

W/SERD

Wales Institute of Social & Economic
Research, Data & Methods

INSIGHT

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Director's report



A warm welcome to WISERD Insight 2017, our report on what has been the institute's biggest year so far.

WISERD is the national centre for social science research, bringing together academics from different social science disciplines to share knowledge and develop ideas that apply cutting-edge research methods to address a range of important policy areas. As you will see from this report, that unique approach to social science research has continued to produce ground-breaking findings in 2017.

Our research frequently effects change by influencing the development of policy and practice across a range of sectors. And, in 2017 we made major progress by expanding our links with third sector organisations in Wales and internationally to help our expertise reach new corners of civil society.

Not only does our work span our partnership across five Welsh universities, but we continue to collaborate with academics across the UK and forge global links.

We will be entering our 10th year in 2018. We will be marking that anniversary year with events and celebrations, but most importantly we will continue to deliver further excellent research findings, develop new research ideas and attract new research talent to join our teams and networks.

I hope this report gives you an insight into the breadth and depth of our work, and that it inspires you to follow our progress throughout 2018 and beyond.

Ian Rees Jones

WISERD Director

WISERD is a partnership of these five Welsh universities



Welcome

Contents

Director's report 02

Innovative research

Our research 03

Recognition and awards 04

Innovative research methods 05

Influencing policy

Working with civil society 06

Influencing policy outcomes 07



Increasing capacity

Developing research leaders 08

Research networks 10

Sharing our research

Blogs and publications 11

A year of events 12



Global reach

International links 14

Funding

Income profile 16

Our research

WISERD's work spans a range of different disciplines. Our largest funded research programmes are:

Civil Society

Civil Society is WISERD's biggest current research project, bringing together the institute's five universities in an ESRC-funded research centre. The centre which began in 2014 has a five-year programme of multidisciplinary, policy-relevant research addressing civil society in Wales, the UK and internationally.

Global-Rural

The Global-Rural project, based at Aberystwyth University, aims to advance our understanding of the workings and impacts of globalisation in rural regions through the development and application of new conceptual and methodological approaches.



WISERD Education

WISERD Education is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (Hefcw). The project aims to undertake research in order to sustain and enhance the quality of learning, and the standards of teaching and teacher education in Wales. One of its main pieces of work is the Multi-Cohort Study, surveying pupils every year in schools across Wales since 2012.

IMAJINE

IMAJINE (Integrative Mechanisms to Address Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities in Europe) is a major, Horizon 2020-funded research project at Aberystwyth University addressing spatial injustice and territorial inequalities.

Administrative Data Research Centre Wales

The Administrative Data Research Centre Wales (ADRC-W) is one of four national centres that have been established in the UK by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). It uses cutting-edge technology to link and analyse de-identified administrative data to help inform social, economic and health-related research in the UK.

IDEAL study

The IDEAL study (Improving the Experience of Dementia and Enhancing Active Life) is a project led by Exeter University focusing on the potential for living well with dementia from the perspective of people with dementia and their primary carers. The study's second phase has been made an Alzheimer's Society Centre of Excellence.

Recognition and awards

WISERD's researchers and their work are frequently recognised within and outside the academic sphere. Here's just some of the formal recognition achieved by our academics in 2017:

Professor Chris Taylor awarded Hugh Owen Medal



The Learned Society of Wales awarded the inaugural Hugh Owen Medal to WISERD Co-Director Professor Chris Taylor (Cardiff University) in recognition of his methodologically ground-breaking contribution to educational research.

Chris Taylor gave his medal lecture in December to an audience of education workers and policymakers, reflecting on the implementation of the Donaldson Review of the Welsh school curriculum.

Prestigious fellowships and appointments



WISERD Co-Directors Professor Sally Power (Cardiff University) and Professor Michael Woods (Aberystwyth University) were elected as fellows of the Learned Society of Wales, a public recognition of Welsh academic excellence. Cardiff University Honorary Professor W. John Morgan was also elected a Council member and Trustee of the Learned Society.

Professor Power was conferred as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences. Professor Roger Goodman FACSS, Chair of the Academy, said that each Fellow had been "recognised for their outstanding and impactful contributions."

All-WISERD shortlist for research award

Professor Chris Taylor was awarded the Research Impact Award by the Wales Social Research Association from a field of WISERD researchers.

Professor Taylor won the award for leading a team evaluating the Welsh Government's Foundation Phase, the school curriculum for 3-7 year olds. The work not only led to changes in education policy, but also had a direct impact on practitioners and policy-makers working in early years education.

