

## Learning Lessons from WISERD:

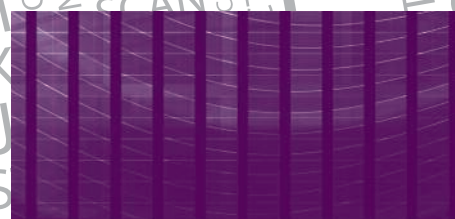
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# Learning Lessons from WISERD:

## the significance of research collaboration

At the end of March 2012, WISERD reaches a major mile-stone in its development, as its initial period of core funding from the ESRC and HEFCW draws to a close. When WISERD was established at the end of 2008, one of its key targets was that it should be financially sustainable by the end of the first core funding period.

At that time, of course, the funding of research in higher education, and more widely, was substantially easier than it is now. Nevertheless, WISERD has achieved its key sustainability target, largely through extensive external funding from project grants and the support of the five Saint David's Day Group (SDDG) universities. Currently, the finishing touches are being made to a Development Strategy for WISERD over the three years from 2012 until 2015; and further details of this will be provided in a future issue of WISERD News. It is clear that general financial stringencies will continue to affect

university-based research for some years to come. Nevertheless, WISERD has a viable future for at least the medium term, albeit one in which even greater priority than hitherto will need to be attached to securing external funding.

Alongside this planning for the future, a great deal of energy is being devoted to the process of reporting WISERD's activities up until now to the funders of the initial core grant, the ESRC and HEFCW (the Final Report is to be submitted by the end of June 2012). In truth, the principal difficulty here is choosing what to prioritise from amongst the enormous range of activities and outputs that WISERD has generated. In this context, one of the things that seems extremely important is to learn the lessons which the first few years of WISERD's development provide.

Here, the cornerstone of the analysis that led to WISERD's creation – the necessity of effective research collaboration in the social sciences – has been borne out. This is reflected not only in the outputs from WISERD's initial research programme, but also in the opportunities for successful research grant capture that pooling the strengths of social science research across the SDDG universities has provided. Most notably, perhaps, the award of some £1 million by the Welsh Government to evaluate the Foundation Phase exemplifies this. WISERD's bid was successful, in the face of stiff competition from across the UK; and it is one of the largest grants to be competitively awarded to Welsh universities by the Welsh Government (or its antecedents) for this sort of research. This collaborative bid also provided a basis to draw in distinguished researchers from outside of Wales to work with the research team. It is to be hoped

that similar successes will be achieved by some of the grant applications that are currently pending with the ESRC and other Research Councils.

It is also clear that wider collaborations have significantly improved the architecture of social science research in Wales and beyond. WISERD's investment in knowledge exchange activities, especially with the Welsh Government, but increasingly with local government and the third sector too, will provide new opportunities for social scientists to exploit the potential of their research for economic and social impact. For example, the organisation of joint 'evidence symposia' has already offered an innovative avenue for researchers to influence key areas of Welsh Government policy; and the increasing availability of ESRC funding for such activity will continue to be crucial here. In this context, some of WISERD's Thematic Networks have also created new spaces in which academic researchers have been able to interact with researchers in other types of setting and with policy-makers and professional practitioners.

Important progress is also being made in respect of the availability of and access to economic and social data about Wales, much of which in a comparative context. It is too early yet to be thinking in terms of a National Data Strategy for Wales. However, advances are being made in terms of data integration (both of administrative data with ESRC-funded cohort studies and of different types of administrative data); and in terms of easier access to data of different kinds (through, for example, the WISERD Geo-Portal). WISERD will continue to play an integral role in these developments, which will undoubtedly be of considerable benefit to social science researchers in the future.



Professor Gareth Rees  
WISERD Director

# Increasing the research capacity of social care in Wales

With the identification of a need to increase research capacity of social care in Wales and for greater collaboration between Welsh academia, social services and policy makers; a new project will create an All Wales Academic Social Care Research Collaboration (ASCC).

Funded by the National Institute for Social Care and Health Research (NISCHR), the three-year project will work in partnership across Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea Universities to strengthen social care R&D in Wales.

The research team comprises Dr Catherine Robinson, Professor Andy Pithouse and Professor Judith Philips who will lead the regional teams in Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea respectively.

The three regional teams will contribute to the following work framework:

- Development and exploitation of national datasets (Bangor)
- Increasing capacity and research skills in the workforce (Cardiff)
- Promotion of evidence based practice (Swansea)

Each regional team will pilot and evaluate a different model over the three-year period, aiming to identify and establish effective approaches to increasing the quantity and quality of social care R&D in Wales.

The first model will be led by Bangor University in collaboration with Glyndŵr University and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and echoes part of the WISERD agenda for developing capacity in quantitative methods and secondary analysis of existing datasets.

The second model will develop a WISERD e-learning initiative to raise the research skills of service providers across Wales. A Research Development Fellow (RDF) funded by NISCHR and based and supervised at WISERD Cardiff will develop the e-learning project,

working in conjunction with the WISERD TCB team and local partners to develop a training website.

The website will include a suite of e-learning resources that can be accessed by trainees both as a means of distance learning and also as a resource to assist in specialist courses that may assume some brief attendance at WISERD for one or two day courses.

The appointed RDF will carry out a mapping exercise to identify training needs of social care workers in South Wales to create a bespoke research training strategy. This strategy will then be piloted and evaluated locally before being rolled out on a regional and then national level.

