

WISERD NEWS

Wales Institute of Social & Economic
Research, Data & Methods



Celebrating the first year of WISERD Civil Society



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A Welcome from the WISERD Director



Professor Ian Rees Jones
WISERD Director

WISERD has seen rapid growth over the last year or so. Unsurprisingly we have suffered a few growing pains as we reorganised ourselves and, over the course of many committee meetings, finalised the collaborative agreement with 13 different Universities. Nevertheless it has also been an exciting and productive year and after a successful launch to the new WISERD Civil Society Centre we had the largest WISERD Annual Conference in Cardiff at the Millennium Stadium. The job of planning the 2016 conference in Swansea has already begun.

WISERD has reorganised its research along the themes of: Civil Society; Education; Health, Wellbeing and Social Care; Economic and Social Inequalities; Localities; and Data and Methods, and some of the research projects nested within these themes are already beginning to produce new data and early findings.

The first year of WISERD Civil Society had flown by.

WISERD Co-Directors are taking our engagement, training and capacity, and impact strategies forward with a host of events and activities planned for 2016, and our international networks and civil society collaborations are growing and offering opportunities for developing our research activities further. The prospect before us is both exciting and positive.

At such a point it is probably a good thing to be reminded that academic research is often infuriating, frustrating and full of pitfalls. For my summer reading I picked up a second hand, dog eared, copy of Wittgenstein's *Poker* by David Edmonds and John Eidinow. It was published well over a decade ago, but it is a brilliant account of a ten minute spat between Ludwig Wittgenstein and Karl Popper at a seminar of the Cambridge Moral Sciences Club in 1946; involving, or not involving a poker, depending on whom you believe. Apart from the wonderful insights into the lives of both men during the inter-war years, for me the book raised the question, whatever their intellectual differences, whether either of these great philosophers would have survived the current mode of production in academia. Wittgenstein's rate of publication, grant income, engagement, and especially his treatment of students and colleagues would, I think, in today's climate have raised more than a few eyebrows. In that light it seems to me that these days we need to think even more carefully about the different contributions that people can make to academic life.

Not everyone can be a great communicator, not everyone will be able to claim to have achieved major research impact and not everyone will be able to teach at the highest level (I hasten to add that all those 'nots' apply to me in spades).

But then again many achievements within academia occur because of the scholars and researchers who are doing good work in the background. Good research often takes years to come to fruition and that requires patience, trial and error, open discussion, and the recognition that there will be many obstacles and failures on the way. Moreover, success can be as much the result of happy accidents as much as careful planning. Looking back over the last year or so it has been wonderful to see the hard work of WISERD colleagues lead to many positive outcomes.

One of the most pleasing aspects of these successes is seeing WISERD take on many new enthusiastic and gifted research staff with a wide range of skills and research interests. I am sure that they too will have their moments of frustration but I am equally sure that as part of a diverse and friendly research culture they will make invaluable contributions to our programmes of work and produce interesting and thought provoking research. It makes all those contracts and committee meetings worthwhile.

Hwyl!



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Reflections on the 2015 Annual Conference

Professor Ian Rees Jones

From 30th June – 2nd July 2015, the 6th Annual Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods (WISERD) Conference took place at Cardiff's iconic Millennium Stadium. The WISERD Conference is the largest of its kind in Wales, and brings together practitioners, policy makers and social scientists to discuss and debate a range of topical themes such as health; social care; wellbeing; education; culture & values; environment; labour markets; devolution; and civil society.

Established as an important event in the social science calendar, academic and non-academic researchers, from a diverse range of disciplines, shared their research at the conference; an event which is a must for anyone concerned with social, economic and political issues in contemporary Wales. This year over 120 papers, posters and panel sessions were included in the programme, encompassing a wide range of topics including: the UK gender pay-gap; the future of the Welsh language in Wales; palliative care for people with dementia; labour market experiences of young people; and e-cigarette use among young people.



Anne Keane

WISERD's Director, Professor Ian Rees Jones, shares his reflections on another superb event:

The WISERD Annual Conference came and went in a whirlwind of presentations, keynote addresses and research workshops, with some opportunities to socialise and catch up with colleagues in between. We were fortunate to have wonderful weather and a great setting in the Millennium Stadium and I would like to extend my thanks again to the WISERD hub staff for all their hard work and especially to Victoria Macfarlane who has kept the show on the road for six years and is now taking up a new post at Nottingham University. We wish her well in her new role.

The conference has grown year on year and with over 200 delegates a day this year it was a privilege to be involved. I was very impressed by the excellent presentations across a range of substantive research areas and particularly by the work of the PhD students from across the WISERD Universities. I am very grateful to the Wales DTC, the Learned Society of Wales and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) for their continued support for the conference and for their

sponsorship of awards and prizes.

This year we were fortunate to have three excellent keynote speakers. Ann Keane, former HM Chief Inspector at Estyn, opened the conference with reflections on her work in Welsh education. At a time when there are increasing concerns about social mobility, Anne provided new perspectives on areas of achievement and suggested areas where improvements can still be made.

On the second day we were given fascinating and challenging insights into the research and policy concerns of the Karl Wilding, Director of Public Policy at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). Karl's speech was hugely entertaining, but he also pushed us as an academic community to think more about working with third sector organisations to produce research. I found his talk incredibly informative and it left me thinking that a critical and independent stance is more important than ever in the face of political rhetoric that attempts to divide the third sector into 'good and 'bad' charities.



**Ian Rees Jones
and Will Hutton**



After a two day heatwave Guardian columnist, writer and economist Will Hutton arrived on the conference's final day in the middle of a rainstorm. His keynote speech was based on his new book 'How Good We Can Be' and combined a forensic critique of government policies with new policy ideas and proposals that offer an alternative to the austerity agenda. Questions came thick and fast from the audience and I wish we could have had more time to discuss the many issues raised by his talk, particularly his views on the Greek crisis.

It has been a few months since the results of the Greek referendum have been announced and it would be good to have Will back to reflect on a fast moving situation. My fear is that democratic movements are increasingly threatened by the combination of global economic forces and the interests of unaccountable elites and ordinary working people are paying a terrible price. But I also believe in hope and optimism in spite of present difficulties. My optimism was buoyed by the research and scholarship presented at the WISERD Conference. Although we are only a small country on the western periphery of Europe I think we can, and do, make a difference to policy through the kind of critical social science we produce.

The 2016 Annual Conference will take place at Swansea University on the 13th and 14th July, 2016. The call for papers will open on 1st November. Please visit the WISERD website for further details: www.wiserd.ac.uk/events



Karl Wilding

Evaluating the Foundation Phase in Wales

Professor Chris Taylor

“This is a report of the very best kind, I think, because it gives policy makers and professionals tools for the next stage of the job. It’s truthful, it’s challenging, it’s not afraid to point to inconsistencies and insufficiencies within what we have, and it gives us a platform, I think, for some really focused work over the next few years.”