Also nominated in the same category were Dr Peter Mackie, who chairs WISERD's Housing Research Network, and Dr Elin Royles, Dr Huw Lewis and Dr Catrin Wyn Edwards, who are part of WISERD's Centre for Welsh Politics and Society at Aberystwyth University.

Man of the Year

Professor Paul Chaney (Cardiff University) was named Chwarae Teg's 'Man of the Year' at the 2017 Womenspire Awards. Wales's leading gender equality charity recognised him "as a true advocate for gender equality through his writing and policy influence, which has had an impact on the lives of women in Wales and beyond."

WISERD PhD student wins poster prize

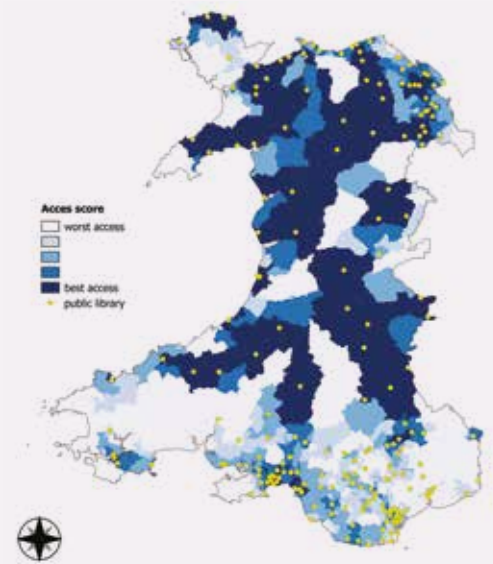
ESRC-funded PhD student Samuel Brown (Swansea University) won the WISERD Annual Conference 2017 Poster Prize, sponsored by the Learned Society of Wales. Samuel is in the 3rd year of his PhD which looks at the impact of major life events on an adult's life satisfaction. His poster was entitled, 'A look into the anticipation and adaptation of well-being from changes in employment contracts, accounting for social cohesion'.

Innovative research methods

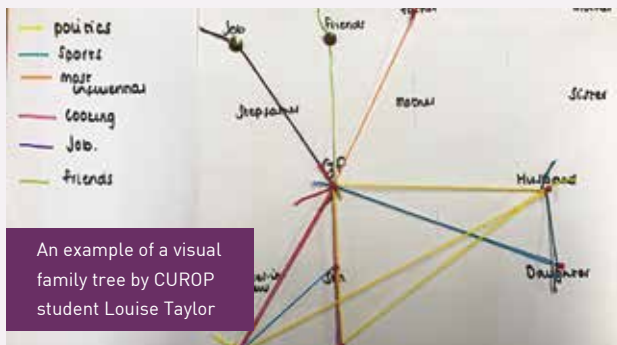
WISERD is proud to be at the cutting edge of social sciences research. As well as bringing together academics from across different social science disciplines, our researchers often develop new methodologies and use innovative approaches in their work.

Measuring demand for and access to public services

Dr Nicholas Page (University of South Wales) has been using geographical information systems (GIS) techniques to investigate local variations in levels of access to essential services in Wales. By using advanced floating catchment area (FCA) methods, his research looks at the combined implications of travel time/distance, availability, and potential demand.



Mapping access to public libraries using GIS



An example of a visual family tree by CUROP student Louise Taylor

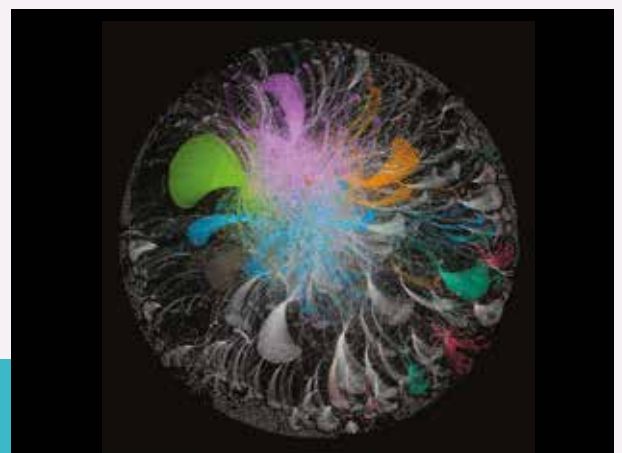
Inheritance mapping

Dr Esther Muddiman (Cardiff University) has used a series of visual 'family trees' to explore the connections that exist between family members. She uses these maps to discover the sorts of values and practices that get passed from one generation to the next. Dr Muddiman welcomed two students from the Cardiff Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (CUROP) this summer to help her develop this method.

