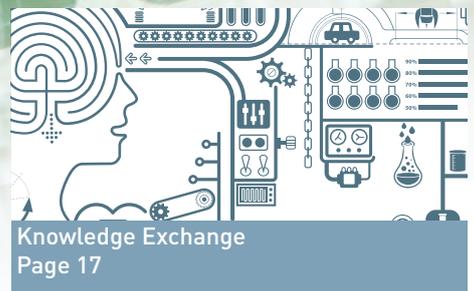


Wales Institute of Social & Economic  
Research, Data & Methods

## WISERD's Strategic Development: Looking to the Future - p2



# WISERD's Strategic Development: Looking to the Future

WISERD is now well into its second phase, which formally runs for three years from July 2012. As I outlined in the last issue of WISERD News, WISERD Phase 2 is being supported by core funding from the St. David's Day Group of universities. This ensures that WISERD can retain a substantial complement of research and administrative staff, both in the Hub and in the research centres across the five universities. Equally, however, WISERD's success during Phase 2 will be judged on the basis of its capacity to attract significant funding from external sources.

It is clear that the general economic climate poses problems for the funding of social science research, especially where the STEM subjects are prioritised by government at all levels (European, UK and Wales). However, there are indications that high-quality projects in the social sciences are still being supported. In WISERD's case, the Welsh Government continues to be a significant source of funding, through major projects such as the Evaluation of the Foundation Phase, as well as a range of smaller, yet still significant studies. In addition, as is reported elsewhere in this issue of WISERD News, HEFCW has recently agreed to fund a very substantial (almost £1 million over three years) programme of research and capacity-building in the field of education (WISERD EDUCATION will be led by Sally Power at Cardiff). Moreover, whilst Research Council funding remains intensely competitive (especially for larger grants), WISERD was successful recently in securing two grants from the ESRC's Secondary Data Analysis Initiative: one on pay in the private and public sectors, led by Phil Murphy at Swansea; and the other on access to higher education, led by me at Cardiff (this latter project is jointly funded by HEFCW).

What the funding climate does underline, however, is the need for WISERD to pursue a coherent development strategy. Its priorities with regard to its research and other activities need to provide an explicit framework within which WISERD's efforts can be focused. Clearly, these priorities have a necessary element of flexibility; the capacity to respond nimbly to new developments is important (the Welsh Government's recent announcement of its intention to create a Public Policy Institute provides an example here). Nevertheless, substantial effort has been invested over past months in developing what is hopefully a clear vision of what WISERD intends to achieve during its Phase 2.

Perhaps the first point to emphasise here is that WISERD will continue to organise its activities in terms of two broad programmes: one comprised of research projects; and the other concerned with developing the research infrastructure. The research programme will embrace a 'mixed portfolio' of activities, ranging from basic science to applied research projects. It will continue to have a focus on the Welsh economy and society, but in an essentially comparative context, across the UK and more widely. In substantive, academic terms, it will focus on a small number of key themes, developing the work that has been carried out successfully by WISERD researchers hitherto:

- The distributional consequences of economic recession;
- Devolved governance, state policy and civil society;
- Social mobility, spatial mobility and labour markets.

It is intended that these academic priorities will map closely on to the key policy concerns that are likely to dominate the coming period in Wales (as set out, for example, in the Programme for Government 2011-2016) and more widely across the UK and internationally. These include:

- Improving regional and local economic development;
- Ameliorating poverty and social disadvantage;
- Improving educational attainment;
- Strengthening civil society and its capacities.

Certainly, close engagement with the Welsh Government and the wider policy community in Wales and elsewhere will remain a cornerstone of WISERD's work in the future.

The research infrastructure programme will comprise three principal elements:

- Knowledge exchange and transfer;
- Training and capacity building;
- Data assembly and access.

Knowledge exchange and transfer activities will continue to be a major element of successful social science research. Accordingly, WISERD aims to extend its close collaborations with the Welsh Government in this context; and seek to strengthen its relationships with other parts of central government and local government, as well as the private and third sectors. A specific target will be to develop a viable model of 'interactive social science' with these 'research users'. Training and capacity building has been a major element of WISERD's activities hitherto. It is envisaged that this will continue. However, the focus of this activity will shift from the provision of training through workshops, seminars, and so on, to the development of e-learning and support materials. It is also anticipated that WISERD will continue to contribute towards the development of a national data strategy for Wales, especially with regard to linking data sets. In addition, the WISERD Geo-Portal, providing researchers with meta-data for sources of existing data of various kinds, will be further tested and refined.

The development of the social science research infrastructure through activities of this type can be regarded as broadly equivalent to the creation of a 'well-founded research laboratory'. The research infrastructure is necessary to carry out high-quality social science research. Unfortunately, the Welsh universities have not kept pace with UK – let alone international – competitors in this regard. A key element of WISERD's strategy is therefore attempting to remedy this situation.

**Professor Gareth Rees, WISERD Director**



# Evaluating the Foundation Phase

## Initial Research Update

**WISERD's independent evaluation of the Welsh Government's flagship early years policy - the Foundation Phase - was introduced in Issue 4 of WISERD News (October 2011, p.19). Since then, two full-time post-doctoral research associates have joined the team and the project is well underway.**

The main aim of the project is to assess how the Foundation Phase is being implemented across Wales and what impact this may be having on children and

practitioners. For example, how are schools managing to provide this new curriculum based on the principles of experiential active learning, child development and child participation? And is the focus on providing more relevant and exciting learning opportunities better engaging children in their learning?

Based on models used in Scandinavia, Northern Italy and New Zealand, the Foundation Phase largely delays 'formal' teaching until children reach the age of seven (Key Stage 2). The results of this research will therefore have significant local and international implications.

The research programme has been widely discussed (e.g. Child's World Conference in Aberystwyth) and can be divided into two parts (see chart below):