**Huw Lewis AM, Minister for Education and Skills, Welsh Government
Minister’s Statement on the evaluation of the Foundation Phase to
the National Assembly for Wales, 19th May 2015, Cardiff: Senedd.**

In the seminal *The Learning Country: a Paving Document* (NAfW 2001) the newly established Welsh Government set out its ambition to develop its own education policy in order ‘to get the best for Wales’. One of the most significant and ambitious policies to develop from this was the Foundation Phase – a major reform of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy for three to seven year old children in all maintained schools and funded non-maintained settings across Wales. Significant because it sets out a clear intention by the Welsh Government to establish a programme of education for all children from the age of three years (as opposed to traditional childcare). Ambitious because it has required a transformation of all areas of early years education, but most notably in terms of a distinct pedagogical approach to teaching and learning rooted in the theory of developmentally appropriate practice. The main aim of the Foundation Phase was to raise children’s standards of achievement. Implicit in this was the desire to finally ‘break’ the persistent underachievement of around 20% of children who each year do not reach the minimum expected levels of achievement at the end of primary school.

The key elements of the Foundation Phase have been:

- Seven new Areas of Learning (AoLs) – as distinct from previous traditional subjects
- New end of phase assessments (and recently a new on-entry assessment tool)
- Additional funding for schools and funded non-maintained settings to improve outdoor learning environments
- Training and support officers (TSOs) to support the training and development of early years educators
- New pedagogical guidance for practitioners; and
- Improved adult to child ratios (1:8 for three to five year olds and 1:15 for five to seven year olds) scientific merit and public benefit.

The Foundation Phase currently costs just under £100million in additional recurrent expenditure (i.e. in addition to the costs for its predecessor, Key Stage 1); an 11% increase in the national costs of primary years education. The majority of this funding has paid for the recruitment of additional practitioners to work in early years classrooms and settings, nearly doubling the number of practitioners working in the same classrooms and settings since 2004/05.

Given the scale and ambition of the Foundation Phase it might not be surprising to learn that the implementation of the reforms has taken many years.

The first implementation of the Foundation Phase in just 22 ‘pilot’ schools and 22 ‘pilot’ funded non-maintained settings began in 2004/05. But it was not until 2009/10 did all schools and funded non-maintained settings start to deliver the Foundation Phase to its new entrants. That first full cohort of children to be educated within the Foundation Phase are just about to begin their final year of primary education in September 2015. Furthermore, the Foundation Phase continues to develop with a new on-entry assessment tool and revisions to the curriculum in a number of Areas of Learning.

It is in this context that the Welsh Government awarded a significant contract to WISERD in July 2011 to undertake a three-year independent evaluation of the





Foundation Phase. Working with colleagues from four universities and each with their own disciplinary expertise we designed a detailed and equally ambitious evaluation. This involved survey responses from over 360 primary school headteachers and over 240 funded non-maintained setting providers across Wales. Interviews with key personnel in every local authority. Observations of over 3,300 children and 820 practitioners in 131 classrooms. A survey of 670 Year 2 pupils. Well over 300 interviews with headteachers, Foundation Phase teachers and additional practitioners, and Year 3 teachers. And over 1,000 survey responses from parents and carers with children currently in the Foundation Phase. Alongside the enormous amount of data that we have collected and analysed we have studied and analysed three years' worth of data from the national pupil database in Wales. This genuinely mixed methods study is probably the largest educational research study ever to be conducted in Wales and clearly demonstrates the commitment and eagerness of the Welsh Government to ensure the Foundation Phase really does 'deliver for Wales'.

In May this year the evaluation finally reported its key findings and recommendations (Taylor et al. 2015). This final report largely contains an overview of the most important observations made by the evaluation team. There are currently seventeen other reports from the evaluation published by the Welsh Government on a whole range of topics, such as management and leadership, children and families, learning outside the classroom, literacy and numeracy, the Welsh language, and findings on child involvement and wellbeing in school. All of which are freely available to access from <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/evaluation-foundation-phase>.

So what did the evaluation find? The first part of the evaluation was to try and define the Foundation Phase. The development of the materials and guidance for the Foundation Phase have largely been organic, with a strong emphasis on what the pilot schools and settings developed in the first few years of its implementation. But the origins of the Foundation Phase go much further, particularly to the early years educational practices of Scandinavia, Reggio Emilia in Northern Italy, and New Zealand (Te Whāriki). What was produced was a radical departure from the formal, competency based approach associated

with the previous Key Stage 1 National Curriculum. Instead it set out to provide an experiential, play-based approach to learning which emphasises the educational and social needs and wellbeing of the child at its centre. Consequently practitioners were encouraged to ensure there was a developmentally appropriate balance of child-initiated and practitioner-directed activities utilising a wide range of stimulating learning environments (including an overt emphasis on the outdoors).

The evaluation team identified twelve distinct pedagogical practices that we considered necessary to ensure that the Foundation

Phase was being delivered correctly. Many of these pedagogical practices would be considered by some to simply reflect 'good practice'. But then again, this is what the Foundation Phase was attempting to deliver. What is perhaps unique about the Foundation Phase is the combination

of these different pedagogical practices. But equally this has been the principal challenge of the Foundation Phase. It requires practitioners to draw upon a large range of educational theories. No longer are 'lesson plans' the main pedagogical device that practitioners can rely on. Approaches and strategies to classroom and behaviour management have had to be re-written and re-learned. 'Subjects' and 'skills' can no longer be delivered in stand-alone segments, instead they have to be embedded within broader educational topics and themes.

This has put enormous pressure on practitioners, many of whom do not have the experience, expertise or training to support them. We saw this in numerous schools, classrooms and settings across Wales. Even in some of the more successful Foundation Phase schools there is scope to still go further. As a result, and as Huw Lewis AM, Minister for Education and Skills, himself said in the Senedd on the 19th May,

"the key disappointment within this report—and I fully accept it—is inconsistency across the country; the failure, perhaps, of some professionals to fully grasp or fully embrace, or a combination of the two, the foundation phase in terms of its implementation".

A large number of our 29 recommendations in the final report therefore focus on the training and development needs of practitioners to ensure that the Foundation Phase can continue to be implemented fully.

Unfortunately, this is not going to be easy or straightforward. The most important obstacle to getting consistency in the implementation of the Foundation Phase across all early years settings and schools is that of standards. Whilst the Welsh Government has been trying to encourage a new and relatively progressive approach

to teaching and learning it has also spent the last six years adopting and strongly promoting a standards agenda to address an apparent 'crisis' in Welsh education. Irrespective of the rights and wrongs of that standards agenda (see Rees and Taylor 2014 for more on this) it has had an important impact on the Foundation Phase.