Finally, the third model based at Swansea will take forward the building of the research-practice interface in social care and social work. This initiative will be piloted in relation to adult services and rolled out at a local level before being evaluated for national and wider application. It will link specifically with the Older People and Ageing Network (OPAN) at Swansea and with initiatives developing around Cardiff and Bangor Universities in relation to social care capacity building and consequently will be linked through WISERD as well as the new Doctoral Training Centre in Wales.

The aim of the initiative will be to develop capacity from within practice settings through encouraging doctoral studies by practitioners/managers and developing a 'Making Research Count' style approach in Wales through a dissemination and implementation role and an income generation function.

For more information about the project please visit:  
[www.wiserd.ac.uk/research/wiserd-projects-current/](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/research/wiserd-projects-current/)



# WISERD Conference 2012

## “Devolution, Place and Change”

The WISERD Conference has become one of the most important events in the social science calendar for people concerned about social and economic issues in Wales today.

On the 28th and 29th of March 2012 at Bangor University, the third annual WISERD Conference will bring together social science researchers, postgraduate students and public sector representatives from across Wales and beyond to provide a forum to explore a wide range of topical themes that impact society in the context of devolution, place and change.

Set in breathtaking landscape at the foot of the Snowdonia National Park and overlooking the Menai Straits, Bangor University is ideally situated to offer an inspirational backdrop to the WISERD Conference this year.

To launch the event there will be a special poetry reading on the eve of the conference with renowned poets Menna Elfyn and Zoe Skoulding presenting their work under the title of ‘Ffin a Frontier’ (boundary and frontier).

Themes covered at the two-day conference will include: Labour markets in Wales and the UK, Environment and Sustainability in Wales, Health and Care, Identity and Place, Theory and practice of devolution, Poverty and ethnicity, Education and Children in Wales, Migration and Mobility, Crime and criminology, and Citizenship and language. Headlining the programme of more than 57 talks and roundtable discussions are three high profile keynote speakers: the Rt. Hon Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, **Professor John Curtice** from the University of Strathclyde and Costa Rican politician and former presidential candidate **Otton Solis**.

**Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas’** keynote address on how to legislate for sustainability will open the conference. WISERD Director, Professor Gareth Rees, said: “We are delighted to welcome such a well respected figure to the WISERD conference. Dafydd Elis-Thomas is one of the major figures in contemporary Welsh politics and I’m sure that his contribution will be well-informed and thought-provoking.

### ‘Ffin a Frontier’ Poetry Evening

The conference will be launched with a poetry reading by two well-known poets – Menna Elfyn and Zoe Skoulding – who will be presenting some of their latest work in Welsh and in English. This special event takes place on the evening of March 27th at the Terrace Lounge and is open to everyone.

Menna Elfyn is an award-winning poet and playwright who writes with passion on the Welsh language and identity. She is the best known and most translated of all modern Welsh-language poets and author of more than twenty books of poetry, including *Aderyn Bach Mewn Llaw* (1990), winner of a Welsh Arts Council Prize. Menna is also Director of the Masters Programme in Creative Writing at Trinity University, Carmarthen and is Literary Fellow at Swansea University.

Zoe Skoulding’s most recent collection of poems is *Remains of a Future City* (Seren, 2008), which was long-listed for Wales Book of the Year in 2009. She lectures in the School of English at Bangor University and is the editor of the international quarterly *Poetry Wales*.

Tickets for the poetry evening cost £5.00 and can be booked via the conference booking form.



### Keynote Speakers

**The Rt. Hon. Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM**

‘Sut mae deddfu dros gynaliadwyedd / How to legislate for sustainability?’

(This speech will be delivered in Welsh with simultaneous translation)

Dafydd Elis-Thomas is currently AM for Dwyfor Meirionnydd and was Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales since its first opening in 1999 until 2011. He is President of Bangor University where he was formerly a student and lecturer.

Lord Elis-Thomas was an MP (Plaid Cymru) from 1974 to 1992 and became a member of the House of Lords in 1992. His political interests are focused on the development of devolution in Wales, and the status of Wales in Europe. Recently he was appointed as Chair of the Assembly’s Environment and Sustainability Committee and Plaid Cymru’s spokesperson for Environment and Energy.

Aside from his work in politics, Dafydd Elis-Thomas has also served on the Welsh Language Board, the British Film Institute and the Arts Council of Wales, as well as working in the private sector as a director of an environmental surveying company.





The background image shows a large, multi-story building with a grey stone facade and numerous windows. A metal railing with a circular ring is in the foreground, partially obscuring the view of the building. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

### **Professor John Curtice**

'Is there still a basis for a stable Union? Trends in Public Opinion in the wake of Scottish and Welsh Devolution'

Professor of Politics at University of Strathclyde, John Curtice conducts research into social and political attitudes, electoral behaviour, electoral systems and survey research methods in Scotland, Britain and comparatively. He is a frequent broadcaster and contributor to newspapers and has been a regular member of the BBC's general and local election night programme production teams.

### **Otton Solis**

'Subsidising multi-national corporations: is that a development policy?'

Otton Solis is a Costa Rican politician and three times presidential candidate, economist and Eminent Scholar. He served as Minister of Planning and Economy and founded the Citizens' Action Party, a third-party movement that emphasises social equity and environmental issues. The Citizens' Action Party is currently the main opposition party in Costa Rica.

The conference will close with director's address by Professor Gareth Rees who will discuss the current state and future directions of research and higher education in Wales.

For any enquiries regarding the conference programme or booking arrangements, please contact Cheryl Buchanan via email [buchananca@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:buchananca@cardiff.ac.uk) or call 029 208 75345.