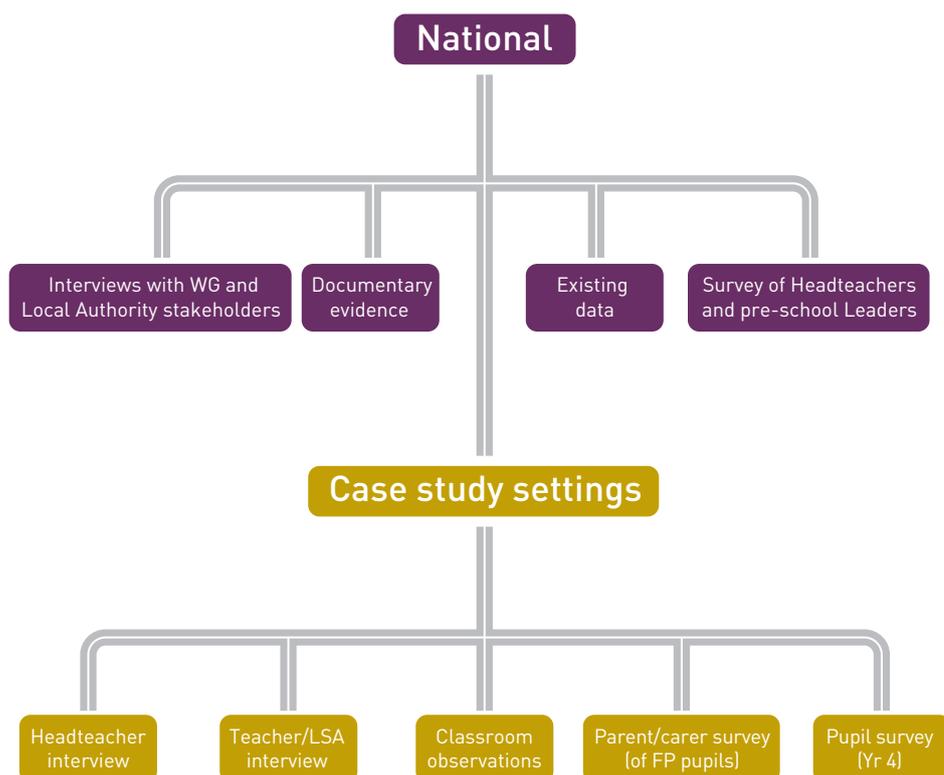
The national element of the project is now beginning to draw to a close, with the Welsh Government and Local Authority stakeholder interviews almost complete, and the Headteacher and pre-school Leaders survey data soon to be analysed. When published, these data will provide an overall picture of how the Foundation Phase has been received and implemented across Wales.

Existing data held in the National Pupil Database is also being analysed and a forthcoming report will focus on how initial Foundation Phase outcomes compare with its predecessor (Key Stage 1) and how the Key Stage 2 results from children who attended the pilot Foundation Phase schools compare to the Key Stage 2 results from children who attended non-Foundation Phase schools. Issues surrounding adult/child ratios and staff qualifications will also be considered.

In addition to the above, a 'Programme Theory' report is also due to be published soon by the Welsh Government, providing the first documentary analysis of official material on the Foundation Phase. In doing so, the report provides an initial Logic Model by linking the underpinning Foundation Phase rationale and approach to the suggested pedagogy, statutory curriculum and intended outcomes.

The next phase of the project will focus on 50 randomly selected case study settings (40 schools and 10 pre-schools), and this is due to start immediately. Visits to each of these settings will encompass interviews with key staff, as well as classroom observations, direct work with children and a parent/carer survey. By working closely with these case study settings, the research aims to add important detail to the national work described above and assess in detail how the Foundation Phase is being implemented across Wales and what the initial outcomes might be.

For more information, please visit [www.wiserd.ac.uk/foundationphase](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/foundationphase)



# £1m investment to advance education research in Wales

## WISERD EDUCATION

**WISERD has successfully secured a £1m investment into the development of education research in Wales with the establishment of WISERDEDUCATION.**

This Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) funded programme has the potential to change the landscape of education research in Wales and will put Wales at the forefront of research-capacity building developments in the UK and beyond. It will build on WISERD's existing networks and infrastructure to develop a unique combination of data integration and longitudinal studies to provide a resource for ongoing and sustainable increases in educational research activity. It will draw together high-quality research expertise from across the Welsh universities to focus on the educational issues confronting Welsh society, thereby contributing to the development of more effective educational provision, from early years through to higher education and lifelong learning.

The central aims of this exciting new programme are:

- to enhance the capacity to carry out high-quality educational research within universities in Wales;
- to undertake research activities designed to sustain and enhance the quality of learning and the standards of teaching and teacher education in Wales;
- to work with teacher educators, practitioners, policy-makers and other stakeholders to maximise the usefulness of education research;
- to put in place an infrastructure which will ensure that this capacity and activity can be sustained.

*WISERD is a splendid example of how we can achieve truly excellent research capacity in Wales by combining the skills of top-class researchers across a number of universities. I'm delighted that it is now possible to apply this intellectual firepower to some of the challenging issues around education policy in Wales where, as devolution progresses, the need for capacity to comment on policy and its outcomes from a position of solid analysis and evidence can only grow*

**Professor Philip Gummett, HEFCW**

The four inter-related sets of activities that frame WISERDEDUCATION are:

1. **Research Infrastructure** enhancement to lay the foundations for a robust and sustainable research future in Wales. This will improve the functionality of existing data sets through data integration and better access, and the establishment of longitudinal studies of different age cohorts and institutions.
2. A series of **Research Projects** generated by the enhanced research infrastructure which will address key challenges within the Welsh education system.
3. **Researcher Capacity Building** across Wales to provide opportunities for postgraduate and other early career researchers to undertake research alongside those with greater experience.
4. Finally, the programme will facilitate a range of **Translational Activities** which will enable practitioners, policy-makers and university staff engaged in initial and continuing teacher education to make the most of evidence emanating from educational research.

The establishment of a series of cohort and institution studies in different areas of Wales will be one of the most innovative and exciting aspects of WISERDEDUCATION's programme. The data from these studies will create a virtual laboratory for social science research which can be used to increase engagement and promote capacity building in a cost-effective way.

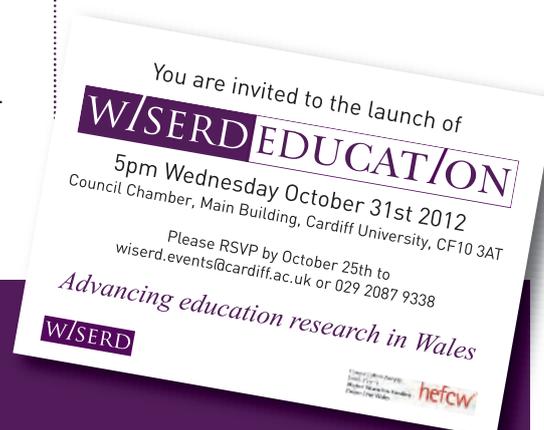
Professor Sally Power, the Co-Director of WISERD who will lead WISERDEDUCATION, said: "This investment will place Wales at the forefront of educational research capacity building and harness the impetus that has been developed through WISERD to foster increased educational research activity in Wales."

A major feature of the programme is to offer less experienced and novice researchers the real opportunity of working with more experienced education researchers, either within Wales or elsewhere. WISERDEDUCATION will seek to extend the skills of education researchers, particularly in the area of quantitative and mixed method approaches, by providing a framework for capacity building which emphasises the importance of actually doing research.

In addition, the enhanced research infrastructure will generate robust data for a series of research projects and provide a highly effective vehicle for developing new forms of collaborative activity, across the Welsh universities and more widely.