One direct and explicit impact has been the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) and associated national test, beginning with Foundation Phase pupils in Year 2 (age 6/7 years). In the final evaluation report we acknowledge the theoretical tension between the Foundation Phase and the Literacy and Numeracy Framework but argued that this existed in the original design of the Foundation Phase. That is, how an approach that incorporates constructivist theories of learning – where pupil development is essentially linear but not tied to chronological age – can be integrated within a statutory curriculum that continued to emphasise the development of key skills by a certain age?

The other more indirect impact of the standards agenda on the Foundation Phase has been the considerable reluctance by some practitioners to 'let go' of their control in ensuring their pupils acquire key skills. This has been particularly the case in schools and settings with children who struggle with their self-regulation and inattention. The concern amongst these practitioners is largely that an experiential, child-initiated approach to learning will only hinder these pupils' progress further, which will then have a knock-on effect on their later attainment (and, importantly too, the schools' performance measures).

Despite these concerns, the evaluation finds that (a) pupils who experienced the Foundation Phase during its 'pilot' years have gone on to do better than we would have expected at the end of primary school (end of Key Stage 2) and (b) pupils attending schools that appear to have implemented the Foundation Phase more fully are more likely to achieve expected outcomes by the age of seven (at the end of the Foundation Phase). These sets of results should allay any fears or concerns amongst the

remaining practitioners, that the Foundation Phase and its associated 'progressive' pedagogies can help pupils achieve in school. However, there remains one critical blemish to the Foundation Phase that could hinder universal implementation. Although we found a significant association between the Foundation Phase and improved educational attainment, the evaluation also found that some groups of pupils appeared to benefit more from the Foundation Phase than others. Unfortunately these are not the groups of pupils most associated with underachievement in schools. Instead of benefitting, for example, male socio-economically disadvantaged pupils, the Foundation Phase seems to be associated with greater educational attainment amongst female socio-economically advantaged pupils. Perhaps of even more concern was the misapprehension by over half of practitioners we surveyed who thought that the Foundation Phase had reduced inequalities in educational achievement.

So has the Foundation Phase been worthwhile? This is a difficult question to answer, since the curriculum and pedagogy of any education system ought to change, just as the needs and challenges of society change. It would be very hard to find an education policy in Wales that has been met with more support and encouragement amongst practitioners and parents. Indeed, in the major 2015 'Donaldson Review' of the curriculum and assessment in Wales (Successful Futures: Independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales) the most frequently mentioned 'best thing' about education in Wales in the 'call for evidence' was the Foundation Phase.

Although the Foundation Phase is associated with higher levels of educational attainment on average, attainment is not the only benefit of the Foundation Phase. For example, we observed greater levels of pupil wellbeing in classes and greater involvement amongst pupils in their learning where the Foundation Phase was being implemented more fully. These positive outcomes are notoriously hard to measure, and it may take many more

years before we know what kind of impact they will have on children's attainment, aspirations and later enjoyment of learning. Also, one of the major benefits of early interventions is that even small benefits early on in a child's life could lead to major benefits later. In the final report we estimate that the knock-on benefits of improvements in Key Stage 2 outcomes could lead to an additional £1,008 per annum in earnings on average per pupil. On this basis alone it would only take three years of additional earnings to match the additional cost of the Foundation Phase per pupil. So although an 11% increase in the cost of primary education might seem expensive the cumulative benefits of the Foundation Phase may in many years make this look insignificant.

Of course, this can only be conjecture. Critically, any benefits to pupils as a result of the Foundation Phase are also dependent upon continued support after they leave the Foundation Phase. Failure to build upon this could prove very costly. This is where the recommendations from the Donaldson review of the school curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales is incredibly important. The main proposals to replace Key Stages with 'progression steps', to continue the shift away from 'subjects' to 'areas of learning' in the curriculum, and to embed literacy, numeracy and digital competence across the curriculum, are all commensurate with the design of the Foundation Phase. However, if there is one lesson to be learnt from the Foundation Phase it is that to radically alter the

curriculum and pedagogy for teaching and learning across all primary and secondary schools is not going to be easy, and could take significantly longer than the eleven or more years it has taken the Foundation Phase to get where we are today.

Rees, G. and Taylor, C. (2014) **Is there a 'crisis' in Welsh education?**, Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 20, 97-113.

Taylor, C., Maynard, T., Davies, R., Waldron, S. Rhys, M., Power, S., Moore, L., Blackaby, D. and Plewis, I. (2015) **Evaluating the Foundation Phase: Final Report**, Social Research No. 25/2015, Cardiff: Welsh Government



Exploring the Global Countryside

Professor Michael Woods and Dr Jesse Heley

When most people think of globalization the image that comes to mind is of a global city such as New York, London or Tokyo. Yet, rural areas around the world are increasingly being tied into global network, with transformative consequences for rural people, cultures and environments. Many key global commodities – from food to rare metals – come from rural locations, and the reconfiguration of commodity chains, liberalization of international trade and growth of transnational corporations have all contributed to reshaping rural places, along with the intensified mobility of migrants and tourists, the integration of global communications, and the spread of globalized culture. However, the rural dimensions and experiences of globalization have been relatively marginalized in research in favour of urban-focused studies.

WISERD researchers are now addressing this oversight with the largest-ever study of globalization in a rural context, funded by a 2.23 million Euro Advanced Grant from the European Research Council. The five-year GLOBAL-RURAL project, which started last year, is led by WISERD Co-Director Professor Michael Woods, with the Aberystwyth University-based team including co-investigator Dr Jesse Heley, post-doc researchers Dr Laura Jones, Dr Anthonia Onyiahialam and Dr Marc Welsh, and project administrator Dr Rachel Vaughan.

GLOBAL-RURAL aims to understand the processes through which rural localities become engaged in globalization and how they change as a result. Drawing on the conceptual framework of 'assemblage theory' it sees globalization as complex phenomenon involving the stretching, intensification and reconfiguration of multiple relations between places, and thus emphasizes the micro-dynamics through which these relations are produced, contested and reproduced to form an emergent 'global countryside'. From this perspective, globalization is not a domineering top-down force against which rural localities are helpless, but rather is an open process in which local actors can make a difference. As such, GLOBAL-RURAL intends to identify practical conclusions that can inform policy-making for rural development.

To get a global perspective, the project involves a number of case studies in different parts of the world. Work so far

has included analyses of a sugar mill closure in Australia, and a study of Chinese farmers in late 19th and early 20th century northern Queensland as a parallel with contemporary debates over immigration in rural areas. Over the next few months, research will examine the legacy of Foreign Direct Investment in western Ireland, the sizeable Brazilian community in the Irish small town of Gort, and how the New Zealand wine industry has been created through the mixing of local and global, and human and non-human, components. Later research will include work in Brazil, Canada, China, Spain and Sweden, as well as two PhD students working in Africa.