Interactive social media maps

Dr Wil Chivers (Cardiff University) has been using software to collect data from social media and map online interactions. These tools, like NodeXL, COSMOS and Netlytic, allow for the collection of historic and real time data from platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. He then uses the data to investigate how people and groups organise and communicate in online spaces.

A map of Twitter conversation on the day of the McDonald's strike on 4th September 2017



Working with civil society

As well as studying civil society, WISERD has worked with organisations across the third sector and those delivering public services to help them benefit from our research.

Sharing Civil Society research at Wales' largest voluntary sector event

WISERD attended and exhibited at gofod3, a new annual event organised by Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) for those who work in the third sector. In a workshop facilitated by WISERD staff, researchers from the ESRC-funded Civil Society centre shared their latest work. Talks covered findings from research about voluntary association and belonging in two distinct and diverse communities in mid Wales, older people's involvement in volunteering, and the importance of higher education for individuals' civic engagement.



Optimising cancer care delivery in the community

WISERD researchers at the University of South Wales are supervising a PhD student funded by a Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship (KESS) with Tenovus Cancer Care. The student is developing fully open-source solutions for measuring geographical accessibility to screening and cancer support services. Tools already developed are currently being used to show how spatial analytical techniques can be used to optimise the locations of mobile cancer units run by organisations such as Tenovus.

Supporting third sector organisations to engage with the National Assembly for Wales

WISERD organised a well-attended training event to support more academics and researchers from the third sector to engage with policy-making in Wales. It brought together experts from the National Assembly for Wales who explained how, when and who to engage with in a devolved Welsh context. Speakers included a Committee Clerk, a member of the Assembly's Research Service and a member of the Assembly's Engagement team. The Wales Governance Centre's Professor Roger Awan-Scully shared his experience of giving evidence in the Assembly.



Exploring community with Local Trust

WISERD researchers at Bangor University have been asked by charity Local Trust to bring their experience of ethnographic, place-based research to help explore patterns of local participation in Big Local project areas. Each Big Local area has been allocated £1m of Lottery funding to support people to make sustainable change in their community.

PhD student placements

Through the ESRC Civil Society award, WISERD has funded PhD students to undertake placements with the WCVA, the Welsh Government's Communities and Third Sector policy team, Women in Sport and the 'Re-energising Wales' project at the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA).

Influencing policy outcomes

Recognised for their expertise in their respective fields, WISERD academics are frequently asked to help develop and evaluate public policy. In 2017, our research influenced change across the public sector.

WISERD analysis helps determine whether Welsh Government can fulfil childcare commitment

WISERD's bespoke mapping tools were used to assess whether the existing supply of childcare can cope with Welsh Government plans to provide 30 hours a week of free early education and childcare to working parents of three and four year olds.

The research and analysis was conducted by WISERD Co-Director Professor Gary Higgs and Dr Mitch Langford of the University of South Wales, together with the Welsh Government and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). By mapping and modelling the demand for childcare and current provision the work identified a mismatch between supply and demand.

Evidence gathering to inform future of Estyn

WISERD has been commissioned by Professor Graham Donaldson to undertake an independent call for evidence from stakeholders. This evidence will be used to inform Professor Donaldson's review of the implications of the Welsh Government's educational reform programme for the future role of Estyn, Wales' school inspectorate.

Welsh Assembly briefing event on dementia

WISERD Director Professor Ian Rees Jones gave a briefing on the IDEAL dementia study to Assembly Members and other stakeholders. The research explores factors that influence the possibility of living well with dementia. The project, which started in 2014, seeks to identify changes that could result in improved wellbeing and quality of life for both individuals with dementia, and those who care for them.

Developing rural policy

Work by WISERD researchers at Aberystwyth University has fed into debates on future rural policy. Co-Director Professor Michael Woods gave a presentation to the Welsh Government on issues facing rural Wales after Brexit, and advised the Rural Development Forum established by Eluned Morgan AM to propose new ideas for rural policy. Professor Woods is also contributing to the Royal Society for the Arts (RSA)'s Food, Farming and Countryside Commission.