#### **Launch event**

WISERDEDUCATION will be officially launched at Cardiff University on October 31st 2012 at 5.00pm. For more information, please email [wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk)



*I am delighted WISERD has been successful in obtaining this grant to build research capacity in Wales. Obviously following devolution where Wales is responsible for education, it is important that Wales has a strong research base to inform and contribute to educational policy formulation in Wales given the importance of improving the skills base of the economy which is necessary if Wales is to compete successfully in the global economy.*

**Professor David Blackaby, Co-Director WISERD Swansea and Director of Research, College of Business Economics and Law, Swansea University.**

*The creation of WISERDEDUCATION represents a significant extension of the work that WISERD has been doing over recent years. The development of an infrastructure to support genuinely collaborative social science across Welsh universities is a key element in enabling internationally high-quality work to be carried out by researchers in Wales. We are very pleased that this award from HEFCW will enable WISERD to extend this approach to the field of educational research.*

**Professor Gareth Rees, Director of WISERD.**

# WISERD 2013

The WISERD 2013 Conference will take place on June 25th and 26th at the University of Glamorgan, attracting colleagues from academic, policy, public, private and third sectors.

**Following on from three successful events in Cardiff, Swansea and Bangor; the WISERD conference has become established as one of the most important events in the social science calendar.**

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## Keynote Speakers

We are delighted to introduce the three keynote speakers for the 2013 conference: Professor David Martin, Professor Laura McAllister and Professor Lindsay Paterson.

### Prof. David Martin

David Martin is Professor of Geography at the University of Southampton and a co-director of both the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods and UK Data Service. David began his academic career as a lecturer in the School of City and Regional Planning at Cardiff University, where he wrote one of the first textbooks on the socioeconomic applications of geographical information systems.



He moved to Southampton in 1992 and his interest methods for the geographical representation of population data have been reflected in his longstanding research collaboration with the Office for National Statistics, leading to the system of output areas used in 2001 and 2011 censuses. For ten years he directed ESRC's Census Programme and he is currently a member of ESRC Council.

### Prof. Laura McAllister

Laura McAllister is Professor of Governance at the University of Liverpool's School of Management. She was educated at Bryntirion Comprehensive School, Bridgend and is a graduate of the London School of Economics and Cardiff University where she completed a PhD in politics.



Laura was a member of the Richard Commission on the Powers and Electoral Arrangements for National Assembly for Wales that reported in March 2004 and advisor to the Sir Roger Jones Independent Review of AMs' Pay and Support in 2008-9. Laura's principal academic interests centre

# Conference

on public administration and politics, specifically: devolution, Welsh politics and elections, sport and public policy, gender and politics. She has written extensively on these areas and her recent books include *Plaid Cymru, The Emergence of a Political Party* (2001), *Women and Constitutional Politics in Wales* (2007), and a forthcoming biography of Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas, *Presiding Officer at the National Assembly* (2012). She is Honorary Visiting Professor at Cardiff University, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia and the China National School of Administration, Beijing. Laura is a political analyst for BBC Wales and a regular commentator on Welsh and British politics and elections.

A former Wales football international and national team captain with 24 caps, Laura has been a member of Sport Wales Board since April 2006 and was Vice Chair of the Council from March 2007 to January 2010. Laura was appointed Sport Wales Chair with effect from 1st February 2010. She is also a Board Member of UK Sport.

## Prof. Lindsay Paterson

Lindsay Paterson is Professor of Educational Policy in the School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh, where he teaches courses in educational policy and research methods. Most of his research is based on the statistical analysis of large-scale social surveys.



His main substantive interests are in education, civic engagement and political attitudes. He has published widely on school effectiveness, on the expansion of higher education (including on social-class inequalities of access to higher education), on social mobility and on the relationship between education and civic values.

He has extensive experience of using longitudinal data, notably from the Scottish School Leavers' Survey, the large British cohort studies and the British Household Panel Study. He has served on the ESRC Research Resources Board (2003-7), and has been commissioned on several occasions to provide policy advice to the Scottish Parliament's Education Committee and to the Scottish Government. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

## The Call for Papers is now open

We are inviting submissions for papers and posters across themed and open strands.

The themes are:

- Health and wellbeing
- Education
- Environment
- Labour markets
- Innovations in research methods
- Identity

Submissions for the open strands should reflect the research interests and priorities of the social science and policy sectors within Wales, the UK and internationally.

We are welcoming proposals for papers, sessions and posters from academic and non-academic colleagues, to be submitted via abstracts of no more than 500 words.

The deadline for all submissions is December 14th 2012. Please visit the WISERD website to download a pro forma. All proposals should be emailed to [wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk)

## New for 2013

We are teaming up with the Wales Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) to host a PhD strand at the conference and a competition for the best PhD poster and paper presented at the conference.

## Booking

Booking for the conference opens on 1st March 2013 with early bird rates applying until 4th May 2013. Further information about the conference and how to book will be available from the WISERD website. [www.wiserd.ac.uk](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk).

# Measuring access to public transport opportunities and transport-related social exclusion

**WISERD Co-Director Professor Gary Higgs and Dr Mitch Langford from the GIS Research Centre at the University of Glamorgan have used an innovative mapping technique – known as Floating Catchment Analysis – to measure public transport accessibility in relation to social disadvantage.**

Previous studies have highlighted the link between various dimensions of social exclusion and a range of transport indicators and have drawn attention to the potential implications of variations in access to transport services for disadvantaged communities.

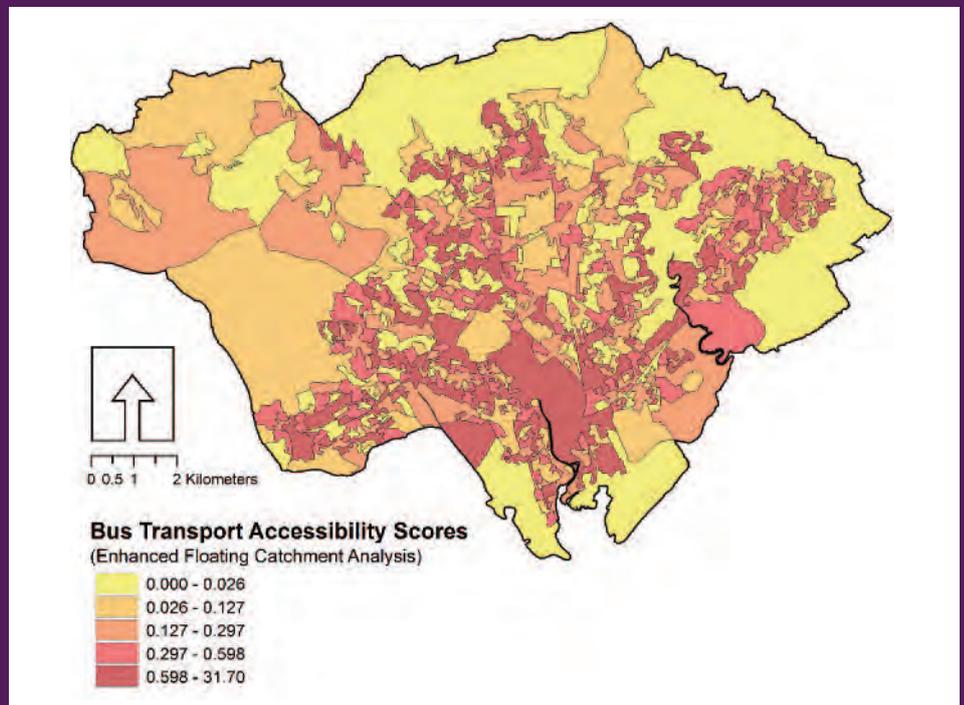
In addition, several UK Government policy reports over the last decade have highlighted the importance of accessibility to public transport as a component of transport-related social exclusion. In a previous article (WISERD News, Issue 3) we described research which involved the use of publicly available bus timetable information to derive more nuanced measures of accessibility to transport opportunities. Briefly this incorporated aspects of proximity to bus stops, the balance between service supply and demand, and cumulative opportunity and provided enhancements to an existing measure based on 'floating catchment analysis' (FCA) techniques.