Alternatively you can visit the dedicated conference mini-site at [www.wiserd.ac.uk/conference2012](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/conference2012)



# Professor Andreas Hoff visits WISERD at Bangor



Professor Andreas Hoff

**Professor Andreas Hoff visited WISERD at Bangor University for two weeks during September 2011. Professor Hoff is a social gerontologist at Zittau-Gorlitz University of Applied Sciences, Germany, and was formerly a senior research fellow at the Oxford Institute of Ageing, University of Oxford. He is also currently the Vice-President of Research Committee 11 (Sociology of Ageing) of the International Sociological Association (ISA) and the Chair of RC11 Scientific Programme Committee for both the ISA World Congress of Sociology and World Forum.**

During his time at Bangor, Professor Hoff gave a talk in the School of Social Sciences seminar series in which he presented his international research project, 'Carers@Work – Between Job and Care: Conflict or Opportunity?', which is funded by the Volkswagen Foundation. In addition, Andreas coordinated a workshop to staff and students on the SHARE (Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe) data set and was also involved in several informal meetings on ageing research with staff across the University.

As an internationally recognised expert in population ageing and intergenerational relationships, Andreas was particularly interested in furthering the understanding of how these issues are shaping the reproduction of Welsh speaking communities – his University in Gorlitz also being located within the Sorbian minority language community close to the German-Polish border. To this end, Andreas will be continuing to work with Dr Robin Mann and other WISERD associates on a comparative study of intergenerational transmissions within the Sorbian and Welsh speaking families. We fully expect that his visit will be the first of many to come as this collaboration unfolds.



# Interdisciplinary team explore ICT use and digital exclusion within Wales

**In early February 2011 the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded academics within Swansea University, Cardiff University and the University of Glamorgan to develop a collaborative, interdisciplinary scoping study as part of its wider Connected Communities programme.**

The primary aim of the scoping study was to gain an understanding of the impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) on changing cultures and patterns of connectivity within and between minority communities and vulnerable groups and the potential of multifaceted digital divides in constraining or shaping these forms of connectivity in Wales. In addition, built into the research design were a number of specific objectives, for example, identifying potential gaps within existing research, understanding policy responses to these issues across the UK and enhancing existing engagement between stakeholders and researchers within Wales.

The research team led by Dr Panayiota Tsatsou (Swansea) and made-up of Dr Ian Stafford (Cardiff), Professor Gary Higgs, Dr Robert Berry and Dr Richard Fry (Glamorgan) carried out a range of activities in developing the scoping study. These activities included a literature review of existing research on the role of ICTs in communities and digital divides, a systematic analysis of existing research and data within Welsh and UK contexts and a series of stakeholder workshops which brought together academics, Welsh Government officials and stakeholders from across the private, public and third sectors.

The scoping study was completed in October 2011 and confirmed many of the key arguments identified within broader UK and European-wide debates around digital divides – notably that ICTs provide a potentially key resource in promoting community connectivity in contemporary society in Wales but many minority communities or vulnerable groups continue to be at significant risk of both social and digital exclusion.

The study's final report highlighted that there appears to be clear anecdotal evidence to suggest that minority communities and vulnerable groups within Wales require bespoke policies in order to fully take advantage of information and communication technologies and to enhance their experiential inclusion and connectivity. However, the report argued that existing, primarily quantitative research generally fails to adequately explore these issues and tends to provide high level data for the population as a whole – providing limited insights into the experiences and issues faced by minority communities and groups. In addition, discussions with key stakeholders suggested that there was a great deal of 'grey data' focused on this issue but the study highlighted the challenges in identifying and securing access to this data.

Therefore the study recommended that there was a clear rationale for developing more qualitative, fine grained, community-based research in order to explore the potential barriers to digital inclusion and the impact of digital inclusion/exclusion within minority and vulnerable groups. The scoping study and recent review work

undertaken by the Welsh Government provides solid foundations to further explore these research areas within a UK and Welsh context. To this end the research team is planning on submitting an expanded research project in 2012.

**For more information on the project and to download the project reports, visit:**  
**[www.wiserd.ac.uk/research/connected-communities/cc/](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/research/connected-communities/cc/)**



# WISERD supports national Festival of Social Science

WISERD were pleased to support two events as part of the annual Festival of Social Science run by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

The week-long festival (29 October – 5 November), now in its ninth year, celebrates some of the country's leading social science research, showcasing the valuable work of the UK's social scientists and demonstrates how their work has an impact on all our lives.

Both events took place on Wednesday 2nd November, one in Cardiff and one in Aberystwyth.

**Dr Sin Yi Cheung, Senior Lecturer at the Cardiff School of Social Sciences (SOCSI), successfully secured funding from the ESRC to run the event. Here, she recalls her memories from the day.**

Talk of numbers with school teachers, most immediately think of their MAT (more able and talented) students who can 'do maths', but where does the social science bit come in? On Wednesday 2nd November, in our ESRC Festival of Social Science event 'Who are we? From local to global citizen', we took on the challenge to show some 70 Key Stage 4 pupils from five local schools how to 'do' social science with numbers. The five participating schools included three from Cardiff: Cathays, Cantonian and Mary Immaculate and two from the Valleys: Mountain Ash and Ferndale.

Head of the Cardiff School of Social Sciences, Professor Malcolm Williams, opened the event with his welcome speech. Three short presentations were then given using the results of an online survey students completed in advance of the event. Interactive activities were built into the plenary sessions, including the well-received pink, green and blue voting cards.