An important element of the GLOBAL-RURAL project, however, is focused closer to home in Wales, with an in-depth study of 'everyday globalization' in Newtown, Powys. Whereas much previous work on globalization has focused on high-profile dramatic changes, this part of the study is concerned with how globalization has affected everyday life in a typical small town, exploring questions about the food we eat, consumer goods we buy, places we holiday, music we listen to, sports we follow, companies we work for and so on. This strand of the research, being undertaken primarily by Jesse Heley, Laura Jones and Marc Welsh, uses mixed methods to assemble a rich body of information and encourages the active participation of local people in the research, including in some innovative research techniques. Already the study has revealed the hidden global connections of local businesses in the town, tracing Newtown-made products to the record-breaking climb of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park and to a research base in Antarctica.

Another important component of the GLOBAL-RURAL project is the mapping and visualization of data using GIS. This work, led by Anthonia Onyiahialam, aims to construct and illustrate 'narratives' that connect global-scale trends to examples of local impacts and responses. These will be made available to the public through an interactive website, forming a valuable resource for students, schools, policy-makers, NGOs and others interested in understanding how globalization affects rural areas and how rural people can respond.

In the meantime, the ongoing GLOBAL-RURAL research can be followed on the project blog, www.globalruralproject.wordpress.com and on the Twitter handle @globalrural.



The Global Rural Team.
L - R: Dr Anthonia Onyiahialam, Dr Jesse Heley, Professor Michael Woods, Dr Laura Jones, and Dr Marc Welsh

Migrants, Minorities and Engagement in Local Civil Society

Dr Rhys Dafydd Jones, Professor Stephen Drinkwater,
Dr Andy Thompson, and Dr Taulant Guma

Following the expansion of the European Union in 2004, the resultant immigration from the eight central and eastern European countries (the A8) to the UK constitute one of the largest and most significant flows of immigration in the country's history. While previous studies have tended to focus on economic and identity-based dimensions of immigration from Poland and other accession countries, this project explores how immigrants from these countries contribute to civil society in Wales.

The aim of this research, which commences in January 2016, is to examine the nature of A8 migrants' participation in local civil societies, their motivations for participating, and how this relates to emotive connections with particular places, such as senses of belonging. This research project has four central research questions:

- 1) How are A8 migrants involved with civil society?
- 2) How do A8 migrants' involvements relate to senses of belonging in particular localities?
- 3) How do A8 migrants' involvements align with notions of 'good relations' of social cohesion?
- 4) How do A8 migrants experience belonging in Wales as a distinct part of the UK?

Taken together, these research questions allow for the exploration of the varying roles that A8 migrants play in civil society, how these differences are influenced by particular factors, and how these activities are concerned with ideas of belonging in 'host societies'. Furthermore, the project investigates the potential of civil society for encounters that foster 'good relations' and, subsequently, social cohesion between (transient) migrants and longer-standing residents. Such inquiries have the potential to shed new light on the ways integration, settlement, and migration entwine over time and space.

This work package primarily involves qualitative analysis of A8 migrants' connections with local civil societies. Unlike previous waves of immigrants

and diasporic communities, post-2004 A8 immigration is not confined to larger metropolitan settlements. Many A8 immigrants work in agriculture and leisure and hospitality, and live and work in a variety of areas. This research focusses on four case study sites: an urban setting, a semi-rural market-town setting, a 'deeper' rural setting, and a coastal resort setting. These different case studies also allow examination of interactions with civil society in areas where immigrants have traditionally faced socio-cultural isolation, and may place more emphasis on civil society for networking purposes. This work package involves semi-structured interviews with around 20 respondents in each of the four case study sites. These semi-structured interviews are particularly appropriate in understanding the motivations and participation of migrants in civil society.

As well as linking with the qualitative aspect of the work package, from the perspective of providing a statistical background for the detailed interviews that will take place at several locations in Wales, this work package also contains a more stand-alone quantitative element. This involves some detailed statistical analysis of large-scale secondary data sources that include information on migrants and civic participation. The first of these data sources is Understanding Society, which is a comprehensive longitudinal survey of UK households that asks a range of questions on civic participation in the third wave of interviews. Some of the analysis will take place at the UK level but a more disaggregated approach will be applied

where the data permit. Key issues to be considered include the extent to which civic participation varies by migrants from different countries as well as according to the type of activity/membership. Variations across the UK will also be investigated, focusing in particular on how Wales compares to English regions, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Specific migration-related influences such as the amount of time that respondents have been resident in the UK will also be examined.

Other data sources containing appropriate information on the civic participation of migrants to the UK will also form part of the quantitative analysis. This is likely to include the Citizenship Survey, which was carried out in England and Wales between 2001 and 2011. Similar analysis to that outlined above for Understanding Society is planned but the availability of data from the Citizenship Survey allows for a more dynamic picture of civic participation of migrants in England and Wales to be developed. This is especially important in the context of examining the changing behaviour of migrants given the far higher levels of migration to the UK that have been observed over the last couple of decades. This particularly relates to the migration that followed EU enlargement in 2004 given that people from Poland and other new member states from Central and Eastern Europe have moved to virtually all parts of England and Wales, including to more rural areas.

Economic Austerity and Older Volunteers

Professor Sally Power, Professor Irene Hardill,
and Nick Ockenden

In recent years the political, economic and social climate in which volunteering by older adults occurs has changed significantly, with the onset of an economic downturn, concern about pensions, a change in the public policy context for volunteering following a change of government, and the abolition of default retirement age.

The notion of 'unretirement' is being used to capture the new reality of older people. In this seminar we wish to critically explore the constraints and facilitators of volunteering amongst older people. Specifically: what constrains/enables older people to volunteer; how this impacts on organisations that rely on older volunteers; how this impacts on the social isolation of older people; and are organisations ready for what could be a considerable change in the supply and availability of older volunteers?

On March 17th 2015 WISERD Civil Society, Cardiff University, hosted a seminar on the impact of economic austerity on the lives of older volunteers (people aged 50+ years). It was attended by academics, policy makers and practitioners from three of the four UK jurisdictions: Wales, Northern Ireland and England. Across the three jurisdictions the policy contexts towards volunteering and the voluntary and community sector are very different, including policies to promote volunteering across all age groups. In recent years the political, economic and social climate in which volunteering by older adults occurs has changed significantly.

As WISERD are just embarking on their Civil Society projects, this seminar provided a really useful and fascinating range of contributions which sparked off a number of ideas amongst those of us lucky enough to be there.

Each of the presentations was informative and each raised particular issues for those of us working on the *Theme of Generations, Life Course and Social Participation*.

Professor Maurice Stringer from Ulster University presented findings from the

'Unlocking Potential Project' funded by Atlantic Philanthropies he undertook with colleagues. The focus of their project was the relationship between ageing and health in Northern Ireland, and he highlighted the positive impact volunteering has on the health and wellbeing of older adults. They did find that some older volunteers had less time to devote to volunteering because family members needed more help, for example, some were devoting more time to caring for grandchildren because of childcare costs.

Professor Stringer's research may have particular significance for us in Wales. Northern Ireland, like Wales, has experienced the worst effects of the recession and the smaller proportion of the working population will be supporting the retirement funds of an increasing number of older people.