We concluded by suggesting that by using such measures researchers have the potential to explore small area variations in accessibility as part of wider studies investigating potential associations with existing (and projected) socio-economic patterns. This in turn should enable transport planners to identify locations where additional services could be provided to satisfy potential demand as well as permitting the implications of service reconfiguration in relation to changing patterns of social disadvantage to be monitored.

In our follow-up research we have been concerned with investigating the distribution of access to transport opportunities in relation to spatial patterns of social disadvantage and geodemographic area classifications, based on UK 2001 Census data, across the city of Cardiff. In so-doing we have drawn on previous studies that have identified the characteristics of those groups more likely to be dependent on public transport in order to gauge levels of association with these enhanced FCA measures. Here we outline how a publicly available social area classification (namely the National Classification of Census Output Areas (OAC)) published by the Office for National Statistics has been used to investigate potential associations with disadvantage within the city.

This neighbourhood classification is based on 41 census variables measuring aspects of demography, household composition, ethnic identity, health, employment, occupation, commuting practices, housing tenure and accommodation type. A complex clustering algorithm is used to derive, at the highest level of aggregation, seven 'Supergroup' clusters which represent Output Areas (OAs) with similar socioeconomic profiles and these are used here to compare our FCA access measures with socio-economic measures in order to examine spatial patterns in supply of public transport opportunities and potential demand for such services.

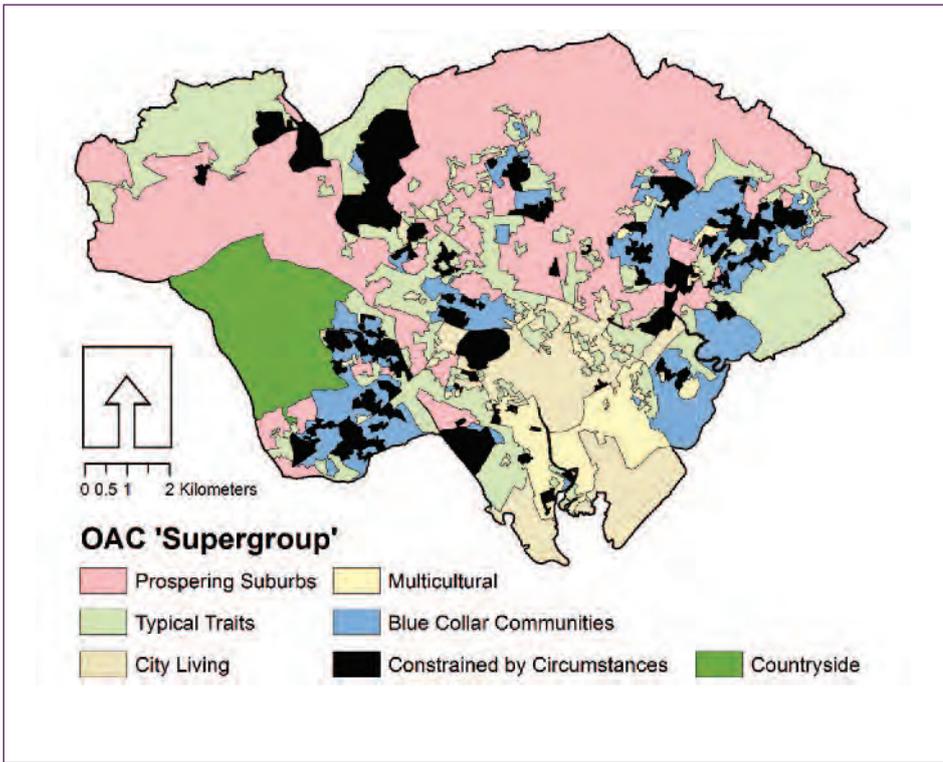
Figure 1 shows the spatial patterns in the enhanced accessibility measures for the city of Cardiff and reveals complex and finely detailed patterns of accessibility at the OA level.



**Figure 1: Variations in enhanced FCA scores for Cardiff**

These are described in more detail in a forthcoming paper (Langford et al, in press) but broadly show high scores in the areas of the city such as Ely, Gabalfa, Llanrumney, and St. Mellons, and the inner city districts of Splott, Butetown

and Cathays. In contrast, generally more affluent areas to the north of the city have lower accessibility scores on this measure. However, it is also noticeable that there are often intricate variations in accessibility within many neighbourhoods that do not appear to bear any close relationship to patterns of material deprivation.



**Figure 2: The Census Output Area classification for Cardiff**

Figure 2 shows the distribution of OAC Supergroups in Cardiff. Figure 3 presents box plots which show the median score and inter-quartile range for each of the seven

'supergroups' in order to draw out broader contrasts between the neighbourhood types. These trends tend to mirror those of other measures of deprivation (such as the Townsend Index) and are consistent across a range of accessibility measures we have studied for the city, namely that access