In the break-out sessions, students compared their own results with national and international data on happiness, Welsh language and identities. They learned how to compute the 'happiness index' and interpret statistics by studying maps and tabulations. They also learned how to be a critical consumer of statistics, the importance of random sampling, the limits of generalisations and the merits of disaggregation in data analysis. Lunch was a highlight of the day. Many participants found it particularly enjoyable mixing with our colleagues and asking what social scientists actually do.

After lunch, students re-convened to report their results from the workshop exercises. The chance of 'lucky dips' in the goody bag certainly helped boost their confidence in answering questions in what might seem an intimidating big lecture theatre. The slide show of photos taken during the morning sessions justly achieved a 'wow' effect. Mark Drakeford, Cardiff West AM, as well as Professor of Social Policy at SOCSI, presented at the final plenary session. He spoke about how quantitative social science research makes a real difference in peoples' lives and how Townsend's work on poverty in Wales and the Welsh Multiple Index of Deprivation had informed government policies and

*In the break-out sessions, students compared their own results with national and international data on happiness*



funding allocation. The day was rounded off with a presentation of certificates of attendance, which gave the students a sense of accomplishment. Ferndale School also won the prize for the highest response rate in the online survey.

So what did the 14-15 year olds make of it all? The majority (89%) said the day was enjoyable, stimulating and educational and two students wanted to become politicians by the end of the day.

Public engagement events like this are never easy, let alone with teenagers and schools. From recruitment, ethics approval, survey design, programme development, publicity and press release to liaising with different departments within the university, we had totally underestimated the huge challenges an event like this would entail.

There were lots of lessons learned and we are very happy to pass on the baton to anyone who wishes to rise to the challenge next year!



# WISERD Mini

As part of the second phase of the WISERD research programme, a series of mini-projects were established to build on existing WISERD research. These projects enabled further analysis of key themes identified during the first phase of the WISERD research programme.

The projects were diverse in their areas of study and included collaborations with colleagues from different institutions, organisations and disciplines. Themes covered by the mini-projects included immigration, behaviour change, national identity, boundaries and the reorganisation of local government in Wales.

Below and on the following pages are updates on three of the mini-projects from the series: **Welsh Speakers and the Labour Market**, **Older People's Connected Rural Lives** and **Responses to Redundancy at Anglesey Aluminium**.

## Welsh Speakers and the Labour Market

### Research Team

Stephen Drinkwater (WISERD Swansea)  
Robin Mann (WISERD Bangor)

Previous research has indicated that there may be a labour market advantage for speakers of minority languages. Evidence in support of this has been found for Welsh speakers in Wales by Drinkwater and O'Leary (1997) in terms of employment and Henley and Jones (2005) for earnings. Various explanations have been suggested including educational policies and higher attainment, increased cognitive ability, bilingual policies in the workplace, employment shifts following economic restructuring and better networks and information flows (Day, 2002; Williams and Morris, 1999).

This mini-project examined the labour market differences between Welsh and non-Welsh speakers by extending the existing literature in a couple of ways. Firstly, a mixed-methods approach was used by combining quantitative analysis of the Annual Population Survey (APS) with qualitative analysis of WISERD stakeholder data.

Secondly, the research distinguished between labour market differences within the public and private sectors. This was initially done by comparing the earnings and occupational achievements of Welsh speakers relative to non-Welsh speakers in both sectors using APS data, whilst also controlling for differences in personal and socio-economic characteristics. Findings from the APS indicated that Welsh speakers, particularly females, in

the public sector experience an earnings advantage but this is not the case in the private sector. The differences are also found to vary across areas within Wales and are largest in the Unitary Authorities (UAs) located on the Southern Coast that include the cities of Cardiff, Swansea and Newport. However, much of this is due to higher levels of education of Welsh speakers. In particular, there is no longer a significant earnings advantage for males in the public sector, whilst in the Southern Coastal area a significant effect persists for females after educational differences are controlled for.

The stakeholder data collected by WISERD researchers were then used to shed further light on the likely sources of the earnings premium in the public sector. In particular, analysis of the 120 in-depth interviews revealed that stakeholders view the ability to speak Welsh as conveying an advantage in the public sector, especially in rural parts of Wales. This may be particularly the case for UAs and employment domains in which Welsh language skills have traditionally been of value.

**The acquisition of Welsh via schooling was also perceived as providing an important advantage in the Welsh labour market.**

However, there were contrasting experiences with regards to the availability of Welsh speakers for filling bilingual positions in the public sector in different parts of Wales.

A presentation on the findings from the mini-project will be made at the Third Annual WISERD Conference in Bangor, 28th-29th March 2012.



# -Projects

## Older People's Connected Rural Lives

### Research Team

Jesse Heley (WISERD Aberystwyth)  
Laura Jones (WISERD Aberystwyth)  
Suzie Watkin (WISERD Aberystwyth)

Over the past few months, members of WISERD Aberystwyth have been undertaking a study which considers the shifting role of older people within the wider social and economic networks contained within and across rural communities in mid-Wales.

Taking its cue from the findings of the stakeholder interview programme undertaken by the localities research team, where many senior local government officers voiced concerns regarding their collective ability to meet the health, care and wellbeing needs of Mid Wales' ageing population; these concerns have also been articulated at a time of widespread public sector spending cuts and a corresponding squeeze of resources. Although absolutely valid, and informed by working experience, these reflections tally with wider, longstanding narratives regarding older age insofar as they have a tendency to focus on the formal, and often physiological, healthcare needs of this group to the exclusion of other aspects of their lives.

