled with advances in mining technology, means the deep-sea is now a potential site of resource extraction. The DSM industry already explores over 1 million sq km of deep-sea bed and is expected to be worth £40 billion over the next 30 years in the UK alone.

“Deep-sea mining is a hugely divisive topic,” says researcher Dr John Childs. Much debate to date has focused on the damage and contamination it could cause to unique marine environments, but the industry’s environmental impact is not the only concern.

Many assume that there is limited human impact from mining in the deep-sea, a notion that is persuasive especially when compared with the socio-ecological impacts of land-based mining. But research with communities in Papua New Guinea (nearest the site of the world’s first

proposed commercial deep-sea mine) reveals that such thinking is a fallacy.

“Those living close to the proposed site saw the seabed as intimately connected to humanity,” says Dr Childs. “Deep-sea mining disturbs a sense of who they are, including the spirits that inhabit their culture and beliefs. Digging up the sea-bed and extraction of its resources cuts through the very fabric of their spiritual world and its sacred links to the sea and land.” As this new industry collides with cultural belief systems in different parts of the world, it will be essential to understand the complex ways in which deep-sea mining does have ‘human’ impacts after all.

Deep-sea mining raises a host of uncomfortable political questions which have yet to be fully addressed, the study concludes. “What is certain is that the pressures from both the pro and anti deep-sea mining lobbies will get stronger and it is important to face up to all political challenges of DSM while we still have time, before any commercial mining begins,” says Dr Childs. ■

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Collusion over illicit finance

IMPROVED REGULATION AND supervision of professional intermediaries is required to minimise misuse by criminals of ‘corporate vehicles’ (such as companies, trusts and partnerships) to control, conceal and convert their illicit finances, says a recent study from the Partnership for Conflict, Crime and Security Research (PaCCS).

“Corporate vehicles are legal structures that can be abused for illicit and illegitimate purposes such as money laundering or tax avoidance while enabling an illusion of legitimacy to be created and providing effective anonymity from law enforcement and regulation,” says researcher Dr Nicholas Lord.

The study’s findings show that the misuse of corporate vehicles requires the collusion – whether witting, unwitting or wilfully blind – of professional intermediaries such as Trust & Company Service Providers (TCSPs) and other agents who set up and manage them on their clients’ behalf. Further research and policy focus is now required on these professional intermediaries, how they are identified and recruited, and the tipping points that incentivise this, say researchers. The study also calls for parliaments to take a stronger approach to tackling the movement of illicit finances. One recommendation is that regulatory authorities such as HMRC would benefit if more stringent reporting requirements were placed on TCSPs to better understand clients’ finances. “By improving supervision, opportunities for facilitating the concealment of illicit finance can be reduced or made less appealing,” says Dr Lord. ■

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More support for adolescent adopted children

CHILDREN ADOPTED BY gay fathers are at least as likely to be securely attached to their fathers as children from other adoptive family types, says recent follow-up research.

In the original study, researchers explored the family relationships, parental wellbeing and child adjustment of children aged between four and eight years placed with 130 adoptive gay, lesbian and heterosexual couples for at least one year prior to being interviewed. In this project, the team revisited the same families with the children now teenagers – a time when difficulties in parent-child relationships are most likely to arise.

Research among 111 of the original families revealed no differences in the quality of parent-child relationships or child adjustment between adoptive gay father, adoptive lesbian mother or adoptive heterosexual parent families as the children enter adolescence.

“We did find the proportion of children with emotional and behavioural problems had doubled since the first phase of the study in all three family types,” explains Centre for Family Research Director, Professor Susan Golombok. “That was not surprising given that all of the children had been adopted from the care system and had experienced neglect or abuse in their early years before being placed in an adoptive family. The parents were doing an amazing job. But many were struggling to enlist the support that their children required.” ■

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Language skills key to refugee wellbeing

LANGUAGE SKILLS ARE one of the keys to successful refugee integration and wellbeing, says a recent longitudinal study of the experiences of 280 resettled refugees who arrived in the UK in 2010 or earlier through the UK's Gateway Protection resettlement programme.

“Refugee resettlement is a very different way of becoming a refugee from asylum since refugees do not have to reach the territory of the destination state,” explains lead researcher Professor Michael Collyer. “Rather, refugees are selected for resettlement by potential host states and have social rights equivalent to citizens on arrival.”

The study, which included 11 resettled refugees as peer researchers, focused on three locations: Brighton, Greater Manchester, and Norwich. Researchers looked particularly at integration outcomes such as wellbeing, the quality of social relationships, self-efficacy and perceived social acceptance.

Findings reveal that less than 41% of refugee respondents were employed – a much lower percentage than the general employment rates in those locations. Language barriers were cited most frequently as the main difficulty

in finding work and, indeed, as a more general barrier to participation in society as a whole.

Refugees with poor language skills were most at risk of exclusion while better skills led to more contact with other communities and, in turn, better wellbeing. Steps to improve refugee language skills are vital, say researchers. For example, access to language classes and integration activities should begin on refugee arrival and be tailored to refugees' diverse needs including fast track programmes for those with higher level skills.

“Ultimately though, the refugee resettlement makes a vital contribution to the global system of international protection,” says Professor Collyer. Hence, the announcement in June 2019 that the Home Office will extend the UK's current system of refugee resettlement and expand the geographical scope should be widely welcomed. ■

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Reservists are a source of skills

RESERVISTS ARE AN increasingly important and professionalised resource for the British Army, say findings from the Future Reserves research programme, a joint initiative between the Ministry of Defence, ESRC and four universities.

Reserve troops bring key medical, IT and cyber security expertise as well as important civilian skills such as human resources, purchasing, logistics, and mechanical engineering, say researchers. But part-time personnel face a range of pressures which need to be recognised and addressed. Researchers analysed Reservist experiences and the perceptions of civilian

employers, regulars and significant others, and recommendations range from reviewing Reservist age limits and fitness requirements to offering Reservists greater predictability in their lives – with military training schedules more tailored to Reserve soldiers' civilian lives and working schedules. ■

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Public wish for political party reform

WHETHER IN government or opposition, big or small, old or new, political parties are almost uniformly described by the public as unrepresentative, corrupt, untrustworthy organisations, says a two-year study into public attitudes towards political parties, their use of digital technology, and party membership and organisation.

More than three-quarters of people are fairly or very dissatisfied with political parties and 87% of people don't think parties keep their promises, according to findings from three workshops and a survey of almost 1,500 people.

Almost half of those surveyed think party reform is possible. Researchers identified seven principles people want to see in parties' conduct, so that parties are transparent, communicative,

reliable, accessible, principled, inclusive and act with integrity.

"Asking the public what they think about political parties, we find significant evidence of discontent, but we also find patterns in what people want," explains researcher Dr Katharine Dommett. Public opinion towards parties is complex, but researchers found no desire among the public for radical change in how politics is conducted; rather a wish from many for parties' activities to be 're-imagined'. "The real challenge for parties now is how to revive their images and address citizens' concerns," she says. ■

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IN BRIEF



PEACE MISSION EFFECTS

The number of peacekeepers deployed to Africa has doubled over the last decade, with two-thirds of the over 100,000 deployed troops drawn from African militaries. Looking at Ghana, Sierra Leone and Uganda, researchers will explore the effects of peacekeeping deployments on the thousands of soldiers that return home each year and investigate whether new forms of support are needed that extend beyond pre-deployment and deployment periods.

ESRC grant number ES/S00579X/1

DYING AT HOME

While most people would prefer to die at home, this is less likely to happen for those living in the UK's more socio-economically deprived areas. New research will explore the specific needs, wants and experiences of people dying in socio-economic deprivation with regards to end of life and the health and social care innovations which might reduce inequalities.

ESRC grant number ES/S014373/1

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Historically, sharp increases in economic inequality have generated drastic changes in political and social order. Researchers aim to compile qualitative, quantitative and behavioural data on the causal effects of inequality on governance. The study will analyse how one key factor – trust – mediates the relationship between inequality and governance in four countries affected by rising inequalities – Colombia, Ethiopia, Pakistan and Spain.