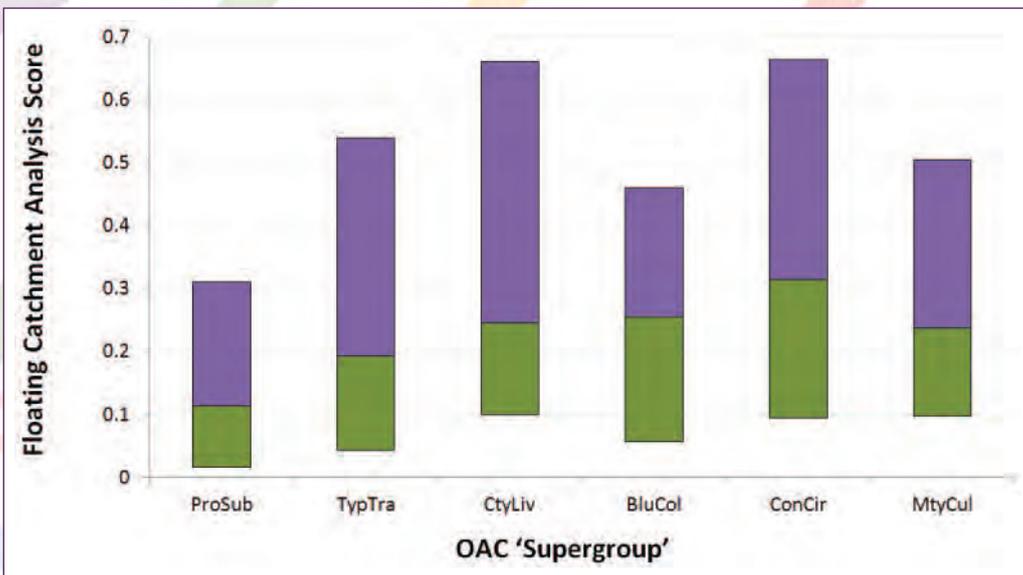
## References

Langford, M., Fry, R. and Higgs, G. (2012) Measuring transit system accessibility using a modified two-step floating catchment technique, *International Journal of Geographical Information Science*, 26(2), 193-214.

Langford, M., Higgs, G. and Fry, R. (in press) Using Floating Catchment Analysis (FCA) techniques to examine intra-urban variations in accessibility to public transport opportunities: the example of Cardiff, Wales, *Journal of Transport Geography*, forthcoming.

Vickers, D. And Rees, P. (2007) Creating the UK National Statistics 2001 output area classification, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society Series A*, 170, 379-403.

scores tend to be higher in more deprived areas as identified on these indices. Thus for example the 'Prosperous Suburbs' class of OAs tend to have lower access scores than the 'Constrained by Circumstances' Supergroup.



**Figure 3: Variations in access scores by OAC Classification for Cardiff**

The analysis conducted to date has been very much of an exploratory nature and there are a number of research strands that could be followed up. Although the findings are consistent across a range of standard deprivation indices and accessibility metrics, the enhanced access scores based on detailed bus timetable information and access points show complex patterns which we suggest are worthy of further study.

There are subtle differences in association that could be a result of the detailed

methodologies adopted but that also provides more insight into detailed patterns of transport related social exclusion at the OA level. In this study we have taken an ecological approach that has enabled an analysis of the association of FCA scores with census-based measures that permits an objective comparison of access to public transport opportunities with respect to aggregate measures of social disadvantage.

Further research is needed to see if these findings are replicable in other contexts

and to demonstrate how these potential measures of accessibility relate to transport users perceptions and experiences of public transport utilisation within the city. Nevertheless the use of such innovative public transport accessibility measures have real potential in transport planning both from the perspective of monitoring the spatial and social equity implications of service re-configuration as well as in aiding targeted policy interventions in response to current and projected levels of transport-related social exclusion.

# Living Streets

## Digital storytelling with young women in Grangetown

WISERD Research Associate, Dr Kate Moles, has successfully secured funding to run a digital storytelling project with young women living in Cardiff.

Building on the success of the Beacon for Wales funded 'Sounding the Way' project in 2011 – where young male residents of Grangetown produced audio walks allowing them to explore their community and express their identities – this new project will involve the women of Grangetown.

The 'Living Streets' project will utilise Google Earth technology to enable the participants to layer audio memories, stories and experiences with photographs, and video clips to create a living street walk. Working through Google Earth will enable the walk to 'live' beyond the project, as other groups within the community can continue to add their own stories, photos and experiences as the area and the community evolves and changes. The resources created can be used by different groups who want to explore ideas of place in their community.

"The work we did with the group of young men in Grangetown was extremely successful. The men involved developed a number of important life skills; namely increased confidence and an understanding of their own ability to achieve things" commented Dr Moles.

"The 'Living Streets' project will allow the young women to get to know members of their community, to talk with people they might not otherwise talk with and to look at places through new eyes that provide them with a new perspective and understanding of the cultural and social issues that make up that place.



"Being the creators and initiators of this project has the potential to offer a long life span within the area and enable the girls to leave their own legacy to the area they have grown up in" Dr Moles added.

The project is one of seven successful applications awarded up to £500 as part of Cardiff University's Community Engagement Team (CET) Small Grants Scheme. The CET aims to support and develop public engagement activities, and the final reports from all seven projects will be used as case studies to promote best practice in engaging the public with academic work.



# Intersectionality and the Spaces of Belonging

In June 2012, the Belonging and Ethnicity Research Group at Bangor University, organised and hosted an international two-day conference on the themes of 'intersectionality' – currently a widely discussed methodological concept across the humanities and social sciences – and 'spaces of belonging' – a field that would refer primarily belonging to national or cultural spaces, but which would also be open enough to include a wider variety of spaces and forms of belonging.

The conference was a collaborative venture between the School of Social Sciences at Bangor University, the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research Data and Methods (WISERD), the Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging at the University of East London, as well as the British Sociological Association Social Theory Study Group.

Reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the conference were the three keynote speakers, each of whom being leading figures in the fields of gender, postcolonialism, racism and nationalism.

Professor Nira Yuval-Davis, Director of the Centre on Migration, Refugees and Belonging, University of East London, presented on the title of her new book 'The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Constellations', in which she sets out the mutually constitutive and overlapping character of divisions of class, gender, ethnicity. A key point in this debate is whether analytical categories of identity can ever do justice to the subjective and lived experience of belonging that they are meant to capture. Rather, as qualitative research often demonstrates, the spaces of belonging are the spaces in-between the categories of identity ascribed to them. Professor Jie-Hyun Lim, Director of the Institute of Comparative History and Culture, Hanyang University, Seoul, South Korea, discussed the complexity of forms of nationalism that are based on a sense, or an experience, of being victims, typically, of other nationalisms. However, whilst the injury forms the basis of identity, often what people keep doing is to be fixated on the injury and not concentrate on its politics. It has to be resolved by working through its politics and moving on. Yet it is also important to not hold on to an identity once it has met its purpose.

Thirdly, Dr Gurminder Bhambra, Director of the Social Theory Research Centre, University of Warwick, revisited the classic sociological study 'Middletown: A Study of Modern American Culture' published by Robert and Helen Lynd in 1929. It became a best-seller and was seen to represent "typical" American society. The study projected an image of the town which was seen to be quintessentially American. However, in erasing the existence of the African Americans, an essentially all-white community was created, a myth perpetuated by subsequent sociological work. The sociological representation of Middletown reflected dominant conceptions of the US as a homogenous white society with others seen as marginal and unnecessary.