This project set out to explore and critique those often homogenising narratives of older age which render older people as being 'passive', 'static' and as a net burden on service provision; particularly in a rural context where the cost of delivering such

services (financially and otherwise) is often that much higher than urban centres. The premise of this study, therefore, has been to generate a clearer picture of the multiple interactions of older people in rural communities as a basis for a better understanding of the different services they require, desire, use and contribute to.

**The setting for the research has been in and around the rural village of Llanilar in Ceredigion, which is approximately six miles to the south east of Aberystwyth, and the team carried out a series of in-depth interviews and focus-group activities with people over the age of 60.**

The investigations provided a detailed insight into the everyday lives of older residents in Llanilar, and the manifold ways in which these residents contribute to the social fabric of the community have come to light. In particular, and perhaps most straight-forwardly, the important economic contribution that the over 60's make to their localities has become very apparent; whether through their use and valuation of local shops and services or the hiring of local trades people. Here many interviewees frame their use of these services in terms of social responsibility; contributing to the viability of institutions relied upon by the less mobile elderly, new mothers and those without transport, and as a source of employment for local people. Furthermore, many respondents also indicated that they continued to work in voluntary capacities and as members of such organisations as the National Trust and the Women's Royal Volunteer Service, the latter of which provides an important function through providing drivers for meals-on-wheels services.

Rural services and businesses were also valued beyond simply their function, and also for their social roles as a focal point and physical meeting-place for what respondents discussed as the local community. Thus, the local shop, surgery and post office van were regularly cast alongside those more directly, socially-orientated activities within the village; including a wide range of formally organised groups. These included the Women's Institute, family history and church societies and keep-fit classes; all of which included over 60's as facilitators and members alongside a wider cross-section of the local population.

Now at the stage of analysing and disseminating a rich vein of qualitative data, the team have presented evidence of the findings at a number of events and to a range of different audiences as part of the commitment to stakeholder feedback. To date, the team have taken part in a number of meetings of the Ceredigion County Council Research, Information & Intelligence Strategic Group (RIISG), provided evidence to the Welsh Government's Rural Health Implementation Group, and also discussed the data with representatives from Hywel Dda and Rural Health in Wales.

Furthermore, the project has also spurred an involvement in Older People & Ageing Research & Development Network (OPAN). As part of this network the team took part in the 'Age Agenda' conference, which involved presenting their findings and taking part in workshops alongside academics, practitioners, policy makers and other representatives concerned with ageing issues in Wales. At a grass roots level, they are also set to deliver a presentation to the Women's Institute in Llanilar.



# *The research identified a significant category of ex-workers deciding to continue to live and work locally*



## Responses to Redundancy at Anglesey Aluminium: Narratives of Transition

### Research Team

Alex Plows (WISERD Bangor)  
Howard Davis (WISERD Bangor)  
Rhys Davies (WISERD Cardiff)

The Holyhead-based Anglesey Aluminium (AA) plant closed in September 2009 with the loss of nearly 400 jobs. AA was a major employer providing significantly high rates of pay for the area.

This small research project explored individual experiences of redundancy understood as a "critical life event" (Gardiner et al 2009). The research explored the impact of the closure through accounts of individuals' narratives of transition through redundancy.

The project combined some secondary data analysis concerning the regional economic environment and social inequalities, with qualitative data derived from biographical narrative interviews with ex-employees at Anglesey Aluminium and semi-structured interviews with other stakeholders.

The interviews explored individual narratives of transition through redundancy including ex-workers' accounts of training and support; and elicited interviewee's views about the impact of the closure on themselves, on their families and the wider community. Interviewees were also asked for their views on the economic prospects for Anglesey now and in the future.

The key findings based on qualitative accounts with ex-workers and stakeholders were that the majority of redundant workers actively seeking work appeared to have found further employment by mid 2011. There was also evidence of a broad spread of post-redundancy career pathways; while many locally-based ex-workers stayed local and are looking for, or have found, work locally. Others now travel a significant distance to work or have out-migrated, in some cases undertaking global opportunities provided by AA parent company RTZ. Some took early retirement; others started their own businesses with varying degrees of success or failure. Many had accessed training opportunities, and some had struggled to find work and were still unemployed.

The research identified a significant category of ex-workers deciding to continue to live and work locally and thus prepared to be pragmatic and to 'make do and mend' in terms of the sorts of opportunities available to them through the local labour market.

Age and family ties are key factors affecting redundant workers' expectations and opportunities with regards to their career pathways post-redundancy. There is an underlying issue on Anglesey relating to the quality of job opportunities and levels of remuneration. Workers had had access to a range of training resources, initiatives and other provision, for example the Welsh Government's REACT scheme, and there was evidence of uptake of training opportunities. However there was an apparent gap between training provision and the quality of available work opportunities on the island.

Although unemployment is comparably low on the island, the number of vacancies is also low. This is counter intuitive and goes against the conventional wisdom of what is known as the Beveridge curve where low

unemployment is associated with a high number of vacancies and vice versa. This seeming paradox may be a case for further research.

In conclusion, the study of available statistics revealed Anglesey's socio-economic profile to be fairly complex: Unemployment is low and the population is growing. The workforce seems to be highly skilled by all-Wales standards. Yet its GVA per head, the bedrock of measuring economic performance, is the lowest in any region in the UK. There is also a paradox in terms of the relationship between unemployment and vacancies. This may partly be explained by the fact that many of the vacancies on the island are short term in nature and so we may be under estimating the true number of job vacancies. However, this is an area where further research may be of interest.