The data, derived from four sweeps over 5 years, highlights some of the benefits of volunteering. The respondents report a number of benefits in volunteering and the evidence suggests that it may reduce relative declines in physical and psychological health associated with ageing.

For our project we are also particularly interested in the extent to which volunteers and volunteering more generally involves working across the generation. It would appear that there are some interesting undercurrents. There is some evidence from the Northern Ireland project to suggest austerity has put older people

under increasing obligations to undertake childcare – other the expense of more formal volunteering activities.

The second speaker, Dr Eddy Hogg from the University of Kent, drew on his PhD (an ESRC collaborative studentship with AgeUK) where he worked with older volunteers from a range of organisations to understand their volunteering journeys from a life course perspective, including how retirement can act as a 'trigger' or catalyst pushing people to volunteer. He concluded that the deep impacts of austerity on active older people are yet to hit, and that the ways in which older adults come to volunteer are, to some extent, austerity proof. But some organisations are changing in terms of how they work, but thus far volunteers appear to be happy to ride with the changes if they see the sense in them.

In the discussion afterwards questions were raised in connection with Dr Hogg's presentation regarding the relationship between geographic mobility and volunteering. Dr Hogg's respondents often spoke of the significance of being embedded in their community in order to participate in volunteering. However, there is also some evidence (which will be explored more fully in the WISERD Civil Society projects) – that moving into a new area provides an incentive for newcomers to volunteers as a means to embed themselves. This is likely to be particularly marked in parts of Wales which attract 'retirees', such as Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

Bryan Collis and Fiona Liddell of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) examined the situation in Wales, looking at supply and demand side factors, and concluded that social changes are probably greater than austerity effects. The effects of austerity on older volunteers are probably the result of changes in



other areas, such as tax credits and the effects of austerity on their extended family, including children. Moreover the changes in the retirement transition can be both positive and negative, and that organisations need to adapt to changes in volunteer availability and demands.

They provided a very insightful analysis of the current challenges facing volunteers and third sector organisations. They argued that demographic issues may be more significant than austerity. In particular, they highlighted a number of 'supply side' issues. For example, the motivations for volunteering appear to change with age. Those over 70 years old tend to volunteer from a sense of duty and a commitment to community, those in the 50-70 age range, are more interested in volunteering to take use their professional skills. The younger volunteers (30-50) appear to be less altruistic and more motivated by how volunteering may benefit their own futures.

In terms of Stebbins' typology of volunteering, older people fall into the 'unpaid service' category, whereas younger people tend to engage in volunteering that can be classified as 'serious leisure' and 'activism'. Economic pressures are also affecting the 'supply' of volunteers as the pressures on free time increase as a result of having to work longer to augment pensions and caring responsibilities. Given the high incidence of 'grandparenting' in Wales this is something which may be particularly significant for our research.

The afternoon finished with Rebecca Stewart's presentation on volunteer 'enablers'. Rebecca is the Head of Volunteering at Age UK, whose work is supported by 75,000 volunteers. Rebecca focused on a Grundtvig Learning Partnership project to engage people aged over 75 years.

The key messages from this project is that the environment in which the volunteering takes place may need to change, including the management of volunteers; more flexible opportunities and with a local focus, and this will improve retention rates.

Using data from the Cabinet Office Community Life survey, she indicated that in while in England there were high levels of volunteering (involving 50% of population), levels have dropped in the last with years. She argued that the voluntary sector may need to change its approach from developing activities that suit organisations to those which match the needs of its volunteer 'customers'. Unfortunately, the Community Life survey does not include Wales, but hopefully the primary data that we collect we throw light on some of these issues.

Three aspects of the discussion stood out: firstly what exactly is the impact of austerity on volunteers and the voluntary and community sector, and how austerity is being felt across the three jurisdictions. We concluded that for older people who volunteer austerity has several dimensions, and we haven't seen the full scale of impacts yet, these are likely to become manifest now the general election is over. The impacts on older people thus far have largely been indirect and felt by extended family members, but may reduce the capacity of older adults to volunteer as they need to devote more time caring for relatives (grandchildren, parents).

The general funding changes in the sector with the move from grants to commissioning prioritises the unpaid

work model of volunteering, with the trend to 'professionalise' volunteering. As a result some organisations are changing in terms of how they work with volunteering is becoming more 'work-like'. The environment in which volunteering takes place is vitally important for volunteer retention, and in order to provide attractive, flexible, volunteering roles and opportunities for people of any age (and perhaps especially older people) investment will be needed in volunteer management and volunteer infrastructures.

Finally older adults include people over 50 years of age; they are not one generation, indeed include up to three generations. The lives of the baby boomers have been shaped by the post war Welfare State, more women baby boomers have maintained a deeper commitment to paid work than previous generations; and if professional, these baby boomers are likely to have a more generous pension. Therefore for older adults volunteering can have many meanings, and fulfil different roles, and these need to be recognised and accommodated by the sector.



at the Eisteddfod

Dr Sioned Pearce

As part of its continuing commitment to public engagement, WISERD was delighted to attend the Welsh National Eisteddfod, which is an annual celebration of Welsh language and culture, attracting over 160,000 visitors a year.

Dr Sioned Pearce, a Research Associate with WISERD, was invited to present her research to the 'Maes', and shares her experience of the event below:

This year I was delighted to be invited to take part in the Welsh National Eisteddfod. During my first day on the 'Maes' I took part in a debate panel, organised by the National Assembly for Wales, to discuss results from research carried out by Dame Rosemary Butler's Office as part of the Children and Young People Engagement Charter. The results from over ten thousand young people aged between 11 and 25 in Wales gauged opinions on voting, electoral processes and youth participation in politics.

The debate panel included myself, Helen Mary Jones (Chief Executive of Youth Cymru), Christian Webb (Chair of Llais Ifanc), and Dr Non Gwilym (Head of Communications at the National Assembly for Wales). My role was to add findings from WISERD research on young people and politics carried out before the general election in May (see further reading).

Dr Gwilym opened with the results of the survey, including the finding that 53% of 11-25 year olds want the voting age to be lowered to 16 (see further reading). Helen Mary Jones put forward interesting insights linking the findings with the recently published Donaldson Review and the importance of political education in Wales. Christian Webb echoed these sentiments and advocated involving young people in wider debates rather than discussions on issues affecting young people only.

Considering the St David's Day Agreement and its pledge to give the National Assembly for Wales powers to change the voting age, this issue is particularly relevant in the run-up to the Welsh Assembly elections (although any change would not come into effect until the 2020 elections).

A few days later I presented the full results of our study, at the Cardiff University stand. As part of a wider WISERD Education longitudinal study, funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales running since 2012, we asked around two hundred 16 and 17 year olds in Wales for their opinion on politics, and found a potentially contradictory picture between engagement and attitude. Having secured a small amount of funding to drill down into this data, we carried out four focus groups in Wales and England during July 2015. Preliminary qualitative findings consistently show politically aware and engaged young people with considerable variation in opinions on votes at 16, devolution, and EU membership. We are currently analysing this data for publication.