A particular insight from this discussion, is how mid-twentieth century community studies, both in the US and in Britain, were shaped by the wider national self-images of the time, and which could lead to the exclusion of others from sociological discourse. For example, within the British sociology of race relations during the 1970s there appeared to be a monopoly upon black and ethnic minorities from former commonwealth migrants. Whilst, reflecting the significance of the empire, class and colonialism for understanding Britain, it also resulted in little attention to other kinds of racisms.

As an initial output, the organisers are publishing an in-depth overview of the conference on H-Net ([www.h-net.org](http://www.h-net.org)). This brings together the reports of the conference sessions that were written by several attendants. Link to the various audio and visual files of the keynote presentations are also available via the conference website. For more information see [berg.bangor.ac.uk](http://berg.bangor.ac.uk).

# New maps, new methods:

## Students and WISERD at the cutting edge

During the recent summer holiday, two Cardiff University students have carried out research for the WISERD funded Biomapping project. This innovative research, devised and constructed by Dr Chris Taylor (Cardiff School of Social Sciences) and Dr Jon Anderson (Cardiff School of Planning and Geography), explores the biophysical and emotional relationship between people and place.

**The students were awarded a bursary by the Cardiff University Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (CUROP) to collect experimental data. Here they explain more about the research they carried out and how it will help them in their final year dissertations.**

During the summer we have been conducting research as part of the CUROP award to investigate the relationship between people and place, using a state of the art piece of equipment called a Q sensor. The Q sensor measures our galvanic skin response to our surrounding environments, which is then produced as a graph. This project combines qualitative analysis with quantitative data which is a new approach for studying human geography.

Our main aim of the project was to test the utility of the Q sensor in recording emotional responses to place. We hoped that the research would provide us with reliable and original data that shows how place can affect people in various environments. Previously the compatibility of Quantitative measuring and Qualitative interpretation has been restricted. We hoped that the project would combine the two ways of analysing through the statistical results of the Q sensor with our own qualitative recordings.

In order to ensure that the research would take into account both forms of data collection, it was vital we carried out all research together. This would ensure we had enough evidence to prove our data was relevant and that the readings from the sensor matched our own recordings of events. Throughout our data collection we used primary methods which included a field diary, a voice recorder and also a GPS mapping device to back up the Q sensors findings. We could then correlate the readings from the Q sensor with our own record of events to ensure that we could sufficiently explain and analyse the findings and therefore backup our own ideas with statistical evidence. To test the sensor effectively we covered a range of different environments for emotional aspects of human geography, from the urban rush of London and Cardiff, to the

tranquillity of rural life in and around the New Forest. Not only this, we also looked into the role of the mobilities turn within human geography, by looking at the way in which different transport modes can alter our emotional responses.

From the field our data has identified some key initial findings which have been relevant to both topics. Firstly the data recorded by the Q sensor does correlate to our primary data collection, for example specific points throughout the Q sensor graph can be linked back to, and explained by, our recordings in our field diary. A crucial finding in this early stage of the project was that unless we are put in a position where we need to engage with place, for example crossing a road or engaging with another person, we tend not to be too affected by our surroundings; whereas, in places unfamiliar or unknown to us our readings tend to be higher and more erratic. However, we feel that being in the company of another person, which has been essential to carrying out the research, has played a part in reducing our engagement with place, through communication and feeling at ease in each other's company.

We are hoping that the research we have carried out has sufficiently tested the effectiveness of the sensor as a means of measuring emotional responses. This primary study has not only provided us with research material for our individual dissertations, but we hope that it enables a continuation of research in this field. We also hope that the data from the Q sensor will be useful in affecting policy for example for future planning authorities in regeneration schemes which would take into consideration the importance of people's perceptions of place.

We feel privileged to be some of the first students to test the equipment and we are pleased to say that it has been effective for our specific purpose in providing us with reliable and innovative research for our dissertations. We hope that our work can aid further studies into the relationship between people and place.

**Jenny Olley and Abbey Coles  
BSc Geography (Human) and Planning,  
Cardiff School of Planning and Geography**

# Funding awarded to examine labour market consequences of cuts in public spending

Colleagues from Swansea and Cardiff Universities have successfully secured funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Secondary Data Analysis Initiative to examine the effects of spending cuts on labour market inequality and work quality.

The project - The Labour market Implications of Changes in the Public Sector: Inequality and Work Quality - will also explore the nature of regional variations in public-private sector wage differences and consider the intrinsic quality of work in the public sector compared to work in the private sector.

The 18 month project will be led by Professor Philip Murphy, Director of Learning and Teaching at Swansea University's Department of Economics, and Convenor of the WISERD Thematic Network on Employment, Skills and Training.

Professor Murphy said, "With estimations that up to 710,000 public sector jobs will be lost as a result of public spending cuts, this study is important in helping to identify the likely implications on the UK labour market.

"We are delighted to have secured this funding from the ESRC and we're confident that the results of the study will be of interest to academic research communities not only in the UK, but in areas of Europe and North America that are facing similar structural changes due to funding cuts.

"Furthermore, working with WISERD on this study will provide a vehicle for ensuring that the results of the research are disseminated to a wide audience spanning a number of disciplines in the social sciences" Professor Murphy added.

The study will be based on the secondary data analysis of four existing sources of data: The Quarterly Labour Force Survey, The Annual Population Survey, Understanding Society, and The Skills and Employment Survey (2012) and its predecessors.

The ESRC Secondary Data Analysis Initiative was launched in 2011 and the call for the first phase of funding closed in April this year. The £10.8 million initiative aims to deliver impact policy and practitioner relevant research through the deeper exploitation of major data resources.

The first phase of the initiative will fund around 20 small scale projects of up to £200,000 (at full economic cost) each.

## Research Team

**Professor Philip Murphy,**  
Swansea University

**Professor David Blackaby,**  
Swansea University and  
WISERD Co-Director

**Dr Melanie Jones,**  
Swansea University

**Professor Alan Felstead,**  
Cardiff University,  
School of Social Sciences

**Professor Gerald Makepeace,**  
Cardiff University,  
Cardiff Business School

**Dr Victoria Wass,**  
Cardiff University,  
Cardiff Business School

# Exporting activity and productivity in Wales:

## A micro-economic analysis

WISERD researchers at Swansea University have produced a report to the Welsh Government examining the relationship between productivity and exports by using company accounts data and taking a regional perspective.

Existing evidence suggests that exporting firms are more productive than non-exporting firms. However, the direction of causality between exporting and productivity is likely to imply significantly different policy approaches. Proponents of free trade, openness and globalizations see exports as a causal factor in increasing productivity. Others have pointed to the barriers to exporting as requiring threshold levels of productivity prior to exporting.