There is a potential eroding of human capital as ex-workers access local jobs where their highly developed skills are not utilised. The make-up of Anglesey's offering is such that there seems to be a structural impediment to retaining its young talent. Hence we are witnessing a high outflow of young people, a problem shared of course, with many rural areas within Wales and the UK in general.

However recent months have seen a number of announcements relating to potential employment opportunities for Anglesey. Proactively increasing the availability and range of various support systems both during and after the redundancy process would be of benefit in a number of ways, for example provision of individual advice on benefits, investment of redundancy packages, and self-employment.

**The authors (Alex Plows and Huw Lloyd-Williams) would like to thank the research participants for their input.**

**The full report will soon be available as part of the WISERD research reports series available at [www.wiserd.ac.uk/publications/info/research-reports/](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/publications/info/research-reports/)**

**A full presentation on the project and its findings will be made at the Third Annual WISERD Conference in Bangor, 28th-29th March 2012 by Dr Alex Plows and Huw Lloyd-Williams.**



# Local Knowledge, Spatial Practice and Urban Patrol

As part of the Local Knowledge in Context (KLiC) research programme, the Local Knowledge, Spatial Practice and Urban Patrol project has been exploring professional geographies of care, repair and inequalities in public space. Project researcher Dr Rob Smith and Principal Investigator Dr Tom Hall reveal what they discovered while observing key groups of people in the city centre of Cardiff as part of the project's ethnography.

The key respondents of the study were outreach workers who seek out and support the city's rough sleepers and, separately, operate in a similar fashion in relation to the city's street-based sex workers. They're experts on movement, local knowledge and urban renewal and the best way to learn is not to ask in an interview but to get out with the team on patrol.

The project also walked the beat with Police Community Support Officers, members of the Council's street cleansing crews, a member of the city centre management and faith based initiatives operating out of hours in Cardiff, offering food, drink and guidance to the vulnerable.

Each of the patrol workers operates with a duty and a care. For some the care is for vulnerable groups like the homeless, others are concerned with the safety of visitors and workers in the city. Some are funambulators, walking a line which traces the politics of the city centre. All of them rely upon and gain a distinct knowledge of the city centre. A knowledge which, for each patrol, has a distinct – sometimes overlapping – geography, but has a common method; routine and regular pedestrian patrol, out there wherever the action is. And all of them, in different ways, are involved in the maintenance and upkeep of the fabric of the city centre. Their work often goes unnoticed but one can imagine things soon beginning to unravel if, one day, they were to stop.

Dr Hall and Dr Smith have described some of the street level complexities of welfare, homelessness and the 'good city' in an article recently published in *Anthropology in Action*. They've also had an article accepted for publication in *Mobilities* which contributes to a politics of mobility by drawing attention to the difficulties the homeless face when trying to pull off a stop in a city centre geared up for smooth and easy (and thus profitable) pedestrian circulation.

Dr Smith had an article published in the journal *Symbolic Interaction* which discussed the strategies that outreach workers employ in managing their interactions with the homeless. The project team currently have another paper under review and are finalising a chapter on the 24 hour city which is drawn from an actual twenty-four hour period of sustained fieldwork on patrol with the various groups mentioned above. The chapter will appear in Dr Smith's forthcoming edited collection on 'urban rhythms'.

They also have a number of further papers planned which they'll be developing at various conference this year, including the British Sociological Association (BSA), Royal Geographical society (RGS) and on day two (March 29th) of the third annual WISERD Conference at Bangor University. More information about the project can be found here: [www.wiserd.ac.uk/research/qualitative/klic/klic-local-knowledge-spatial-practice-and-urban-patrol/](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/research/qualitative/klic/klic-local-knowledge-spatial-practice-and-urban-patrol/)

# Stay, Leave or Return

## A Statistical Portrait of the Early Careers of Welsh Graduates

Given the importance of human capital to economic performance, it is widely acknowledged that graduates play a key role in Wales' economic future. Historically however, Wales has been a net loser of graduates, often described as the 'brain drain'.

The existence of a 'brain drain' of graduate labour has long been a focus of debate (Drinkwater and Blackaby, 2004; Fevre 2004) with recent research confirming that Wales is a 'loser' region insofar that it generates more undergraduates than it recruits recent graduates in to employment (Hoare and Corver, 2009).

This article sets out some of the key statistical findings of a research project recently conducted by colleagues in WISERD and the ESRC Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE) based at Cardiff and Oxford Universities which sought to examine the scale and nature of the problem.

Previous studies have made much use of data produced by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), which provides excellent coverage of recent graduates in terms of their location and employment, but is limited as the data are collected just six months after graduation. A key feature of this new study is the use of data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the largest regular household survey conducted in the UK. The LFS enables consideration of how graduate mobility and graduate careers evolve over time, focused on 'young' (aged 25 or below when graduated) graduates since the 1992 expansion of Higher Education. The research aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the different stages of graduate mobility.