ESRC grant number ES/S009965/1

Taxing matters

Ask anyone in the UK if they pay too much tax and the likely answer would be ‘yes’. But does the UK collect a lot of tax compared to other countries and would cutting taxes on income make the UK unusual relative to its neighbours? By **Helen Miller**, IFS

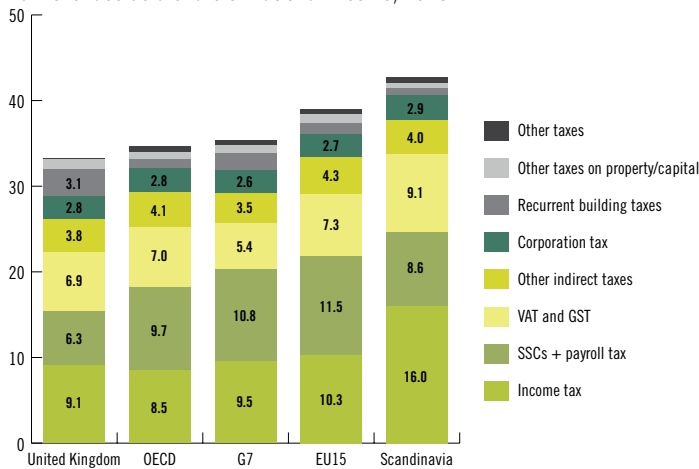
IN THEIR BIDS to become the next prime minister, both Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt said they planned to increase the point at which people start paying National Insurance Contributions (NICs). This move would make the UK’s tax system even more different to those in most other developed countries in two ways.

First, the UK already stands out in raising a lower share of overall tax revenue from income taxes and social security contributions (ie, NICs and other countries’ equivalents). In fact, lower revenues from these two taxes entirely explain why total tax revenue as a share of national income is lower in the UK than on average across other developed countries.

Right: The UK stands out in its relatively light taxation of median earners’ incomes; Opposite page: But the average tax rates faced by UK top earners are more similar to those in other countries.



Tax revenues as a share of national income, 2016



Source: OECD, Global Revenue Statistics Database, www.oecd.org/tax/tax-policy/global-revenue-statisticsdatabase.htm, extracted 2 August 2018. Note: SSCs is social security contributions. VAT is value added tax. GST is general sales tax.

UK imposes lower taxes on middle earners than higher tax countries

Second, recent analysis by IFS researchers shows that the UK stands out most in its relatively light taxation of median earners’ incomes, especially for social security contributions.

For an employee on £28,000 a year, which is enough to put them in the middle of the UK earnings distribution, HMRC will collect almost £3,000 in employer NICs and nearly £6,000 in income tax and employee NICs. Overall, this means that about 28% of what it costs to employ a person on median earnings (£31,000) is taken in income tax and NICs. This rate would be substantially higher in many other European

countries. For example, if the UK imported the French tax system, not 28% but 48% of the cost of employing someone on £28,000 would be paid in tax. That would mean an extra £10,000 in tax revenue – more than double the current amount – for each person employed on median UK earnings.

Average tax rates rise as earnings rise. A bit more than half (51%) of the cost of employing someone earning £340,000 – that’s ten times average UK earnings – ends up in the hands of the taxman. This rate would rise to 59% if the UK imported the French tax system and 67% if it imported the Belgian tax system. Moving to 67% would equate to an extra £91,000 in tax revenue for a very high earner like this one.

The figure left shows that the average tax rates faced by UK top earners are more similar to those in other countries than the rates faced by median earners. This means that if we imported the tax system of one of the European countries that raises more tax overall, average rates would rise for high earners, but they would rise by even more for middle earners.

A large part of the difference in social security contributions across countries arises from employer contributions. That is, if the UK were to implement a system more like one of the higher tax EU countries, it would imply higher contributions from both employees and employers. While the former would be felt directly by employees, we would over time expect higher employer NICs to affect the wages employers were willing to offer.

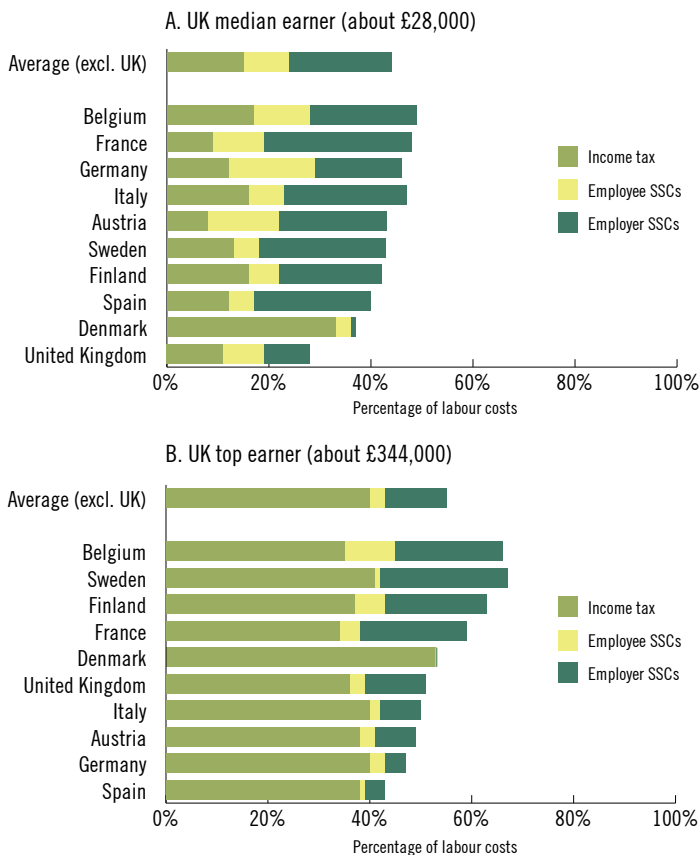
Important choices about level of tax and who pays

UK tax revenues are currently at their highest share of national income since the late 1960s. For many, this historical context paired with a desire to boost the economy after Brexit, will suggest that now is a good time for tax cuts. But an ageing society is increasing pressure for more spending



on health, social care and state pensions such that even maintaining the current quality and scope of public services would likely require higher taxes in

Average income tax and SSCs rates



Source: EUROMOD simulation using ONS data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings and OECD PPP exchange rates. Note: Average tax rates are calculated as the sum of income tax, employer SSCs and employee SSCs paid as a share of labour costs (earnings and employer SSCs paid). The average excludes the UK. The figures are based on the taxes applied to single people without children, but the patterns are similar for households with children.

future. Whatever decisions we make on tax, they must be linked to discussions about the level and kind of public services we want and how to share the bill for paying for them.

Other countries show that it is possible to operate successfully with much higher levels of tax. They achieve this not only by raising more from the very rich but also by having higher income taxes on middle earners. There are good reasons why the UK may want to make different choices about what and who to tax. But taking people out of income taxes altogether and reducing them on median earners (as has been the case with increases in the personal allowance and would be the case with increases in the starting point of NICs) can get very expensive very quickly.

A government wishing to cut income taxes and make up the revenue elsewhere could look to one of the other ways in which our tax system stands out internationally. The UK's VAT raises about the same share of tax revenue as in other developed countries but from a much narrower base. Rather than focus on how leaving the EU would allow us to add more preferential rates into our VAT, we could take steps to remove some or all of the zero and reduced rates, which together reduce revenues by over £50 billion each year. Such policies are often defended as a way to help those on lower incomes but they are poorly targeted. A broader VAT base – that is, one with fewer reduced rates – could fund giveaways that are better targeted at disadvantaged groups with revenue left over. ■

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Making an impact

Researchers who have demonstrated the impact of their work, its relevance and importance to society, and who are contributing to policy debates in their specialist areas, were celebrated at the ESRC's annual Celebrating Impact Prize awards ceremony at the Royal Society

THE CELEBRATING IMPACT Prize is the ESRC's annual opportunity to recognise and reward the successes of ESRC-funded researchers who have achieved outstanding economic or societal impacts. The 2019 awards ceremony took place on 9 July at the Royal Society, London.