In one theory, productivity is causally related to exports with more productive firms choosing to export. The common explanations are that exporting is a costly business (e.g., transportation costs, distribution costs, marketing costs, networking costs etc). These costs provide barriers to undertaking exporting, so that only the more productive firms engage in exporting. Wagner (2005) suggests that productive firms might be more forward-looking, where the desire to export tomorrow leads them to be more productive today. In either case, there is a conscious self-selection explanation for exporting. A firm that wants to export works hard to satisfy international buyers. Firms then make investment decisions just for that purpose. Thus, the enterprises make a “technological” effort prior to entering the export market.

The alternative hypothesis relates to learning-by-exporting, whereby knowledge flows from international buyers and competitors, helping to improve the productivity of exporters. Competition with foreign firms induces firms to improve otherwise they are likely to lose access to international markets. Thus in this case, firms become more productive as a result of exporting.

Whilst there is substantial evidence for both hypotheses, the self-selection and learning-by-exporting hypotheses are not mutually exclusive. The correlation between exports and productivity indicates only that the two characteristics are associated with each other but the causality may run in either or both directions. Distinguishing between these two hypotheses has important policy implications. If more productive firms self-select into the export market, policies aimed at stimulating competition on the domestic market may be expected to improve export performance. If, on the other hand, exporting increases productivity, this may suggest a case for supporting exporting firms in order to reduce the cost of exporting, particularly by lowering the barriers to exporting. The more dominant relationship is likely to have a clearer rationale for policy support.

The broad aims of the project were to consider:

- the associations between performance (defined as productivity and profitability) and exporting behaviour of firms in Wales
- the gap between the performance (defined as productivity and profitability) of exporters compared to non-exporters in Wales

We use the Company Accounts database Financial Accounts Made Easy (FAME) for the period 2002-2010 to test these relationships for Wales and the whole of the UK.

Findings from the firm level analyses for Wales and the UK show that exporting companies in Wales are more productive than the non-exporters. There is weak evidence that the probability of exporting is determined by past performance of firms in Wales, which suggests that self-selection is less apparent in our data, compared with previous studies. We conclude that the more productive firms appear to experience a smaller export premium than those at the lower end of the productivity distribution.

The more robust parametric results relate chiefly to UK data, where we have a sufficient number of observations to build a balanced panel of companies, for which we consider post- and pre- export performance. Our findings indicate weak evidence of self-selection but stronger support for the learning by doing hypothesis since we find evidence that exporting improves productivity for the average firm, once region, firm size, firm age and industry are controlled for.

Further, non-parametric analysis on Welsh firms reveals that at the high end of the distribution of a variety of performance measures, the exporting is a less relevant observable characteristic. Thus, for the most productive and profitable firms, it appears to be an empirical point whether exporters are better rather than a foregone conclusion (as it appears at the lower end of the productivity distribution, where exporters always outperform non-exporters). Grouping our industries according to whether or not they are in a Priority Sector also reveals that there is a less clear-cut distinction between the distributions of exporters and non-exporters in priority sectors. The Priority

Sector split implies that high performance firms are less affected by the decision to export. That is, there is a less clearly observable difference between exporters and non-exporters amongst Priority Sector located firms than is the case amongst non-Priority Sector firms in Wales.

Firms in Priority Sectors display many of the characteristics associated with exporters (i.e. high performance practices such as innovation and better management – attributes that are not observable in our data), which suggests that the use of Priority Sectors has been a useful means of identifying the sort of firms that are likely to have the dynamic capabilities to perform above the average firm.

**Catherine Robinson, Mamata Parhi, Panos Fouskas and David Blackaby**  
WISERD, Swansea University



# Creating a literary Map of Wales

Dr Jon Anderson (Cardiff University) and Dr Sarah Morse (Swansea University) are carrying out a fascinating project seeking to interview a number of Welsh authors about the role of geographies in their fictional work to create a literary map of Wales.

The project involves interviews with 16 authors using a mobile methodology through the real and imagined places that form the geographies of their published work. These 'talk walks' will be recorded in both audio and visual formats and the transcriptions from the interviews will contribute to an academic monograph.

The audio-visual podcasts of the interviews will be produced to compile a GIS-informed interactive literary map of Wales. The researchers have therefore teamed up with WISERD due to the mixed methods, qualitative GIS and multi-media nature of the project.

Many of the places covered in the talk walks correlate closely with the areas studied in WISERD's Localities Research Programme; including Heads of the Valleys, Ceredigion and Anglesey/North-West Wales. The material generated from the Localities stakeholder interviews will complement the new material generated by this project in order to provide an alternative conceptualisation of these places.

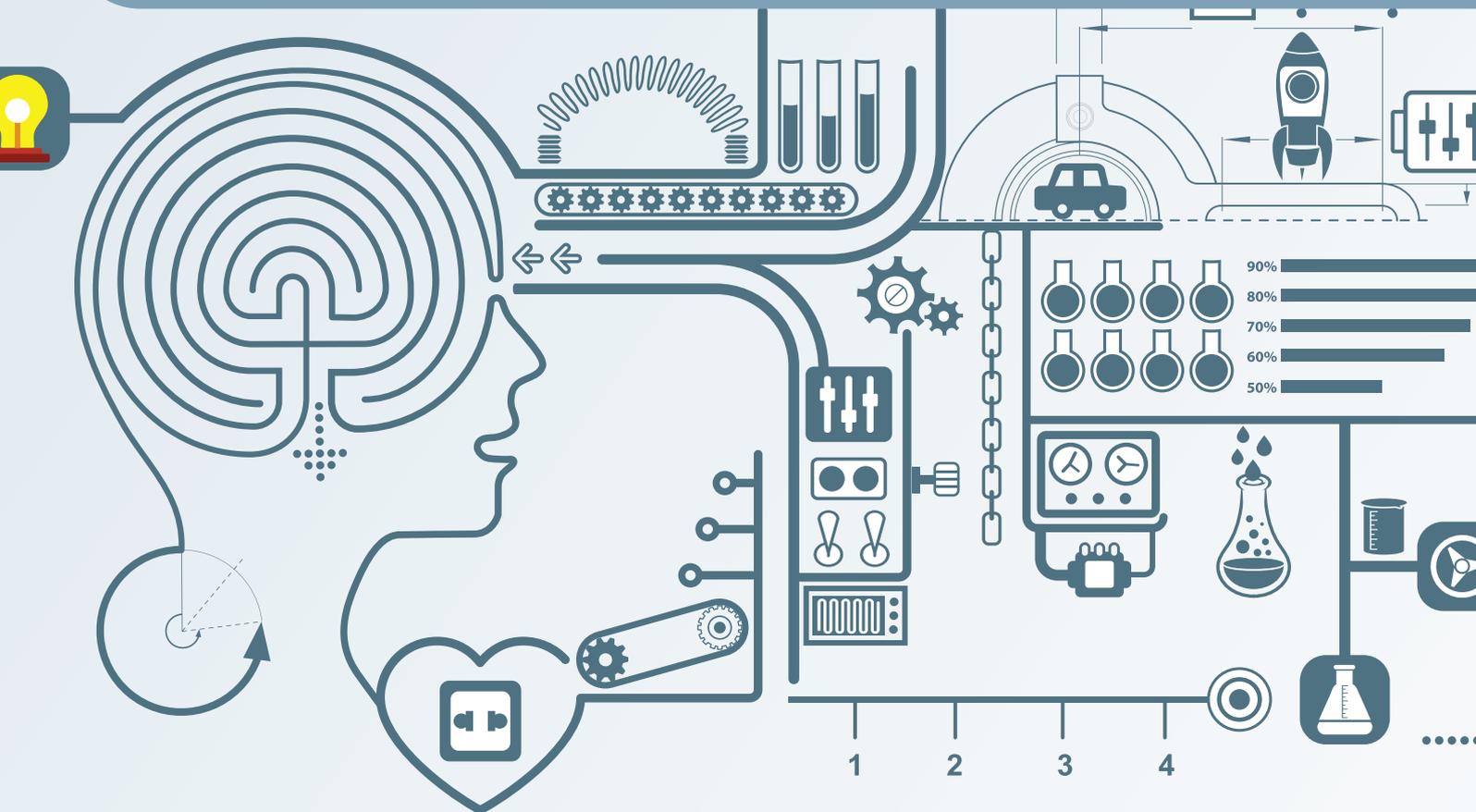
The project forms part of an established book contract in the 'Spatial Practices' book series entitled 'Page and Place: Ongoing Compositions of Plot' by Drs Anderson and Morse. The book attempts to draw on literature as a key resource to provide insight into the connections between humans and place, in both material and psychological senses.