Evaluating the Children's Commissioner's Super Ambassador scheme

Dr Rhian Barrance at Cardiff University carried out the evaluation of this scheme, which 260 primary schools in Wales signed up to in 2016/17. The scheme aims to raise awareness of children's rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) among children and professionals, as well as raising awareness of the role of the Children's Commissioner for Wales.



WISERD pilots academic fellowships with the National Assembly for Wales

Dr Alexandra Plows from Bangor University used her fellowship to work alongside the Assembly's Research Service on a scoping study to address the economy in North Wales. The pilot academic fellowship was funded by Bangor University and the ESRC's Impact Acceleration Account.

Developing research leaders

Since our foundation, a large number of researchers who worked at WISERD have gone on to make excellent contributions to research and teaching at the highest levels, and we are proud that so many have developed into independent research leaders.

Our PhD students and early career researchers benefit from unique academic and training opportunities, helping them shape and contribute to our research. Many of our talented early career researchers have been successful in bidding for competitive research funding in their own right and play an important part in their university Research Excellence Framework (REF) submissions.

WISERD researchers have been promoted to senior posts within their own institutions, or taken up new opportunities in universities across the UK and globally. Our contribution to nurturing and promoting academic leadership is reflected in the roles that many WISERD staff have moved on to as experts; contributing to policy development, managing research, mentoring early career researchers themselves and influencing debate in their respective fields.



Showcasing PhD talent at Swansea

An important objective of WISERD has been to promote capacity building in the social sciences. At Swansea University, WISERD has provided PhD scholarships and supported PhD students. Currently Swansea has six WISERD-affiliated PhD students; two of these submitted their theses in September 2017 and both now have jobs in the university sector.

Swansea's most recent cohort of PhD students started in 2017. One of them is Samuel Mann, who is researching sexual orientation and subjective wellbeing. He presented a paper at the 2017 CLOSER (Promoting Excellence in Longitudinal Research) conference at the British Library. Georgios Melios, another of the cohort whose work explores how institutions affect individual and social welfare, presented at the 21st Annual Conference of the Society of Institutional & Organizational Economics at Columbia University, New York.



Case studies

Many of our students and researchers have used the opportunities WISERD has to offer to achieve impact from their research. Here, two of them explain their achievements in their own words.

Dr Sioned Pearce

Research Associate,
Cardiff University



Sioned presenting at a WISERD-hosted 'Young People and Politics' event at the National Assembly's Pierhead Building

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I'm lucky enough to study Welsh social policy and the impact of Brexit on youth political engagement as part of the WISERD Civil Society Research Centre. For an early career researcher like me, WISERD's interdisciplinary culture and strong links with the policy, voluntary and private sectors are invaluable in helping my work develop.

The activities I've been involved with at WISERD have made me feel that the research we produce can make a real difference. I've been given the opportunity, guidance and practical help to share my findings with a wide range of policy, public, media and academic audiences, as well as publishing in academic journals. In particular I've discussed the transition of Communities First with Welsh Government officials; presented as part of a team on the generational effects of Brexit at the Hay Festival to over 250 people; and been interviewed by national media outlets on youth political engagement. I've been able to present my work at two conferences, as well as co-organising our own London-based event which saw the culmination of our methodologically-innovative research with a host of experts, young people and policy makers convening to debate the impact of the EU referendum on youth political engagement. These have all been fantastic and valuable experiences, made more so by the people I work with.

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I am a 3rd year PhD Candidate studying the implementation of Personal Carbon Allowances (PCAs). I'm fortunate enough to be awarded a grant from WISERD from Year 2. My background is as a Finance Director of SMEs, and this is my first foray into academia.

In terms of achieving impact, membership of WISERD has been crucial to my research. A presentation at last year's Annual Conference led to a conversation with Sophie Howe, Wales' Future Generations Commissioner. This in turn helped set up meetings with a number of AMs from the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee who in October 2017, led by Simon Thomas AM, proposed a cross-party motion in the Senedd requesting the Welsh Government to run and evaluate a pilot of PCAs in a region of Wales. Such a pilot would be binding on all fuel retailers in that region and therefore be a very significant initiative. The motion passed unanimously, though as an opposition motion is not binding on the government. We are nudging hopefully for action in 2018!

Undoubtedly the potential to change government policy would have been more difficult without my membership of WISERD and the access to ideas, facilities and training that it provides. I am grateful and looking to 2018 to continue to move PCAs forward.