Since it was established seven years ago the Celebrating Impact Prize has highlighted and recognised some of the ways in which ESRC-funded research impacts the economy and society. In that time there have been over 300 nominations for awards and 77 outstanding finalists from across the UK.

All the winners and finalists have demonstrated the impact of their work and illustrated its relevance and importance to society. They are already contributing to policy debates in their specialist areas and hopefully their influence will continue for many years to come. Indeed, a key part of the success of the Impact Prize is how previous winners have become trusted sources of evidence, continuing to promote and further research into topics that are vital to people and society.

This year's winners were awarded a prize of £10,000 to be spent on furthering knowledge exchange, public engagement, or other communications activities to promote the economic and social impact of their research.

Above: Professor Jennifer Rubin, ESRC Executive Chair, highlighted the policy impacts of the finalists' research; Below: This year's event featured a new showcase where finalists presented their work.



The ESRC encourages and supports social scientists to maximise the impact of their work to ensure that independent, high-quality research informs decisions across a wide range of policy areas, and helps make a difference to people's lives in the UK and around the world. For example, by enhancing economic competitiveness of the UK; improving public services; raising standards of living and health; contributing to the development of UK policy; driving innovation or improving management practices of businesses; helping a particular group in society; or helping societies in other countries.

To reflect this diversity there are four different categories with the winners chosen from a shortlist of submissions that was selected by a panel of experts. The panel also awarded £2,500 each to the winner of the Future Promise and Panel's Choice prizes.

Outstanding Early Career Impact (in partnership with SAGE publishing)

Winner: Dr Shona Minson (University of Oxford)
Delivering Guidance on the Sentencing of Mothers: safeguarding children's rights and wellbeing

Dr Minson's research on how the sentencing of mothers affects children has changed practice for judges, magistrates and Probation Officers, who now consider how children will be affected by their parents' sentence. It led to changes in guidance from the National Probation Service on Pre-Sentence Reports. The March 2019 guidance states for the first time that probation officers must request an adjournment for a full Pre-Sentence Report in cases where the defendant has child





Above: This year's finalists represented a wide variety of research interests; **Below:** Sir Mark Walport, UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive, gave the keynote address.

dependants, to assess the impact on them and to ensure that plans are in place so children are cared for during imprisonment.

Finalist: Dr Chloe Holloway (University of Nottingham)

Outstanding International Impact

Winner: Professor Nic Cheeseman, University of Birmingham with research team members Professor Gabrielle Lynch, University of Warwick, Professor Justin Willis, University of Durham, and Dr Susan Dodsworth, University of Birmingham

Strengthening elections and accountability in new democracies

Professor Cheeseman's research on legislatures and political parties has strengthened practice towards over 30 developing countries worldwide, while findings on vote manipulation is helping to safeguard elections. Different aspects of the

pioneering Deep Election Monitoring (DEM) model developed by the researchers have been adopted by governments and international organisations seeking to promote democracy around the world, including in Kenya, Ethiopia and Nigeria. The DEM model is also being adopted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in several countries in Africa, to better monitor, support and improve the quality of elections.

Outstanding Public Policy Impact

Winner: Professor Susan McVie, University of Edinburgh and Professor Lesley McAra, University of Edinburgh
Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime: Increasing the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland

Findings from the 20-year Edinburgh study of 4,300 young people underpin a radical change in policy to counter youth offending by shaping the 'Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Bill' which was passed in the Scottish Parliament in May 2019, raising the age of criminal responsibility (ACR) from eight to 12 years of age. The accompanying policy memorandum directly referred to the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime (ESYTC), which was the only academic research cited.

Finalist: Professor Steve Martin (Wales Centre for Public Policy) and team

Outstanding Societal Impact

Winner: Professor Kate Reed, University of Sheffield, Dr Elspeth Whitby, University of Sheffield and Dr Julie Ellis, University of Huddersfield

Challenging taboos and changing practice: the case of baby-loss and post-mortem

Research into non-invasive infant post-mortem using MRI imaging has changed NHS training and post-mortem care processes, increased





uptake in post-mortem consent by parents, and initiated new bereavement support groups. The research findings have been used to provide better information to parents about the post-mortem examination at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which now includes details of the personal care that hospital staff give to babies.

Finalist: Professor Louise Archer (UCL Institute of Education) and team

Future Promise prize

Winner: Dr Chloe Holloway (University of Nottingham)
Research makes police custody more 'autism-friendly'

Research into how autistic individuals are affected by police custody has led to new autism guidance for all police in the East Midlands, shaped the design of 'autism-friendly' custody cells, and changed police practice in supporting neurodivergent individuals in custody. Research findings formed the basis of specialist autism training for over 80 police detention officers in Nottinghamshire, highlighting areas in the custody process where changes in practice were required. Following the training, police officers reported feeling better equipped to support autistic

individuals, through changing practice such as asking direct, specific questions, avoiding physical touching during the custody process, and adapting the custody environment by adjusting lighting and reducing noise.

Panel's Choice prize

Winner: Professor Louise Archer (UCL Institute of Education) with SPIRES colleagues Dr Julie Moote, Ms Emily Macleod, Dr Jennifer DeWitt and Professor Becky Francis
Sparking science diversity and participation with science capital

Increasing young people's participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is a priority for the education sector, government and business sector in the UK and worldwide – not only to boost economic competitiveness, but also to support equality, social mobility and fairness.

The SPIRES research has significantly impacted STEM education policy and practice, changing the emphasis from 'increasing interest' to 'building science capital', where teachers can use pupils' everyday experiences and demonstrate how science is relevant to all aspects of life and work. Evidence from schools implementing the Science Capital Teaching Approach showed significant increases in student science capital (particularly among the most disadvantaged students) and the percentage of young people planning to take 1+ science A levels. ■



i The ESRC website includes full details of the Impact Prize winners and finalists, including case studies, videos and brochure:
[Web esrc.ukri.org/research/celebrating-impact-prize](http://Web.esrc.ukri.org/research/celebrating-impact-prize)
 You can see photographs from this year's awards ceremony on the ESRC Flickr page:
[Web www.flickr.com/photos/esrcphotos](http://Web.www.flickr.com/photos/esrcphotos)

On the campaign trail

What drives online campaigning by political party activists, and how does that differ from offline campaigning? By **Paul Webb, Tim Bale** and **Monica Poletti**

WITH ALL THAT is happening in the Westminster Village – and the likelihood of an early election – it is worth reflecting that, when it comes to election campaigning, boots on the ground can sometimes beat – or at least, mitigate the effect of – cash in the bank. It is very likely that Labour’s huge advantage over the Tories in terms of membership must surely have counted for something in close constituency races in the general election of 2017 – as long, that is, as a decent proportion of those members were actually active.

These are the sort of people who will volunteer for phone banks, deliver leaflets, and canvass door-to-door in the run-up to the election, and then remind people to vote and help them get to the polling stations on polling day itself. But in this day and age, it isn’t just a matter of these perennial methods of campaigning, but increasingly too about exploiting the potential of social media to spread party and candidate messages. With evidence that Labour enjoyed a particular advantage over their main rivals in terms of social media strategy in 2017, it is important to know what drives online campaigning by activists, and whether the answer differs from that for offline campaigning.

We can shed light on this, thanks to the detailed surveys of the members of six British parties we have conducted since 2015 as part of the ESRC-funded Party Membership Project run out of Queen Mary University of London and Sussex University, which has, amongst other things, borne fruit in the shape of our new book *Footsoldiers*. Our results suggest some significant differences between offline and online campaign participation. The details of our statistical modelling can be found elsewhere, but the major findings are fairly easy to summarise.

We found that factors relating to the local party and constituency context are especially helpful in understanding the drivers of traditional offline activism, but are less pertinent to online activity. If an individual is recruited by his or her local party, becomes embedded within its social network, forms a positive impression of the way it conducts its business and feels comfortable with its general ideological outlook, he or she will be significantly more likely to campaign for it at election time than if one or more of these conditions do not apply – all the more so if this all happens to occur in a marginal constituency, and if he or she is a member of one of the major two parties. However, these local contextual factors do not carry the same significance for *online* participation, which is driven

more exclusively by factors associated with the national party and its leadership (eg, its general policy positions and leader images).