Finally, I took part in a panel debate on Innovation in Research as part of the launch of Y Lab, a collaborative project by Cardiff University and Nesta, working with the Welsh Government. Y Lab will research and pilot potential solutions to public

service challenges in Wales. The debate panel consisted of myself, Adam Price (Senior Programme Manager, Innovation Lab, Nesta), Ifan Evans (Deputy Director, Healthcare Innovation, Welsh Government), and was chaired by Professor Richard Wyn Jones (Professor of Welsh Politics, Cardiff University). The debate covered all aspects and potential challenges of using innovation to transform the culture of public service delivery in Wales and highlighted interesting and exciting opportunities through Y Lab in the future.

Further reading:

Should the voting age be lowered to 16?
<http://bit.ly/1Kg6eT6>

Politically Engaged but Unrepresented? Attitudes to Politics Among the Voters of Tomorrow
<http://bit.ly/1xaDpVw>



L - R: Professor Richard Wyn Jones, Dr Sioned Pearce, Ifan Evans, and Adam Price

yn yr Eisteddfod

Dr Sioned Pearce

Fel rhan o ymrwymiad parhaus WISERD i ymgysylltu â'r cyhoedd, roeddem wrth ein bodd yn cael mynd i'r Eisteddfod Genedlaethol ym Meifod eleni, dathliad blynyddol o iaith a diwylliant Cymru sy'n denu dros 160,000 o ymwelwyr bob blwyddyn.

Gwahoddwyd Dr Sioned Pearce, Cydymaith Ymchwil gyda WISERD, i gyflwyno ei hymchwil ar y Maes. Mae'n rhannu ei phrofiadau o'r digwyddiad isod:

Roeddwn i'n falch iawn o gael fy ngwahodd i gymryd rhan yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol ym Meifod eleni. Yn ystod fy niwrnod cyntaf ar y Maes fe gymerais i ran mewn trafodaeth banel, wedi'i threfnu gan y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol, i drafod canlyniadau ymchwil gan Swyddfa'r Fonesig Rosemary Butler fel rhan o'r Siarter Ymgysylltu â Phlant a Phobl Ifanc. Roedd y canlyniadau gan dros ddeng mil o bobl ifanc yng Nghymru rhwng 11 a 25 oed yn casglu eu barn ar bleidleisio, prosesau etholiadol a chyfranogiad pobl ifanc mewn gwleidyddiaeth.

Ar banel y drafodaeth ei hunan roeddwn i, Helen Mary Jones (Prif Weithredwr Youth Cymru), Christian Webb (Cadeirydd Llais Ifanc), a Dr Non Gwilym (Pennaeth Cyfathrebu yn y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol). Fy swyddogaeth i oedd ychwanegu canfyddiadau o ymchwil WISERD ar bobl ifanc a gwleidyddiaeth oedd wedi ei gynnal cyn yr etholiad cyffredinol ym mis Mai (gweler darllen pellach).

Agorodd Dr Gwilym gyda chanlyniadau'r arolwg, gan gynnwys y canfyddiad bod 53% o bobl ifanc 11-25 oed eisiau gweld gostwng yr oedran pleidleisio i 16 (gweler darllen pellach). Cyflwynodd Helen Mary Jones syniadau difyr yn cysylltu'r canfyddiadau gydag adroddiad Adolygiad Donaldson a gyhoeddwyd yn ddiweddar a phwysigrwyd addysg wleidyddol yng Nghymru. Adleisiodd Christian Webb y syniadau yma a dadlau dros gynnwys pobl ifanc mewn trafodaethau ehangach na dim ond trafodaethau ar faterion sy'n effeithio ar bobl ifanc yn benodol.

O ystyried Cytundeb Dydd Gŵyl Dewi a'r addewid i roi grymoedd i'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol i newid yr oedran pleidleisio, mae'r mater yma yn arbennig o berthnasol yn y cyfnod yn arwain at etholiadau'r Cynulliad (er na fyddai unrhyw newid yn dod i rym tan etholiadau 2020).

Ychydig ddyddiau yn ddiweddarach fe fues i'n cyflwyno canlyniadau llawn ein



Early morning on the Maes.

hastudiaeth ar stondin Prifysgol Caerdydd. Fel rhan o astudiaeth hydredol ehangach Addysg WISERD, a ariannwyd gan Gyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru ac sy'n rhedeg ers 2012, fe ofynnwn ni i ryw ddau gant o bobl ifanc 16 ac 17 oed yng Nghymru am eu barn ar wleidyddiaeth, a dod o hyd i ddarlun sy'n croes-ddweud o bosibl rhwng ymgysylltu ac agwedd. Ar ôl sicrhau swm bach o arian er mwyn ymchwilio ymhellach i'r data yma, fe gynhalion ni bedwar grŵp ffocws yng Nghymru a Lloegr yn ystod mis Gorffennaf 2015. Mae canfyddiadau ansoddol cychwynnol yn dangos yn gyson bod gan bobl ifanc ymwybyddiaeth a diddordeb mewn gwleidyddiaeth ac amrywiaeth sylweddol o farn ar bleidleisio yn 16 oed, datganoli ac aelodaeth o'r Undeb Ewropeaidd. Ar hyn o bryd rydyn ni'n dadansoddi'r data yma i'w gyhoeddi.

Yn olaf, fe gymerais i ran mewn trafodaeth banel ar Arloesi mewn Ymchwil fel rhan o lansiad Y Lab, prosiect cydweithredol gan Brifysgol Caerdydd a Nesta, yn gweithio gyda Llywodraeth Cymru. Bydd y Lab yn ymchwilio ac yn peilota atebion posibl i heriau gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yng Nghymru.

Ar y panel roeddwn i, Adam Price (Uwch Reolwr Prosiect, Lab Arloesi, Nesta), Ifan Evans (Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr, Arloesi Gofal Iechyd, Llywodraeth Cymru), a'r cadeirydd oedd yr Athro Richard Wyn Jones (Athro Gwleidyddiaeth Cymru, Prifysgol Caerdydd). Roedd y drafodaeth yn cynnwys pob agwedd ar ddefnyddio arloesi er mwyn gweddnewid diwylliant darparu gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yng Nghymru, gan gynnwys yr heriau posibl, ac fe dynnodd sylw at gyfleoedd difyr a chyffrous drwy'r Lab yn y dyfodol.

Darllen pellach:

A ddylid gostwng yr oedran pleidleisio i 16?
<http://bit.ly/1YOab9i>

Politically Engaged but Unrepresented?
Attitudes to Politics Among the Voters of Tomorrow
<http://bit.ly/1xaDpVw>

The “Ends” or the “Means”?