Martin Burgess

PhD Candidate,
Aberystwyth University



Martin (right) discusses his work with Simon Thomas AM at the Senedd building

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Research networks

Each of WISERD's research networks brings together experts in a particular field to develop knowledge and understanding. They include colleagues from academia and the third sector, service providers, policymakers and others, and help widen the impact of WISERD's research.

Housing Research Network

Led by Dr Peter Mackie (Cardiff University), this network brings together researchers from academia, government, the third sector and the private sector to meet and discuss ongoing and potential research in the housing field. The interdisciplinary group meets twice a year. This year marks a step change in the activities of the network, having bid successfully to be the Welsh hub of the new ESRC-JRF-AHRC funded UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE). The hub was launched at an event in Cardiff in December 2017.

Language, Culture and Identity Research Network

This network, led by Professor Rhys Jones (Aberystwyth University), has developed in the past year to include the Revitalise project. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and working with the University of Edinburgh, it asks whether there is a need to reconsider assumptions about how to revitalise minority languages. The network held a workshop at the National Eisteddfod, an expert seminar on the Welsh Government's Welsh language bill, and a conference on the implications of Brexit on Welsh language policy.

Cultural Participation Research Network

Led by Dr Eva Elliott (Cardiff University), this new network continues to develop as a space for academics, practitioners, service providers and arts and cultural organisations to meet and discuss potential research ideas. A number of seed-corn projects have been funded spanning a range of topics. The network hosted an event at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff as part of the ESRC Festival of Social Sciences, on the topic of working class (under)representation in the arts and used performance to prompt debate on this issue.

At the ESRC Festival of Social Science event 'Class: The elephant in the room' Photo: Jon Pountney



In the media

WISERD's academics were featured regularly throughout 2017 in local, Welsh and UK-wide media. Highlights include:

- Prof Chris Taylor (Cardiff University) appeared on the BBC Breakfast programme in February discussing the implementation and impact of play-based education
- The announcement in July that the Great Western Main Line would no longer be electrified as far as Swansea saw Prof David Blackaby from Swansea University featured in the *Western Mail*, and on ITV Wales and BBC Radio Wales
- In December, Dr Scott Orford from Cardiff University contributed to a three-part series on the *You & Yours* programme for BBC Radio 4 examining the rate of empty shops on Welsh high streets
- A Brexit debate held by WISERD's Centre for Welsh Politics and Society in January saw several Aberystwyth University academics featured across BBC Radio Wales, BBC Radio Cymru, *Y Cymro* and in local media

Publications

Academic outputs from WISERD researchers include a wide range of journal articles, book chapters, reports and online resources. To see a full list, visit www.wiserd.ac.uk/publications

Blogs

WISERD researchers frequently write blogs to share their ideas and knowledge with a wider audience. 43 blogs were published online in 2017; here are some of the year's most popular posts:

Brexit: what do Millennials want out of Brexit?

One of several written as part of the ESRC-funded 'Young people and Brexit' project, this blog by Dr Stuart Fox was the most viewed in 2017.

The IDEAL study: finding strategies to live well with dementia

This blog by Dr Alexandra Hillman aims to understand the reasons why particular factors shape people's experience of living with dementia.

Remembering in Aberystwyth: Memorialisation, civil society and the importance of place

Dr Sophie Yarker examined Aberystwyth's unique way of marking Remembrance Sunday, seeing veterans joining together with peace campaigners to share the memorial ceremony.

Just how much of a problem is cyberbullying in Wales?

Dr Constantino Dumangane Jr. examined findings from the WISERD Education Multi-Cohort study to show that cyberbullying, while not experienced by the majority of pupils, was still apparent in Welsh schools.

All of WISERD's blog posts can be viewed online: www.wiserd.ac.uk/blog

A year of events

In 2017, WISERD organised 74 events across Wales and the UK, as well as attending many held by others. These events gave our academics opportunities to communicate their research to new audiences and develop new ideas.

WISERD Annual Conference 2017

Bangor University hosted Wales' largest social science conference this year, with WISERD colleagues joined by academics from a diverse range of disciplines and others with an interest in the social sciences to discuss the theme "The Decade of Disruption".



Future Generations Commissioner Sophie Howe addresses the conference

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Sophie Howe, delivered the keynote address on whether her role and the Well-being of Future Generations Act could enable disruption within public policy. Hilary Wainwright, the founding editor of Red Pepper Magazine, gave a public talk at Pontio Arts Centre on the inclusion, emergence and future of a new politics from the left.