A point of particular interest is that members who are recruited via the *local* rather than the *national* party are more likely to participate in traditional offline forms of campaign activity, but less likely to engage in social media ‘clicktivism’. While online activism is undeniably significant now, offline campaigning is by no means a thing of the past – and our findings suggest that if parties want members to get involved in such activities, then

“ They need to think carefully before rushing into making recruitment and participation more national and more digital ”

they need to think very carefully before rushing into making recruitment and participation more national and more digital. In particular, we found that becoming embedded in a social network is perhaps the single most important factor that drives ‘high-intensity’ forms of offline campaigning like canvassing, or running local party committees.

By contrast, members who are mainly motivated to join by ideological impulses (which is very common), largely restrict themselves to low-intensity activity like displaying posters in their windows or re-tweeting partisan social media posts. At the heart of the process of creating and sustaining a social network of members around a local party is the process of welcoming and inducting new recruits without intimidating them or turning them off: it is vital that members feel that they are part of a sympathetic social network of like-minded people whose company they enjoy if they are to commit themselves to a party’s cause in a national election campaign. In this regard, anecdotal reports of hostility between, say, Corbynista left devotees and others at Constituency Labour Party meetings, or between recent ‘Blukip’ Hard Brexiteer ‘entryists’ and One Nation or liberal Conservatives in Tory associations might give cause for concern. ■



The ESRC Party Members Project (PMP) was a four-year project run by Tim Bale, Paul Webb and Monica Poletti, funded by the ESRC. It studied party membership in the six largest British parties: the Conservatives, Labour, the Liberal Democrats, UKIP, the Greens, and the SNP. *Footsoldiers* is available at: www.amazon.co.uk/Footsoldiers-Political-Party-Membership-Century/dp/1138302465
Web esrcpartymembersproject.org

Homes fit for heroes

The Housing and Town Planning Act 1919 showed how investing public resources in the development of not-for-profit housing could provide momentum in tackling severe housing shortages. What lessons does it have for today's housing policy? By **Bob Smith**

THIS YEAR MARKS the centenary of the Housing and Town Planning Act 1919 – a key milestone in the history of social rented housing in the UK. The Act was the government's response to Britain's then housing crisis (issues of unmet housing need, shortages of housing, poor conditions and affordability – a not unfamiliar litany of problems a hundred years later). Although a few local authorities had built unsubsidised council housing in the late nineteenth century, the 1919 Act (sometimes referred to the Addison Act, named after the Minister who introduced the legislation) was significant in that it placed a duty on local authorities to survey local housing needs and plan for provision to address shortages. It also introduced generous open-ended Exchequer subsidies to cover deficits above the product of an (old) penny rate (three quarters of an old penny in Scotland).

Right: There are debates about the extent to which parts of the social housing sector have been neglected and stigmatised over many years; Below: Before the First World War local authorities were given access to subsidies and the responsibility for delivering a programme of new housing such as the London County Council's Becontree estate.



“ Between the Armistice and March 1923 just over a quarter of a million homes were built ”

There have been several different explanations for the introduction of subsidised social housing. Some writers have pointed to the failure of the private rented sector (and a major collapse of investment in this sector) and the relative failure of the early model dwelling companies (the forerunners of housing associations). Others have

pointed to the severe post war housing shortages, the perceived threat of revolution and the introduction of war time rent controls in the private sector, which forced the state to intervene and subsidise new housing provision. Before the First World War there had been debates as to whether local authorities should become more involved in provided rented homes, though even those in favour tended to see local authorities as playing a supporting role to the private sector. Nevertheless, local authorities (which unlike the nascent housing associations covered the entire country) were given access to the generous subsidies and the responsibility for delivering a programme of new housing. Whilst this was a national programme delivery was localised and ranged from major developments such as the London County Council's Becontree estate to small-scale schemes in more rural locations.

In the immediate aftermath of the Great War there was widespread political concern that prevailing poor housing conditions and substantial unmet housing need would not be met by the private sector. Prime Minister David Lloyd George promised 500,000 new dwellings (“homes fit for heroes”) within three years. Following the recommendations of the Tudor Walters Report (1918) these were intended to be generously proportioned homes set in large gardens; cottage housing estates built on suburban principles. However, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the 1919 Act programme was not fully implemented.



The immediate post-war boom collapsed within two years and the government restricted the commitment to 300,000 additional homes. Between the Armistice and March 1923 just over a quarter of a million homes were built, the vast majority by local authorities under the provision of the 1919 Act, though Addison had been replaced as Minister of Health in 1921 and resigned from the government shortly afterwards. In Lloyd George's condescending words "he was rather too anxious to build houses".

Under the 1919 Act subsidised social housing (mainly provided by local authorities) was seen as the solution to the post First World War housing problem, although it was superseded by less generous subsidy arrangements in the twenties and thirties. After the Second World War the Attlee Government's commitment to high quality, well-designed public housing was also frustrated by shortages and financial constraints and from the 1950s onwards social housing was increasingly seen by UK governments as a residual tenure (although by the late 1970s social housing accounted for almost a third of housing in the UK, with provision dominated by local authorities). However, for much of the last 40 years council housing in particular has often come to be seen as part of the housing problem rather than the solution, and although the profile of the social housing sector has changed (with an increasing reliance on housing associations) its overall scale has declined considerably (now less than a fifth of the total housing stock is in the social rented sector). UK governments have increasingly relied upon the market to address

“ The failures of UK housing policy have all too often been the failures to think and act in the long-term ”

housing problems and to deliver on the provision of affordable housing. The role of local authorities has been weakened by sales of existing properties under the Right-to-Buy, restrictions on investing in new development and the transfer of homes to not-for-profit housing associations. Although the recent scrapping of the Right-to-Buy in Scotland and Wales and the lifting of borrowing caps on local authorities offers the prospect of a modest renaissance in council housing.

A hundred years after Christopher Addison's landmark legislation we face a somewhat different housing crisis, though one which has been decades in the making. Housing supply needs to increase very significantly to meet needs and for many (particularly younger households) housing has become unaffordable. Homelessness in the UK has reached unprecedented levels and the Grenfell Tower tragedy has sparked debates about the extent to which parts of the social housing sector have been neglected and stigmatised over



For much of the last 40 years council housing has often been seen as part of the housing problem rather than the solution.

many years. Of course, governments must be wary of over-ambition and making promises (and setting targets) they cannot meet. However, the Housing and Town Planning etc. Act 1919 illustrates how investing public resources in the development of not-for-profit housing (rather than encouraging higher rents, underpinned by an inefficient welfare benefits system) could provide momentum in tackling severe housing shortages. Its failure in implementation terms also highlights how housing policy in the UK has been closely tied to wider economic performance and all too often increases in public investment in social housing have been followed by savage cutbacks in spending during periods of austerity. Housing policy in the UK (perhaps unlike health or education) has rarely been seen as an area which needs sustained support and investment. In celebrating the centenary of the Addison Act it's worth reflecting on its ambitions; to increase the supply of social housing to meet shortages, to improve the design and quality of new housing and to keep rents affordable. A hundred years on there is again a need for debate about the value of good quality, well-designed, genuinely affordable social housing and to think seriously about the need for planning and investing for the long-term in providing additional, sustainable social housing. The failures of UK housing policy have all too often been the failures to think and act in the long-term for the benefits of ensuring everyone has access to a decent, affordable home. ■

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The value of nature

Men and women often use, experience and benefit from ecosystem services in different ways. Understanding these differences helps researchers and practitioners avoid exacerbating biases and identify where interventions can make a difference. By Professor **Katrina Brown**

WOMEN AND MEN access, use and value the environment differently and for different reasons. Yet many analyses are based on an average or aggregate view and don't break down these views according to gender, or other social differences such as age, ethnicity or occupation. This matters because as we face an environmental emergency of accelerating climate change and biodiversity loss, and at the same time strive to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we can no longer base actions on average views. If we are to 'leave no-one behind' as the UN urges, we must take diverse values, knowledges and capacities into account.