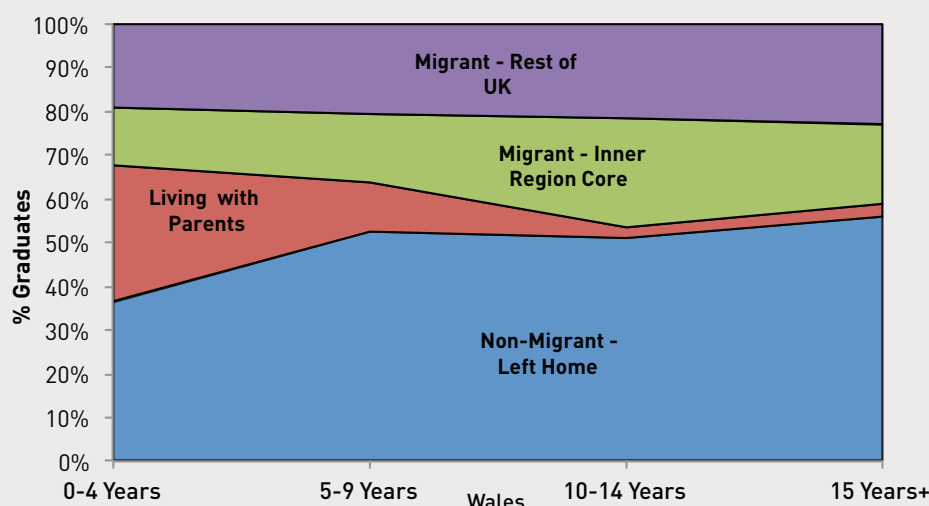
### Where do Welsh Graduates Go Following Graduation?

Patterns of graduate mobility among Welsh Born graduates are shown in Figure 1. Upon leaving university, many graduates live within the family home. Some of these graduates may have attended a university within their locality and would never have left home whilst attending Higher Education. For many, the return to the family home is a short term phenomena whilst they search for their first full-time position following graduation and gain their first job that facilitates independent living. The proportion living within the family home declines steadily in the years following graduation, largely being accounted for by an increase in the proportion who leave home but who remain living in Wales. Levels of migration from Wales peak at between 10 to 14 years following graduation. The reduction in levels of net outward migration among Welsh graduates that occurs beyond this point is accounted for by a reduction in the proportion of Welsh-born graduates living in London, the East and the South East (collectively referred to as the Inner Region Core). This provides us with some evidence of 'returners' to Wales possibly associated with family formation.

### What Do Graduates Do Following Graduation?

An overwhelmingly large majority of graduates gain employment following graduation. However, the expansion of numbers participating in Higher Education over the last two decades has led to concerns regarding the ability of the labour market to absorb the growing number of university graduates. A likely consequence is that many more highly qualified individuals will have to find jobs outside the 'traditional' areas of graduate employment, many of which are now approaching saturation point in terms of graduate penetration rates (Brown, 2004). Elias and Purcell (2004) have produced the so-called SOC (HE) classification to specify employment using HESA Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) data in terms of 'graduate' and 'non-

Fig. 1





graduate' occupations, where a non-graduate job is defined as a job where the skills, knowledge and experience associated with the competent performance of work tasks is less than that which would be expected to held by a person who had successfully completed a degree.

The distinction between graduate and non-graduate occupations provides a succinct way of summarising the careers of graduates. Figure 2 presents combined data on Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish graduates as little difference was observed in these patterns between the devolved nations. Overall, the proportion of young graduates employed in non-graduate occupations declines with time as they find employment in jobs that are more suited to their skills. The share of employment in non-graduate occupations among employed graduates is consistently higher among those who live in their region of birth and is highest among those who live in the parental home (although it must be noted that this group becomes smaller over time). However, the differences in the proportion of migrating and non-migrating graduates employed in non-graduate occupations appear to narrow over time, from 18 percentage points during the first four years following graduation to seven percentage points beyond 15 years following graduation.

Figure 3 reveals that graduate earnings are generally lower in the public sector compared to the private sector. However, Wales stands out as exhibiting higher relative earnings in the public sector among post-1992 graduates compared to the private sector (a differential of approximately £40 per week). This finding emphasises the importance of the public sector in Wales in providing a source of relatively well-paid work for graduates. Despite its lower earnings, the incidence of non-graduate employment is generally lower in the public sector than it is in the private sector reflecting the availability of a range of roles that are more likely to utilise the skills accumulated by graduates. Only within the Inner Region Core does the private sector appear to provide roles that are of comparable suitability to graduates as those provided by the public sector. Almost a third of private sector jobs held by post-1992 graduates in Wales are classified as not being commensurate with the skills of individuals who possess a degree.