PhD students were given opportunities to present their work, both through a Learned Society for Wales-sponsored poster competition, and three-minute presentations as part of the ESRC Wales Doctoral Training Partnership's 3MEI engagement and impact session.



Professor David Shepherd, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) of Bangor University, speaks at the conference

Centre for Welsh Politics and Society

WISERD's Centre for Welsh Politics and Society (CWPS), based at Aberystwyth University, launched in January 2017 with public engagement being a key part of its mission. The Centre held a number of events throughout the year, both in Aberystwyth and further afield.

For their St David's Day lecture, the Centre welcomed Baroness Eluned Morgan AM (now a Welsh Government minister) as their keynote speaker. She drew on her extensive experience of 15 years as an MEP to talk about Brexit and ask whether anything positive can come out of the vote to leave in June 2016.

In December, CWPS ended its launch year with a reception at the National Assembly's Pierhead Building. The event was hosted by Elin Jones AM, the Assembly's Presiding Officer, and attended by those from across Welsh civil society including government, the third sector and the media.



Baroness Eluned Morgan AM delivers the St David's Day lecture at Aberystwyth University



Llywydd Elin Jones AM at the CWPS Assembly event

'Mind the Gap' at Hay Festival

Four WISERD researchers from Cardiff University discussed the divisions between generations revealed by the 2016 EU Referendum at the 30th Hay Festival of Literature and Arts.

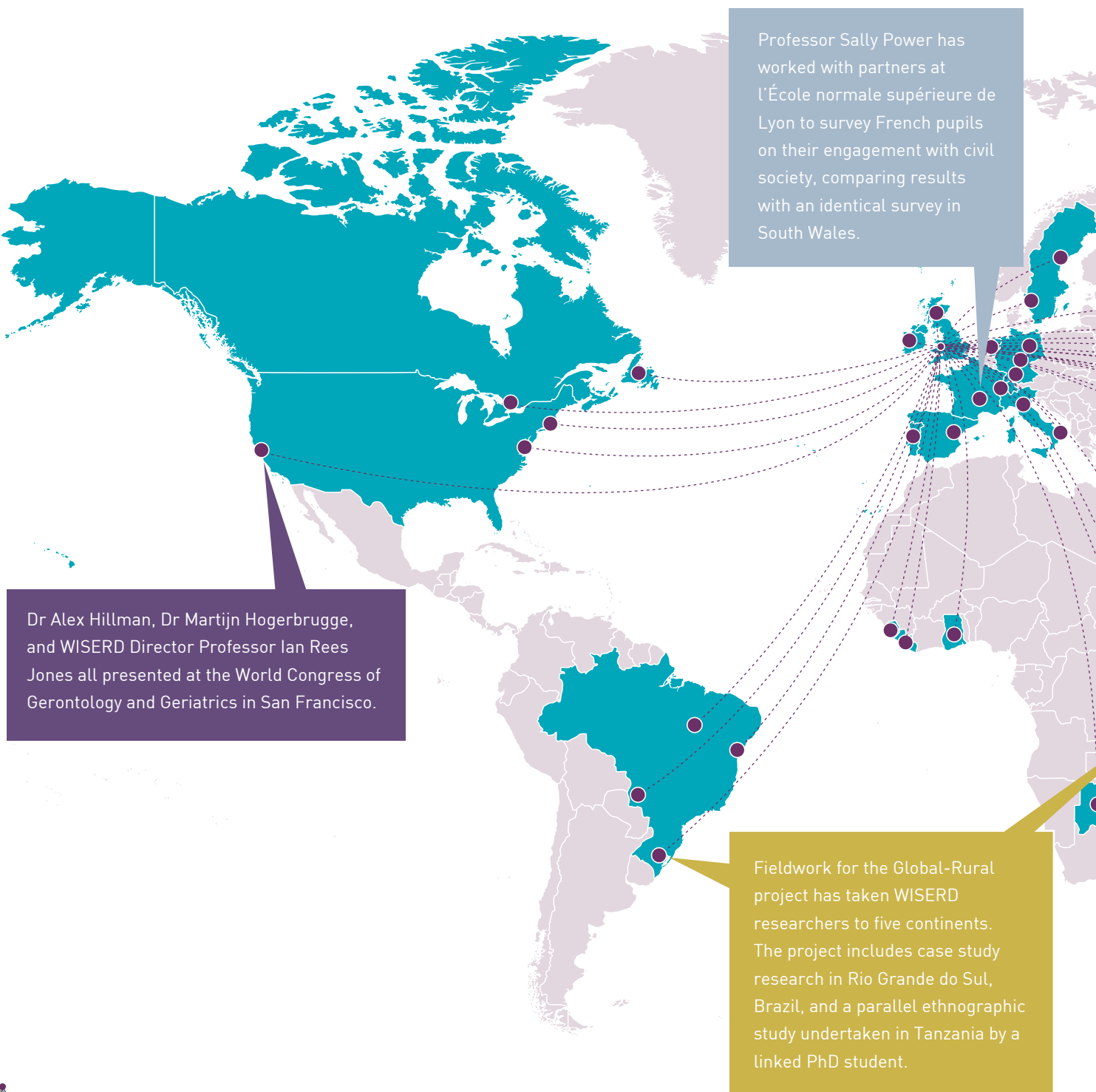
A majority of 18 to 24 year olds voted to remain in the EU, while a majority of over-65s voted to leave. Our researchers discussed how and why this divide came about. Their public talk explored differences in media consumption and sources of information, the role of family relationships in shaping social attitudes, and the role of education and schools in developing political awareness.