What Lessons can Education Research teach Pedagogical Practice?

Dr Kevin Smith

On July 6th, Cardiff University hosted the Welsh Baccalaureate Conference. This event was developed through a partnership between the Welsh Government, the WJEC and Cardiff University research staff. The aim of the conference was to engage secondary and further education teachers with some of the ins-and-outs of conducting research, with a particular focus given to enabling them to better assist their students in successfully completing the Individual Project Challenge in the new Welsh Baccalaureate design.

The Individual Project Challenge is a new component of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification. Previously, students were required to conduct individual research within a narrowly defined set of criteria. However, this new approach grants students and teachers greater opportunities to learn across a number of topics utilising various approaches to conducting research. Unfortunately, with new approaches to inquiry and knowledge production, come new challenges in teaching, conducting and assessing student research.

The recent publication of the ‘Furlong Report’ highlighted deficiencies in initial teacher education in Wales, with many of those deficiencies involving teachers not receiving adequate training and exposure to research methods and evidence. These concerns are echoed by many teachers currently teaching in schools in Wales. For example, prior to the conference, attendees provided the organisers with a list of concerns for engaging with the new Welsh Baccalaureate curriculum. They were asking for new insights into teaching critical thinking and problem solving skills, as well as research methods, strategies for organising and planning research, and analytical approaches and access to data. The teachers’ concerns regarding their ability to confidently deliver the Welsh Baccalaureate curriculum highlight the importance of teachers’ engagement with research, data and methods. Through the WISERD Education study, we have collected data regarding how teachers perceive research and educational research in particular. We are curious as to how teachers’ perceptions of research might influence their use of research as a means to improve their pedagogical practice.

In 2014, we asked over 213 teachers in schools across Wales how useful they felt research and research-related activities were in improving their practice. The results in the following table show teachers find reflecting on their own practice as the most useful research-related activity for improving their practice. According to our results, one in every five teachers indicated they had no experience in undertaking their own enquiry or research, and nearly the same number had no experience of using other people’s research. In regard to usefulness, two-thirds of the teachers in our study found doing their own research, or using existing research evidence, useful in improving their teaching.

It is not surprising many of the teachers attending the Welsh Baccalaureate conference were concerned with how to teach their students about research. Our results suggest a possible disconnect between teachers’ training and everyday practice, and the role of research as a pedagogical tool in schools in Wales. We also asked teachers if they knew where to find relevant research and if they were able to use and understand the evidence they had found. Nearly 75% of our respondents said they knew where to find research, but only just over two-thirds (67.5%) indicated they were able to understand it.

We also asked teachers how frequently they conducted ‘action research’ at their schools. Of the 198 responses, 14.6% said they do some form of action research frequently. The majority of teachers (63.6%) said they had not undertaken action research in the last 12 months. We also asked teachers if their school encouraged them to conduct research and if they had opportunities to discuss research evidence with their colleagues.

Overall, we found the majority of teachers in our study are not engaging in research

that could improve their pedagogical practice, but we still don’t know why. Less than half of the teachers we surveyed said their school encourages them to use research evidence, and over one-third of our respondents indicated they did not have time to use research evidence in their teaching. So, the context and circumstances of teaching are an important area of concern. Equally important, the ways in which schools are monitored and assessed needs to be examined. If there is a focus on overall pupil attainment and qualifications at a school, rather than the micro-level quality of teaching (and teacher preparation), then schooling may be organised more around a particular outcome — the “ends” and not necessarily “the means” through which these ends are attained. This kind of instrumentalisation could over-emphasise particular elements of schooling that are sympathetic to discourses of inspection and evaluation, while occluding areas of teaching and learning that don’t align to these discursive organisers, but still contribute to the holistic health and overall efficacy of educational activity at a school.

As mentioned above, the Furlong Report indicated that more work was needed in preparing classroom teachers to engage in understanding and conducting educational research. As the redesign of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification requires students to engage more rigorously with critical thinking skills and approaches to research, it is unsurprising (yet encouraging) that teachers are asking for better preparation and more resources to enable them to help their students succeed in their Individual Project Challenges. As the Individual Project Challenges of the Welsh Baccalaureate invite opportunities for students to explore new pathways to building and sharing knowledge, we should support and encourage more opportunities for teachers to do the same.

New Publication

Making the Case for Social Sciences in Wales

Victoria Macfarlane and Mark Allen

On 14 July 2015, the Academy of Social Sciences launched the latest publication in its Campaign for Social Sciences 'Making the Case' series. Making the Case for the Social Sciences in Wales showcases the breadth and depth of social science research excellence in Wales.



This tenth edition of the Making the Case series is a joint collaboration between the Academy of Social Sciences, the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD) and the Research Institute for Applied Social Sciences (RIASS) based at Swansea University. The booklet was launched by Lord Bourne, Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Wales Office) at the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Conference Centre in London before an audience of policy makers, civil servants, MPs and social scientists.

The publication includes 14 case studies of research carried out by academics in Welsh Universities that have had real world impact. The nature of these impacts varies and includes local, national and international impacts on policy and practice. Case studies focus on a range of important topical issues and include research on public opinion and Welsh devolution; tackling child obesity, public sector pay, recovering the proceeds of crime and human rights.

This booklet reflects the cross-cutting, nature and impact of social science research taking place in Wales. Ceridwen Roberts OBE FAcSS FLSW, Council Member of the Academy of Social Sciences, opened the launch event by highlighting the influence and reach of Welsh social science research, noting that: 'Wales may be home to just 9 of the UK's 109 Higher Education institutions, but as you will quickly see, it punches well above its weight in contributing to policy and practice across a whole range of social science areas and disciplines.'

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Wales Office and Department of Energy and Climate Change, spoke of the vital role of the social

sciences in driving innovation in policy making, saying 'it's through social science research that we can truly understand many of the issues facing modern society.'

The Making the Case booklets are produced by the Academy of Social Sciences and the Campaign for Social Science to demonstrate the power of

social science research to improve lives, for a copy of 'Making the Case for the Social Science, Wales' please visit: <http://campaignforsocialscience.org.uk/publication-category/making-the-case/>

The Wales launch of this publication will take place on 25th November 2015, at the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay.



Well-being and Six Features of the Human Condition

Professor Steve Smith

The concept of well-being is very slippery as it has many different meanings and applications. With politicians and governments increasingly using it as an adjudicating value for how policies should be formulated and implemented (including, most recently, the Welsh Government's Social Services and Well-being Act 2014), it has become especially important to take a step back and assess what well-being means exactly, and how this value relates to who we are as human beings. It is in this light that WISERD recently hosted a workshop on well-being at the University of South Wales, raising important questions amongst academics, practitioners, and policy-makers, about its meaning and measurement. My observations below summarise the main points in the paper I presented, entitled: 'Six Features of the Human Condition: A Conceptual Mapping Exercise for Competing Understandings of Well-Being and Some Implications for Public Policy.'