Engendering Ecosystem Services

Ecosystem services – nature's contribution to people – has become a core concept linking people and nature. Two comprehensive global assessments in the last 15 years – the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA, 2005) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES, 2019) – have underscored the ways that all human society depends of the diverse contributions from nature. These range from how ecosystems provide protection from storm damage or filter water, to the provision of food and fuel, and the many livelihood activities that flow from them.

Furthermore, the cultural values associated with nature give meaning to place and shape



Photo: Sergio Rosendo

peoples' identity and wellbeing. A rich literature exists presenting fascinating examples of the many ecosystem services and how they benefit society but very little work has looked at how these ecosystem services are disaggregated; many studies have assumed that society overall benefits whilst overlooking that different people within society – in different regions of the world, in different contexts or locations and even different individuals within the same household – experience and are affected by them.

We undertook research at eight coastal sites in Kenya and Mozambique. It shows that the relationships with ecosystem services vary by gender, reflecting the critical importance of social mechanisms that underpin relationships between people and nature. These are embedded within cultures, traditions and socially proscribed gender roles, and in the institutions and governance of natural resource systems, markets and labour relations. The study shows that men and women often use, experience and benefit from ecosystem services in different ways, and possess different ecological knowledges, so that changes to the availability, quality and bundle of ecosystem services will have different outcomes for men and women.

Gendered livelihoods and roles

Participation in coastal livelihoods differs markedly by gender, and roles for men and women are culturally defined. These lead to stark differences in the share of income derived from ecosystem services, for example from fishing, with women typically confined to low-income activities. Women



Photo: Tomas Chaigneau

also value a wider range of ecosystem services than men, and the degree to which different ecosystem services were valued by men and women often varied in accordance with the type of contribution it made to their wellbeing. Non-monetary and personal benefits, such as social relationships associated with collecting firewood or respect gained from fishing, were derived according to distinct gender roles and responsibilities.

Male and female roles and responsibilities, and behavioural expectations, meant that men and women interact with different parts of coastal and marine ecosystems. In our study, men dominated livelihood activities farther away or in deeper water, while women tended to exploit ecosystem services accessible from land or exposed at low tide. Intertidal zones are therefore male spaces at high tide (for fishing) and female spaces at low tide (for gleaning) and women often collect marine life from these ‘in-between spaces’. The interaction between spaces and people influences the knowledge developed about the system.

Access mechanisms

These differences in how men and women use, experience and benefit from ecosystem services can be partly explained by how access is influenced by gender. Formal institutions such as resource permits or resource user groups can create obstacles for women’s participation in livelihood activities and decision-making.

Informal institutions are perhaps even more important in determining access to ecosystem benefits. Behavioural expectations make certain roles masculine, such as those considered dangerous like seafaring, while others are feminine – for example, those associated with caregiving. Ecosystem service relationships are social constructs of gender roles and responsibilities determined by culture, social-economic circumstance and processes of socialisation. The transmission of knowledge by gender observed in our study sites is a key source of such socialisation; we found that knowledge and skills are transferred amongst social groups according to gender, resulting in different access to capital, education and mobility for men and women. This affects the accessibility of ecosystem services and how benefits are derived and shared.

Opening up new spaces

Women in coastal Kenya and Mozambique demonstrated an adeptness to exploit spaces between formal and informal institutions, for example through their use of peripheral spaces (eg, intertidal zone) and markets (for example, low-value, small fish). Women may have preferential access to some ecosystem services either because they hold relevant knowledge or because it is regarded as a feminine activity creating cultural barriers for men to take part. But access to ‘in-between’ spaces also leaves women vulnerable since their access may be reduced if an ecosystem service receives an economic value. By recognising the importance and vulnerability



Photo: Tomas Chaigneau

The study shows that men and women often use, experience and benefit from ecosystem services in different ways, and possess different ecological knowledges.

of ‘in-between ecosystem services’ for women, development programmes might seek options for institutionalising access mechanisms to prevent capture of emerging markets by men.

At Wasini in southern Kenya, members of a women’s group who manage a mangrove boardwalk used income generated from tourists to invest in girls’ education, in a culture where boys’ education is prioritised. As a member of the group explained: “For me, if there would not have been many of these developments, I would not have been able to have attended secondary level of education. The group assisted me[...]. For me, if there was not the women group, I would have not been able to reach the level [of education].”

There are also rare individual women who escape gendered roles, such as a few large-scale female fish traders found at our study sites, with impacts on their own wealth, buying power and status which challenges gender norms. But such individual breaking of cultural norms can come at a personal cost. In Vamizi island in Mozambique, one successful female trader of octopus and reef fish said she was ostracised in the community and accused of prostitution and witchcraft.

Understanding gender and ecosystem services relationships helps researchers and practitioners avoid exacerbating biases and to identify where interventions can make a difference. Time and time again the failure to account for social diversity means that the most vulnerable fail to benefit from development interventions. We know that there are no easy ‘magic bullets’ to remove the inequalities experienced by women when benefiting from ecosystems, but there is the opportunity to make inroads into them and help create equitable opportunities for the fair sharing of ecosystem benefits amongst men and women. ■



Research was part of the SPACES project funded by the NERC/ESRC/DFID Ecosystems Services and Poverty Alleviation Programme (ESPA)

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THE UK BY NUMBERS

FOOD AND FARMING

We present an at-a-glance overview of key topics. This issue's focus is on food and farming. Statistics are from the Office for National Statistics, Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs, National Farmers' Union, and Mintel

GROSS VALUE ADDED OF THE UK AGRI-FOOD SECTOR 2017

£121.6bn

The agri-food sector contributed £121.6 billion or 6.7% to national Gross Value Added in 2017. The GVA of the food sector (excluding agriculture and fishing) increased 6.4% in 2017, following a 1.7% increase in 2016. Wholesaling GVA increased by 2.1%, whilst manufacturing rose by 5.7% and catering rose by 11.5%. Retailing GVA fell by 4.4%.

The GVA of the food sector (excluding agriculture and fishing) increased 6.4% in 2017, following a 1.7% increase in 2016. Wholesaling GVA increased by 2.1%, whilst manufacturing rose by 5.7% and catering rose by 11.5%. Retailing GVA fell by 4.4%.

Source: Annual Business Survey (ONS) & Chapter 4 of Agriculture in the United Kingdom (Defra) ONS

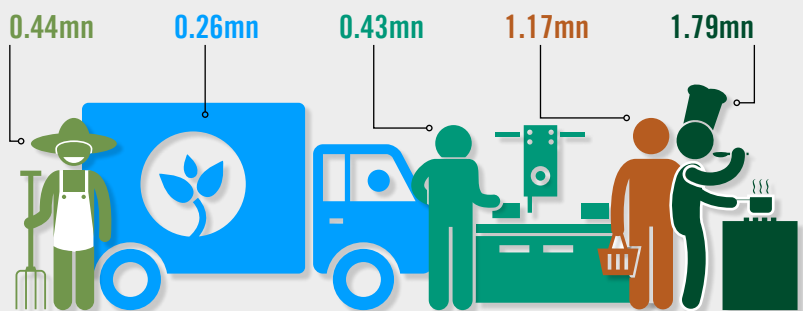


AGRI-FOOD SECTOR EMPLOYEES (GB), Q4 2018

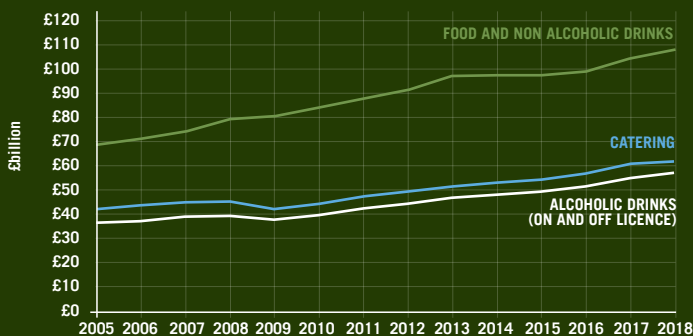
The food sector in GB employed 3.6 million people in Q3 2018 (4.1 million if agriculture and fishing are included along with self-employed farmers), a 2.2% increase on a year earlier. It covered 12% of GB

employment in Q4 2018 (14% if agriculture and fishing are included along with self-employed farmers).