(L-R) Dr Stuart Fox, Dr Sioned Pearce, Dr Dan Evans and Dr Esther Muddiman. Photo: James Cook

International links

WISERD is proud to have forged links to all corners of the world through collaborative research, hosting visiting academics, attending conferences abroad and conducting fieldwork in other countries.

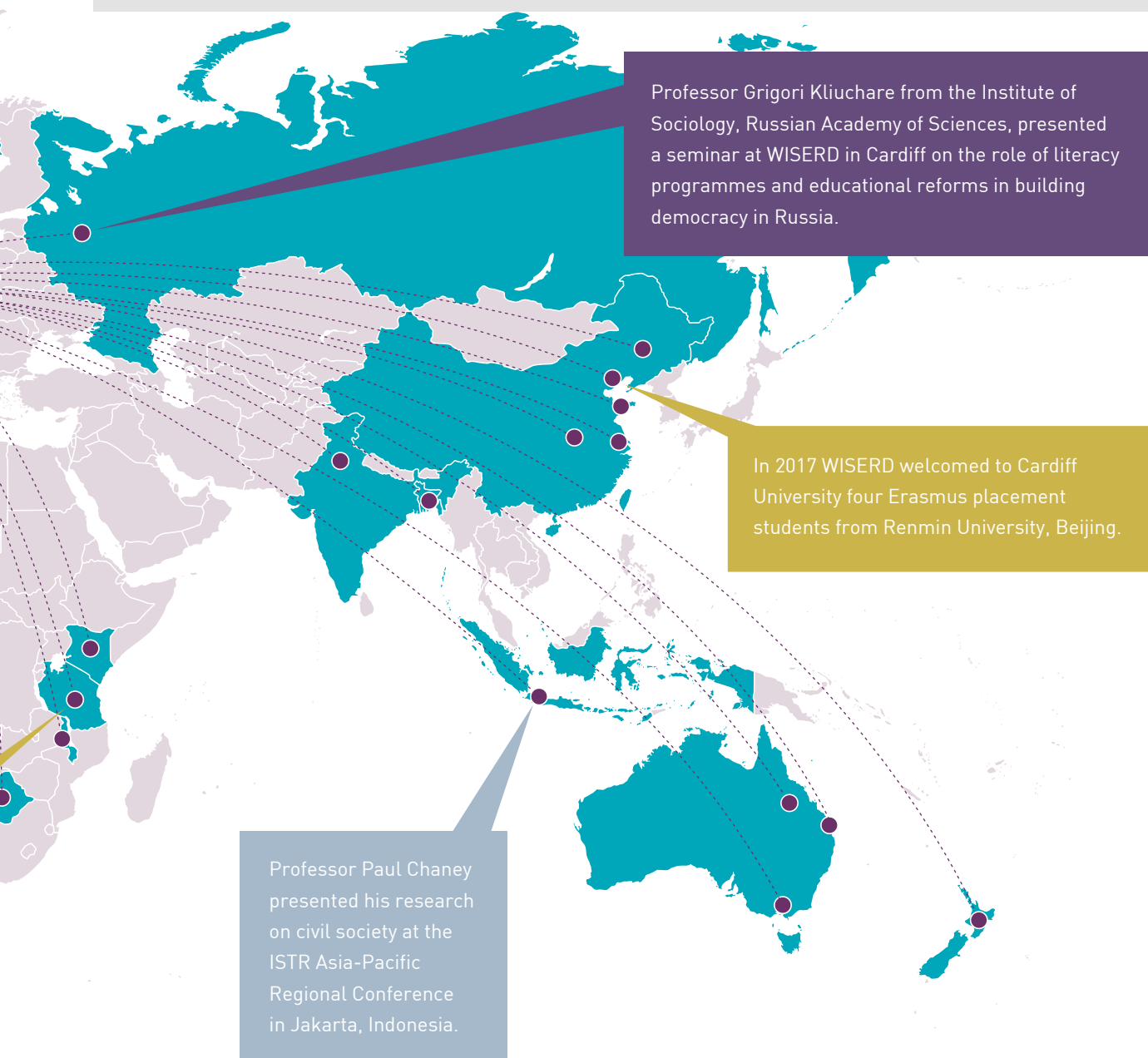


Meet our international Advisory Board members

Professor Carlo Borzaga of the University of Trento studies economic policy, and is the current chair of Euricse - the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises.

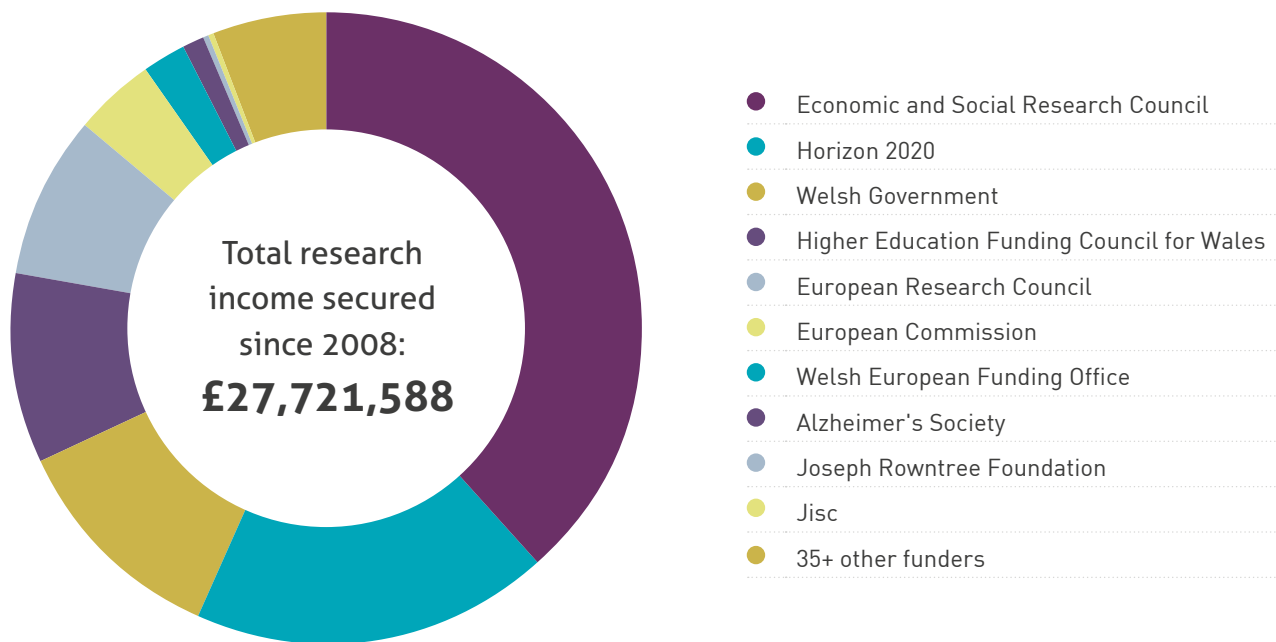
Professor Jamie Peck, Canada Research Chair in Urban and Regional Political Economy at the University of British Columbia, Canada, is a political economist working on issues relating to economic geography, urban restructuring and labour regulation.

Professor Merrill Silverstein, Marjorie Cantor Endowed Professor in Aging at Syracuse University, USA, specialises in the family, an aging population and intergenerational relations.



Income profile

WISERD has an outstanding track record of winning competitive research funding. Our wide range of funders, from research councils and universities to the Welsh Government and public bodies, helps develop our research across the social sciences.



New funding in 2017

In 2017 we secured new funding from a wide range of organisations in the public and third sectors. Many of these projects will effect change by influencing the development of policy and practice across a range of sectors.