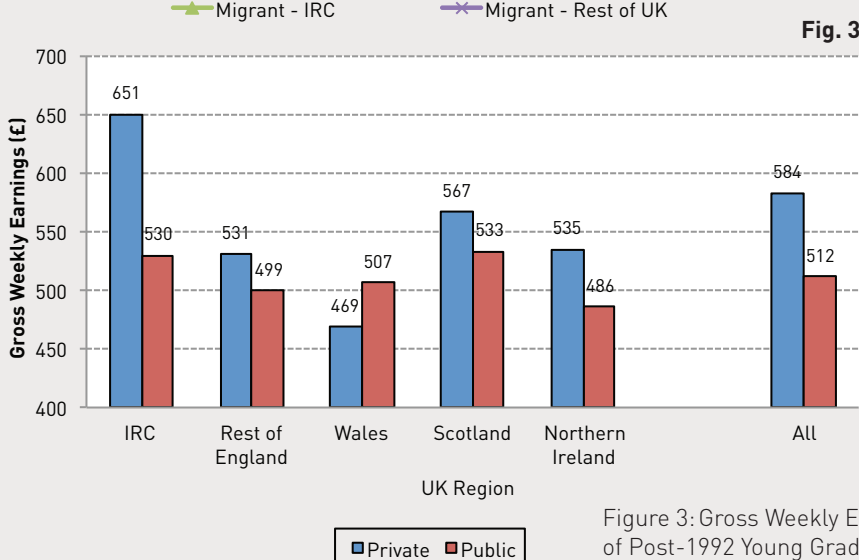
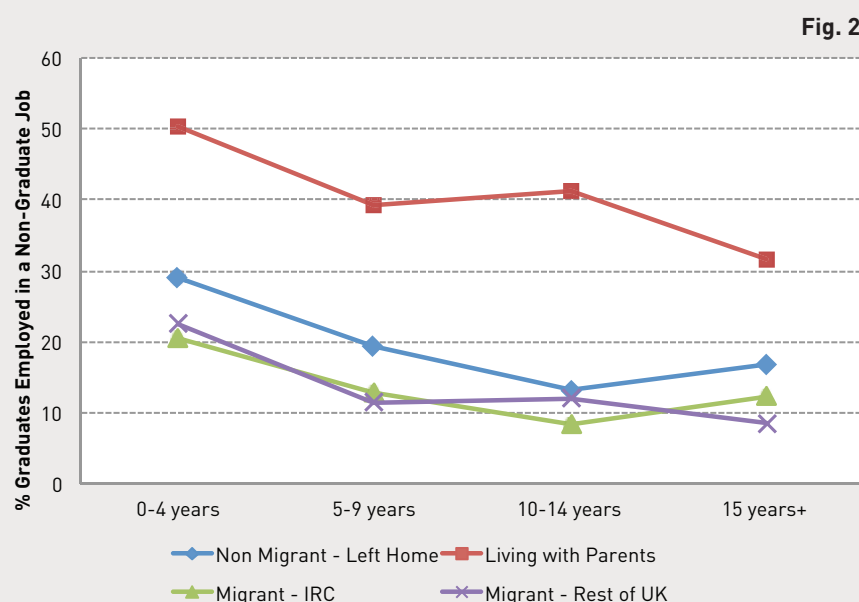


Figure 3: Gross Weekly Earnings of Post-1992 Young Graduates

## Concluding Comments

There are varied policy implications of these findings. First and foremost, this research reinforces the importance of the relative economic opportunities available in the region. Graduate migration decisions are strongly influenced by the search for employment and a higher salary, with the Inner Region Core continuing to provide a powerful pull for graduates from all over the UK, and particularly Wales. Whilst the expansion of the public sector in Wales and other regions has dampened this trend to a degree in recent years, the current recession and public expenditure cutbacks threaten to significantly erode these opportunities (Wright, 20110; WAO, 2011), placing much greater onus on the private sector to create graduate employment opportunities, or graduates themselves to set up their own businesses. It is worth noting that Wales is not alone in facing these issues. Given the links between graduate retention and regional economic performance, a number of UK regions have developed explicit graduate retention interventions (such as the Scottish 'Fresh Talent' initiative) may provide useful insights for policy-makers.

The path dependent and evolutionary nature of graduate migration also means that these findings raise interesting questions around Higher Education (HE) tuition fees. Increasingly variable HE fees regimes across different parts of the UK are likely to have potentially very significant effects. Current Welsh Government policy on HE fees could be regarded as incentivising Welsh student migration, with potentially fewer students choosing to stay local in order to minimise costs. This highlights interesting tensions between what policy might clearly be desirable as far as individuals are concerned and what might be better for a region in economic terms.

## Further Information

Links to the full report, papers and presentations emerging from the research are available from the WISERD website at [www.wiserd.ac.uk/research/wiserd-projects-current/welsh-graduate-migration/](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/research/wiserd-projects-current/welsh-graduate-migration/)

# Forthcoming WISERD Events

## Introduction to Spatial Analysis Using OpenSource GIS Software

**Dates:** 16th and 17th May 2012  
**Time:** 9.30am - 4.30pm  
**Venue:** WISERD Training Room,  
 46 Park Place, Cardiff University

Using open source GIS software (R Spatial), participants will be guided through a series of sophisticated geo-processing functions and shown how they can be used to analyse and visualise their research data and contribute to a richer mixed-methods approach for social science research.

## Integrating Quantitative Methods in Substantive Social Science Modules: Inequalities and Stratification, Sociology of Education

**Dates:** 28th and 29th June 2012  
**Times:** Day 1: 12.00pm – 5:30pm  
 Day 2: 9.00am – 5.00pm  
**Venue:** WISERD Hub,  
 46 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3BB

This workshop will suit both QM and non-QM teachers who wish to develop and design new materials using quantitative research in substantive modules.

## Exploring the Use of Visual Media in the Communication of Research

**Date:** 12th July 2012  
**Time:** 10.00am - 4.15pm  
**Venue:** Glamorgan Committee Rooms,  
 Cardiff University

This exploratory seminar will bring together a range of social science researchers and visual media experts, working within and across a variety of fields, to explore the challenges and opportunities of using visual media in the representation of research findings.

## Teaching Quantitative Methods Workshop 3: Teaching Data Collection and Analysis

**Dates:** 1st – 2nd November 2012  
**Times:** Day 1: 12.00 – 17.30  
 Day 2: 9.00 – 17.00  
**Venue:** TBC

This workshop, the third of the series, will return to looking at research methods based modules by following the Undergraduate students' progression into Stage 2 and focus on data collection and data analysis.



W: [www.wiserd.ac.uk](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk)

T: 029 2087 5345

E: [wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk)



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