Source: Labour Market Statistics (ONS) & June Survey structure statistics (Defra).



UK CONSUMER EXPENDITURE ON FOOD, DRINK AND CATERING



Total consumer expenditure on food, drink and catering has continued to rise, by 2.9% in 2018 to £226 billion. Expenditure on food (including non-alcoholic drinks) increased by 3.4%, alcoholic drinks by 3.3% and catering by 1.7%.

Source: Consumer Trends, (ONS). 'Food' includes non-alcoholic drinks. 'Drink' is alcoholic drinks.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS BRITISH FOOD PURCHASES IN THE UK (2018)

When surveyed...

59% of shoppers agree that they try to buy British food whenever they can while **10%** disagree.

40% think that British food tastes better while **12%** disagree.

78% agree that it is important to support British farmers while only **4%** disagree.



Source: Lightspeed GMI/Mintel

ORIGINS OF FOOD CONSUMED IN THE UK 2018 Based on the farm-gate value of unprocessed food in 2018.



UK FOOD AND DRINK MANUFACTURING BY PRODUCT TYPE



There were approximately

7,030

micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food and drink sector with turnover of around

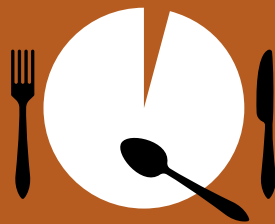
£25 billion

and 110,000 employees in 2018.

In the food sector (excluding beverages) SMEs accounted for

96%

of businesses



25%

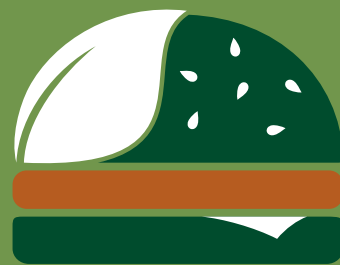
of employment

25%

of turnover

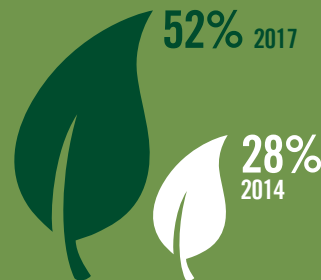
NUMBER OF SMEs IN 2018

800	100
255	2,360
375	1,265
35	345
530	1,225



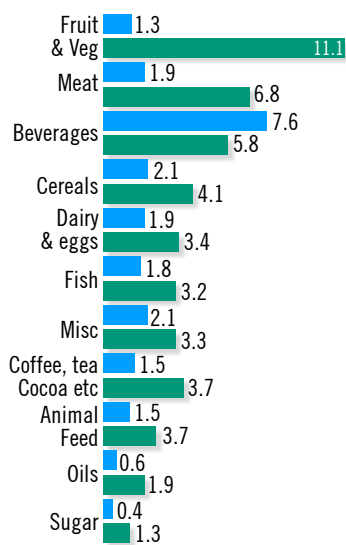
MEAT-FREE INDUSTRY

According to Mintel research, the share of meat-free new products carrying a vegan/no animal ingredients claim nearly doubled between 2014-17.



More than half (52%) of new product launches in the meat-free foods market were vegan/contained no animal ingredients, up from 28% in 2014

UK TRADE IN DIFFERENT FOOD GROUPS, 2018



UK TRADE IN DIFFERENT FOOD GROUPS, 2018



In 2018 the value of imports was greater than the value of exports in each of the broad categories of food, feed and drink except 'Beverages' which had a trade surplus of **£1.81bn**, largely due to exports of Scotch Whisky.



Beverages are the largest export category by far with an export value of **£7.6bn** in 2018, up by 3% on 2017.



Cereals is the second largest export group with a value of **£2.1bn**, followed by the meat and dairy and egg categories at around **£1.9bn** each (excluding the miscellaneous category).



'Fruit and vegetables' has the largest trade deficit. In 2018 imports were **£11.1bn** while exports were worth **£1.3bn**, giving a trade gap of **£9.8bn**.



The second largest groups in terms of imports in 2018 were meat and beverages with imports of **£6.8** and **£5.8bn** respectively.

Source: HMRC

FARM STRUCTURES

From 2017-18 the total labour force on commercial holdings increased by 0.6% to **477,000**.



Sheep and lamb numbers decreased by 3.0% to **34 million**, largely due to a 4.1% decrease in the number of lambs under one year old to **17 million**.

Total pig numbers have seen an increase of 0.9% to just over **5 million**.



The cereal crops area decreased by 2.4% to **3.1 million hectares**.

The Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) increased by 0.7% to **17.4 million hectares**, covering 71% of land in the UK.



As many as 56% of UK adults ate vegetarian/meat-free foods in the six months to July 2018, a significant increase from the 50% who had eaten these foods in the six months to March 2017.

The top three perceived benefits of eating less meat are:



32%
improving health



31%
saving money



25%
better for the environment



The National Farmers Union (NFU) Seasonal Supply of Labour survey, which only looks at seasonal agricultural workers recruited by labour providers, estimates that **99% of seasonal labour is provided by EU workers**.



Agriculture's contribution to the national economy remained at less than 1% and its share of employment rose slightly to **1.53%**.

Working up to depression

While working long and unsociable hours has been associated with poorer physical health, research finds that women who work extra-long hours are at a higher risk of depression, and men and women who frequently work at weekends have a heightened risk of depression too

THE RISE OF globalisation and the 24/7 economy have been fuelling demands for people to work outside standard 'office' hours. In the UK there are concerns about unregulated and frequent unpaid overtime and the effects of the expanding gig economy. Within the EU, a significant proportion of people have to work unsociable hours – with nearly a quarter working most Saturdays and a third working at least one Sunday every month. And in eastern Asian countries the risk of death due to overwork has increased.

Whilst working long and unsociable hours has been associated with poorer physical health, the potential impact on mental health has been less well known. There are a few studies that have found a connection between unsociable work patterns and depression, but so far, much of this research has largely focused on men and/or on specific types of worker or workplaces, and rarely have they taken account of work conditions such as whether workers have any control over how they do their work.

To address these gaps, researchers from the ESRC-funded International Centre for Lifecourse Studies in Society and Health (ICLS) at University College London (UCL) and Queen Mary University of London, set out to look for links between long or irregular hours and depression. They were particularly interested in looking at whether there were any gender differences in these links because research has shown that work is organised, experienced and rewarded differently for men and women, and because men and women react

The research found gender differences in working patterns, and that unsociable working patterns linked to a greater risk of depression for women.



differently to overwork and time pressures.

Their study drew on data from the second wave (2010-12) of Understanding Society, the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS). The UKHLS has been tracking the health and wellbeing of a representative sample of people living in 40,000 households across the UK since 2009. At the second wave, 11,215 men and 12,188 women in paid work provided information on their working hours, weekend working, working conditions and depressive symptoms.

Depressive symptoms, such as feeling worthless or incapable, were measured using the general health questionnaire (GHQ-12), which is a validated screening tool frequently used in public health surveys as it performs well in detecting depression in the general population.

Weekly working hours were grouped into four categories: fewer than 35 hours to include part-time employees; 35-40 hours to represent the standard working week; 41-54 hours deemed long working hours, and 55 and above as extra-long working hours. Weekend working was grouped into three categories: no weekends; some weekends; and most or all weekends. And several potentially influential contributing factors were taken into consideration in the study: age; marital status; parenthood; household income and the number of people in the household; income satisfaction; qualifications; job type and satisfaction; degree of control at work; and long-term health conditions.

Taking account of the potential differences, the data were analysed separately for men and women.