Firstly, I described six features of the human condition which I contended are common to us all, so bearing on questions concerning human well-being. In short, drawing on the wider well-being literature in philosophy, I argue that whatever conception of well-being is used, all must accommodate these six features of the human condition – though, I argued, the precise relationship between these features vary, depending on the position taken.

These six features are:

Embodiment: We are physical creatures who relate and connect with the world through bodily sensations; via our senses – touch, sight, hearing, taste; our experiences of pain and pleasure; our emotions – joy, happiness, anger, sadness, fear; our physical needs for food, water, shelter, rest, warmth; our numerous wants, desires and aversions; and, our feelings towards others – such as pity, compassion, disgust, love, and hate. Whatever our embodied responses, conceptions of human well-being should, I propose, acknowledge this physicality.

Finiteness: We are limited by beginnings and ends – less abstractly, we are necessarily bounded by our existence or survival, the parameters being our births and deaths; our inability to be in two places and times at once; our limited capabilities constrained by social

and physical environments, and so on. These constraints, derived from our finiteness, make us vulnerable to harm, disappointment, failure, conflicting choices, and error when calculating what is best for our well-being to pursue. However, being limited in these respects (and others beside), also shapes our life experiences, paradoxically, enabling us, as subjective differentiated persons, to enjoy and become immersed 'in the moment' and so be 'attuned' to our lives.

Sociability: We learn language and communicate with others, becoming members of social groups. These groups generate social rules of behaviour which delineate arenas of well-being, as different ways of 'being' and 'doing' are created through social cooperation. These memberships also lead to reciprocal exchanges, which, should be accounted for, to understand how well-being is best promoted. Therefore, conceptions of well-being only focusing on individual endeavour and accomplishments are likely to be inadequate given this condition of sociability.

Cognition: We also understand, rationally calculate, and can be reasonable toward others. Human cognition is clearly mind-orientated, exercising logic, gather information and evidence, and engaging in, what we might be described as, creative imagination – via our imagination we can, for example, picture new possibilities for the future, and remember the past. This ability is also crucial in understanding how well-being, most notably over life-times, is best promoted.

Evaluation: It matters to our well-being that we successfully accomplish goals and ambitions, and these goals and ambitions are valuable to us. Value is understood in terms of what is worthwhile (pastimes, career options, other lifestyle choices), but also refers to moral principles – what is considered right, wrong, just or unjust. Consequently, we evaluate what we do and achieve, and so not merely count our successes, with both success and positive evaluation enhancing our well-being. Value is also derived from exercising self-knowledge – being true to ourselves, or authentic, as it is sometimes called.

Agency: As individuals and/or as members of groups, we, as stated, set goals and have plans and ambitions considered valuable or worthwhile. This implies a degree of agency, where, to lesser or greater degrees, we choose from alternatives, and so become authors of our own actions and life-plans. These alternatives are restricted by social, political and physical environments, but, despite these restrictions, we all have options, allowing us to accomplish goals, however limited these might be. Moreover, our choices reflect desires which are shaped by information concerning these desires, so becoming "informed". Informed desires cohere with wider understandings of what is best for us, reflecting the pursuit of our more important goals and ambitions.

Given this brief outline of these six human conditions, what are some further implications of these features for understanding well-being; how might we use these features to understand better the philosophical debates concerning well-being and their application to social and public policy?

Even if all six features of the human condition are accommodated for in any conception of well-being there is still considerable scope for debate concerning how these features precisely relate. Kantians, for example, are likely to establish our capacity for agency and cognition as a foundation for understanding and promoting well-being, tending to view well-being as, at best, an inclusive or transparent value. Consequently, well-being for Kantians is usually enhanced by successfully pursuing valuable, rational and reasonable goals, but is not best, or commonly, pursued for its own sake.

Alternatively Classical Utilitarians, and those from a Humeian persuasion, view well-being as based on embodied experiences, with these experiences understood, at least primitively, as subjective and individual. For Utilitarians and Humeians, subjective well-being is more likely seen as a primary value, and although may be constrained by agency, cognition, evaluation, and sociability, is usually promoted within public policy as a relatively substantial, even dominant, end. Other policy debates also ensue concerning, for example, the significance of a person being present-orientated in her pursuit of well-being, as distinct from a rational evaluator of her life overall.

Communitarians, and most feminist, post-modern and post-structuralists writers, would likely view well-being differently again, emphasising the human feature of sociability as a better platform for understanding well-being. Public policy should, in turn, focus on the social groups we belong to, and on how our realities are constructed by, for example, shared language-use and other social behaviours. In short, well-being is viewed primarily as

a social product, derived from collective endeavours, with the business of public and social policy being to facilitate these activities.

Of course, these brief sketches of the philosophical terrain and their application to public policy are bound to oversimplify issues and over-polarise debate, given many positions are taken in between, plus many others beside. Nevertheless, my contention is that describing these features of the human condition at least define some general territories of discussions about well-being – for example, highlighting the relationship between subjective and objective accounts of well-being, experience and evaluation/ life-satisfaction accounts, and the various ways in which individual and collective/ group endeavours relate and are both promoted.



WISERD Blog and Events



The WISERD blog provides regular updates on the latest research activity, project development, key findings, funding, and events taking place at WISERD.

Our most recent blogs include:

Did Jeremy Corbyn really engage the 'unengaged youth'?
by Dr Stuart Fox

Democracy & Dragons: How do we Teach Citizenship Education in Continually Devolving Wales?
by Dr Kevin Smith

Championing Evidence by Anna Nicholl

Framing the Geographies of Higher Education Participation: Schools, Place and National Identity
by Dr Ceryn Evans & Dr Michael Donnelly

Stress, Environment and the Human Body
by Dr Jon Anderson

Read all our blogs at:

www.wiserd.ac.uk/news/wiserd-blogs

If you'd like to contribute to the blog, email us on WISERD.comms@cardiff.ac.uk

ESRC Festival of Social Science 2015 – WISERD Data Portal demonstration & live webcast

11th November 2015, Cardiff University
As part of the ESRC Festival of Social Sciences 2015 we will demonstrate the new version of the WISERD Data Portal (WDP) with the participation of an exemplar Civil Society organisation, focussing on how the Portal can be used by third sector organisations for Civil Society research.

Campaigning Unions, Devolved Government: Reflections on State, Unions and Civil Society

12 November 2015, Cardiff University
This seminar will examine how devolution has provided opportunities for trade unions in Wales to influence governmental decision making.

WISERD Annual Conference 2016

13th & 14th July 2016, Bay Campus, Swansea University

Planning is in full swing for the 7th Annual WISERD Conference.

Here are some key dates for your diary:
Call for Papers Open: 1st November 2015
Abstract Submission Deadline: 4th December 2015
Author Notification: 29th January 2016
General Bookings Open: 1st March 2016
Conference: 13th & 14th July 2016
Please note that these dates might change.



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