The results of this research – published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* – found gender differences in the working patterns, and that unsociable working patterns linked to a greater risk of depression for women.

Men work longer and more unsociable hours

Men tended to work longer hours in paid work than women, with almost half clocking up more than the standard 35-40 hour week compared with fewer than one in four women. And nearly half of the women worked part-time compared with just one in seven men. Having children affected men's and women's work patterns in different ways – whilst fathers tended to work more hours than men without children, mothers tended to work fewer hours than women without children.

Two thirds of the men worked weekends, compared with half the women. Those who worked all or most weekends were more likely to be in low skilled jobs and to be less satisfied with their job and their earnings than those who only worked Monday to Friday or some weekends.

Disadvantage linked to depressive symptoms

Studies have already suggested that women in general are more likely to be depressed than men, and this was no different in this study. But for both genders, and independent of their working patterns, the researchers found the most depressive symptoms in older workers, smokers, workers with



explanations for the results: women who work long hours are in a minority – just four per cent of them in the study worked 55 hours or more per week. This may place them under additional pressure. Women working longer hours tend to be in male-dominated occupations, and this may also contribute to stress. According to a new paper by Anne McMunn and colleagues in the ICLS, most couples don't share domestic work equally. So perhaps the additional burden of the domestic chores leads to extensive total work hours, added time pressures and overwhelming responsibilities for women. Additionally, women who work frequently at weekends tend to be concentrated in low-paid service sector jobs, which have been linked to higher levels of depression.

Gill Weston, PhD candidate and lead author, said: "We hope our findings will encourage employers and policymakers to think about how to reduce the burdens and increase support for women who work long or irregular hours – without restricting their ability to work when they wish to. Employers and family members should consider how they can be more supportive of those with these work patterns.

"There are many social, economic and health benefits to be gained from working in good jobs, so we need to move from a culture of unrealistic demands and low rewards to one in which workers are supported, feel valued, feel they have control and sufficient time for recovery and leisure. This would benefit all workers regardless of gender, whilst a happier and healthier workforce would benefit employers too." ■

“There are many social, economic and health benefits to be gained from working in good jobs”

the lowest earnings, in physically demanding jobs, and those who were dissatisfied with work.

Heightened risks for women

Taking these findings into account, the results were striking: while there was little or no difference in depressive symptoms between men who worked long hours and those who did not, this was not the case for women. Those women who worked 55 hours or more per week had, on average, 7.3% more depressive symptoms than women working a standard 35-40 hour week.

Similarly, weekend working showed differences for men and women. Compared to men who only worked on weekdays, men who worked weekends also had a greater number of depressive symptoms – on average 3.4% more – but only if they had little control at work or were dissatisfied with work. Whereas for women, regardless of their control or job satisfaction, depressive symptoms were associated with the number of weekends worked – those who worked for all or most weekends had 4.5% more depressive symptoms on average compared to women working only weekdays.

Why women might be more affected than men

This was an observational study, so although the paper's authors could not establish the exact causes, they did suggest some possible

i Long work hours, weekend working and depressive symptoms in men and women: findings from a population-based study by Weston, Zilanawala, Webb, Carvalho and McMunn
 Email gillian.weston.14@ucl.ac.uk
 Web jech.bmj.com/content/73/5/465
 Gender divisions of paid and unpaid work in contemporary UK couples by McMunn, Bird, Webb and Sacker
 Web journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0950017019862153

The need for new measures

Professor Diane Coyle discusses the importance of the social sciences to society, why new approaches are needed to gain a deeper understanding of problems, and the importance of interdisciplinary research in generating new understanding and evidence. By **Martin Ince**

IN A WORLD where expert opinion is no longer regarded as an unalloyed force for good, Diane Coyle is a visible proponent of the importance of the social sciences to society. As Bennett Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge, she is devising new ways for academic findings to make their way into policy, building on her experience as an academic economist and as an economics journalist. She has served in many public roles including deputy chair of the BBC Trust, and is now Senior Independent Member of ESRC Council.

Coyle agrees that of all the social sciences, economics is the one with the most clout in the UK policy system. As she says, “there is a government chief economist, but no government chief anthropologist.” Since the foundation of the Government economic service in 1964 the number of economists in government has grown steadily, and with it their influence. She adds that the methods of economics make it especially

“Existing measures like Gross Domestic Product miss the digital economy”

suitable to the policy world. “It is a very rational form of discourse and very quantitative. So economists are good at presenting understandable statistical evidence.”

That said, Coyle is not in favour of any monopoly for economic thinking. She studied the famous Philosophy, Politics and Economics degree at Oxford and supports the broad perspective it gives to students.

She expects too that over time, other social sciences will gain greater influence within government. “At the moment,” says Coyle, “the picture varies from department to department. But we are now seeing digital companies hiring anthropologists, psychologists and other types of social science expert. Government will follow when they realise that these skills complement economic thinking rather than replacing it.”

However, Coyle is more aware than most of the way in which expertise has “become more contested” than ever. The extreme polarisation of contemporary politics, she thinks, reinforces the tendency to regard expert knowledge as negotiable. However, she is not convinced that there is necessarily a crisis. “Public trust in academics

is higher than for other groups,” she points out. “So the problem could be more about trust in institutions than in people. For example, news on television is more trusted than news in print. TV news is regulated by Ofcom, while people are aware that newspapers have partisan proprietors.”

This concern naturally comes into sharp focus in the debate on Brexit, still raging when this interview was carried out in August 2019. Economics is key to the discussion. Coyle says: “Almost the entire profession sees minus signs” when they consider the economic effects, but none of this, she concedes, has stopped people from “believing what they want to believe” about the possible impacts of Brexit.

Shadow of 2008

Part of the problem, thinks Coyle, is that economics dwells under the long shadow of the global economic crisis of 2008, which was not generally anticipated and whose effects are still felt today. One of the more intriguing consequences has been student pressure to reform academic economics. Coyle supports the idea that the economics teaching of 2008 had become too narrow, and is involved in redeveloping its content. She says: “Students were right to say that the curriculum was not teaching them what they needed.” In 2012 she ran a conference at the Bank of England on this subject for an international audience. It was followed by the establishment of a new initiative, Core Economics, to develop fresh approaches to economics research and teaching, of which she is now a trustee.

The issues that initiatives such as Core Economics must address, she thinks, go well beyond unexpected crises, important though these are. She cites inequality and the environment as two other key areas, asking “Can there be economic tools to help address these issues?” In her view, economics should be able to come up with answers. “There can be progress in our knowledge,” she insists. “We do not have to end up with an array of competing models or views.”

Coyle is less convinced than other observers that Chinese global expansion is the world’s next big issue. New technology is a bigger driver of change, she thinks, while the aftermath of 2008 is still a challenge to global systems. She says: “From the time of Margaret Thatcher [who became UK Prime Minister in 1979] until 2008, it was always assumed that markets were the answer to all economic questions. That was always absurd. Policymakers absorbed this view and stuck with it



Economics dwells under the long shadow of the global economic crisis of 2008, which was not generally anticipated and whose effects are still felt today

after academic economists moved on in the 1980s.” If nothing else, she points out, this illuminates the way in which undergraduate teaching can shape the lifelong beliefs of politicians.

Better measures of the economy

One problem that Coyle thinks is of vital importance is our inadequate grasp of the character of the modern economy. The title of her 1997 book *The Weightless World* hints at the problem. She says: “Existing measures like Gross Domestic Product miss the digital economy. Part of the issue is that many valuable [digital] services are priced at zero.

“Technological innovation may also affect the apparent growth of the economy. If a company ceases investing in its own computer servers and instead buys space in the cloud from a US business, GDP may seem to grow less than in the counterfactual world even though the same activity is occurring, at lower cost and higher quality. It is important to understand dynamics of this type better and for the moment, the raw data needed to get at the issue are not being collected. Coyle is pleased to be working with the UK Office for National statistics on this issue.

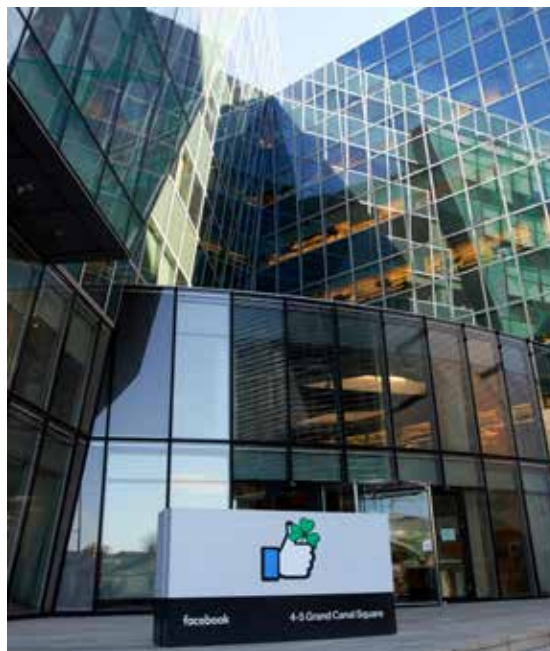
““ Research only produces public benefit if people change their behaviour as a result of the findings ””

However, and despite the immense fortunes now being won by the leaders of the current technology revolution, Coyle is cautious about the idea that digital innovation inevitably drives inequality. “These technologies are transformative for society,” she says, “and their economic impact is not the most important effect that they have.” Not all past episodes of automation have resulted in misery and inequality. What’s more, she points out, people love the apparently free services that many digital businesses offer, and their free availability helps everyone. At the same time, these businesses create well-paid jobs. These can be polarising economically if some social groups are left behind, such as those with out-of-date skills, but are in general a positive development.

In addition, and in the spirit of her work with Core Economics, Coyle is keen not just to improve GDP estimates, but also to go beyond this narrow concept of economic value. In current policy debates, a bigger GDP is always better. But as she points out, GDP is not a measure of economic welfare or of wellbeing.

To gain a deeper understanding of the real economy, she thinks, it is vital for better data to be available. Coyle says: “Policymakers pay attention to what is measured. So we need new measures that draw attention [to new concerns]. For example, a growing economy might well generate more traffic. But that also means more asthma from air pollution as well as more noise. Our current indicators do not take account of this damage.”

People love the apparently free services that many digital businesses offer, and their free availability helps everyone.



Coyle is clear that universities have a key role in finding answers to this complex set of issues, especially as they are the main location for state-funded research. She says: “Research funding from government is essential because we need to undertake research that has uncertain results.” Only government can afford to fund this speculative activity. “It is clear that we can only get prosperity if governments and markets work together.”

In this spirit, Coyle sees opportunity in the emergence of UK Research and Innovation, the new government research body of which ESRC is a component. The new structure, she says, “shows great promise” in the hunt to crack the problem of effective interdisciplinary research. From her own perspective, “It is very important to meld the social sciences with the natural and medical sciences.” After all, as she says, “Research only produces public benefit if people change their behaviour as a result of the findings.”

She adds that this new approach is in effect a much larger version of her work at the Bennett Institute in Cambridge, which also aims to create true interdisciplinary research. The common aim is to produce benefit for society by generating new understanding and evidence. For her, the need for such joint working is obvious. She quotes with approval the well-known saying: “The world has problems, but universities have departments.” ■



Professor Diane Coyle, CBE, is Bennett Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge. She is a member of the Natural Capital Committee, a Fellow of the Office for National Statistics, and researcher at the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence.

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People and news

UK IN A CHANGING EUROPE FUNDING EXTENSION AND NINE NEW SENIOR FELLOWS



The UK in a
Changing Europe

The ESRC has announced additional funding of £3.19 million for the UK in a Changing Europe (UKICE) hub based at King's College London and £4.3 million for nine new Senior Fellows for the UKICE initiative. The hub will run for a further three years and the fellowships will run for up to three years.

Led by Professor Anand Menon, the UKICE initiative aims to promote rigorous, high-quality and independent research into the complex and ever-changing relationship between the UK and the European Union, and to provide an authoritative, non-partisan and impartial reference point for those looking for information, insight and analysis about UK-EU relations that stand aside from the politics surrounding the debate.

The ESRC, as part of UK Research and Innovation, invited proposals from UK-based academics for senior fellowships to work as part of UKICE; this will be the third round of senior fellowships under the initiative.

The nine new Senior Fellows are:

- Professor David Bailey, University of Birmingham – Changing Lanes? Brexit and UK Automotive: Impacts and implications for corporate strategies and industrial policy;
- Professor Catherine Barnard, University of Cambridge – Working hard; hardly working;
- Dr Meredith Crowley, University of Cambridge – UK Trade Policy post-Brexit;
- Professor John Curtice, National Centre for Social Research – The Evolution of Public Attitudes during the Brexit Process;
- Professor Sarah Hall, University of Nottingham – Brexit and the UK's financial services sector;
- Dr Katy Hayward, Queen's University Belfast – The Post-Brexit Status and Future of Northern Ireland;

- Professor Hussein Kassim, University of East Anglia – Negotiating the future. The UK's repositioning in Europe: processes and consequences;
- Professor Nicola McEwen, University of Edinburgh – A Family of Nations? Brexit, Devolution and the Union;
- Professor Meg Russell, University College London – Brexit, Parliament and the Constitution.

The new Senior Fellows are academics of the highest international standing in their field. While their role is focused mainly on impact, dissemination and the synthesis of existing research, they will also have the opportunity to undertake new research where appropriate.

Professor Anand Menon, Director of UKICE, said: "I am delighted to welcome this outstanding collection of first-rate social scientists to our team. Working together we have an exciting opportunity to ensure that social science research informs not only public policy but also political and public debates about the future of the UK and its relationship with the European Union."

Under the guidance of the UKICE Director, the role of the senior fellowship is to provide evidence and analysis, which leads to impact and dissemination across the broad range of issues and policy areas affected by Brexit, its implementation and consequences, and the UK's future relationship with the European Union more broadly.

Jeremy Neathey, Deputy Director of Research at ESRC, said "ESRC continues to be committed to providing a strong evidence base to inform what is the most critical issue facing not just the immediate, but also the longer term, future of the UK.

"We continue to fund research across a range of initiatives which allow us to better understand the profound implications of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. The appointment of this cohort is a crucial part of that effort and builds on the valuable work of the previous fellows." For more information see: ukandeu.ac.uk ■

RESEARCH CENTRES AWARDED LEGACY CENTRE STATUS

Five established research centres, previously funded by the ESRC, have been awarded the new ESRC 'Legacy Centre Status' under a new funding model for centres designed to maximise the impact of their achievements and longer term sustainability. The first Legacy Centre Status Review invited a small number of active former ESRC centres for assessment in April 2019 and approved this status for the following centres:

- Centre for Evidence-based Public Services (CEPS) – formerly known as the Centre for Market and Public Organisation (CMPO) – University of Bristol – Principal Investigator, Professor Helen Simpson;
- Deafness Cognition and Language Research Centre (DCAL) – University College London – Principal Investigator, Professor Mairéad MacSweeney;
- Centre for Microdata Methods and Practice (CeMMAP) – Institute for Fiscal Studies – Principal Investigator, Professor Andrew Chesher;
- Centre for Learning and Life Chances (LLAKES) – University College London – Principal Investigator, Professor Andy Green;
- Centre for Time Use Research (CTUR) – University College London – Principal Investigator, Professor Jonathan Gershuny.

The Legacy Centre Status Review is a rigorous process of review to recognise the ongoing excellence and credibility of a former ESRC centre. Securing this status will enable the centres to continue to brand themselves as an ESRC Centre for a further five-year period, and receive up to £100,000 funding.

ESRC legacy status and funding forms the last stage of the graduated centres funding model introduced in 2017 following a review into how ESRC could continue to foster and sustain the excellence and impact of its centres over a longer period. It introduces the opportunity for centres to be invited to apply to be recognised as an ESRC Centre for a further period once substantial ESRC Centre funding comes to an end. ■

Making sense of society



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

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

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



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