According to Dr Anderson, "This book seeks to examine the key relationships between literary and literal worlds. It explores how the imaginary worlds of stories and novels intersect, conflict, and supplement our understanding of the material locations around us."

The book will also argue that the literary and literal are closely related by exploring how literature can reshape our perception of the world. "The book will explore issues of representation, interpretation and consumption of pages and the places they connect to. It may be common to frame the relationship between the literary and the literal as separate and bounded – distinguished by a 'symbolic boundary' that keeps apart the 'imagined' and the 'real' world. However, this book suggests this boundary itself is more imagined than real" Dr Anderson added.

**For more information about the project visit [www.spatialmanifesto.com/research-projects/literary-geographies](http://www.spatialmanifesto.com/research-projects/literary-geographies)**

# Update on Knowledge Exchange



WISERD has been successful in gaining funding for two projects through the ESRC's Knowledge Exchange Opportunities Scheme.

## **Evidence Symposia: exploring the evidence base on key policy themes**

This project, funded through the ESRC Knowledge Exchange Opportunities Scheme in collaboration with the Welsh Government, aims to encourage knowledge exchange between academic social scientists and policy makers/practitioners in Wales on a number of important policy and academic questions.

A series of four evidence symposia will be organised, on themes mutually agreed to be of current academic and policy interest. The events will bring together leading experts and senior policy makers and practitioners to challenge the evidence base on important, cross cutting policy questions, and discuss the potential policy implications.

The first of these events was held in June 2012 and focused on issues related to measuring wellbeing. Presentations were made by colleagues from the Office for National Statistics (ONS); the New Economics Foundation (NEF); and WISERD. The event was a success, attracting a high number of participants from across the academic, policy and third sectors, and stimulating fruitful debate.

## **Developing a data discovery and sharing infrastructure for quantitative and qualitative socio-economic data via the WISERD GeoPortal**

This project, funded through the ESRC's Knowledge Exchange Follow on Funding Scheme, aims to continue and broaden the work started by WISERD to develop an infrastructure that facilitates the discovery and sharing of socio-economic datasets across national government, local government and national data repositories via a variety of mechanisms.

The project will enable technical development of the WISERD GeoPortal to continue, leading to improved functionality and usability. In addition, further work will be carried out, in collaboration with end users and partners, on exploring methodological and technical enhancements to the portal. Lastly, work will also be undertaken on dissemination, marketing, and the organisation of training events for end users and stakeholders.

# Unequal Wales Seminar Series

WISERD is delighted to be supporting the Wales Governance Centre (WGC) in hosting the Unequal Wales Seminar Series in the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay.

Professor Richard Wyn Jones, Director of the Wales Governance Centre, explains the context and importance of the series:

“In recent years social science researchers working under the auspices of WISERD have conducted a programme of innovative and hugely important research focusing on inequality in Wales - not inequality in some abstract sense but rather as the lived experience of real people in real places. This research could and should have a significant impact on public policy. By working in cooperation with each other, the aim of the Wales Governance Centre and WISERD is to

make policy makers and Welsh civil society more generally aware of the findings.

“This seminar series will map the contours of social and economic inequality in contemporary Wales. The challenges are, without doubt, huge. But without a sound understanding of the multiple and intersecting problems that assail Unequal Wales, solutions will be even more elusive.

“This seminar series is a genuinely important innovation and the Wales Governance Centre is proud to be involved in its organisation.”

Date	Topic	Speakers
28th November 2012	Regional/market facing public sector pay and the Welsh economy	David Blackaby Phil Murphy
7th February 2013	Homelessness, legislation and social justice in Wales	Peter Mackie
13th March 2013	Inequalities in Access to Higher Education	Gareth Rees Chris Taylor
16th April 2013	Welsh Speakers and the Labour Market	Robin Mann Stephen Drinkwater
1st May 2013	The Elderly and Access to Services in Rural Wales	Jesse Heley Laura Jones
4th June 2013	Class, Lifestyles and Health Inequalities	Ian Rees Jones
3rd July 2013	Migrant Workers in Wales	Stephen Drinkwater Andy Thompson

**Time: 5.45-7.30pm beginning with a drinks reception**  
**The events are free to attend.**  
**To register your place, please RSVP to [rumbulra@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:rumbulra@cardiff.ac.uk)**

# WISERD hosts first NCRM training series in Wales

WISERD is delighted to be hosting a series of National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) node events – the first series of its kind to take place in Wales.

The NCRM nodes were launched in 2011 as part of a £7.2m investment by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to improve the standard of research methods across the UK social science community.

The first three events of this series have been finalised and booking is now open.

## A Short Course on Concepts and Methods in Causal Inference

11th-12th October 2012 at Swansea University  
(jointly hosted by the Health Information Research Unit)

### PATHWAYS NCRM Node

Based at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University of London; the PATHWAYS node aims to identify pathways that link socio-demographic circumstances and biological disadvantage to adult health, and parental family and socio-economic circumstances to infant mortality, with a particular emphasis on the mediating factors that lie on these pathways.

## GIS for Criminology & Law

29th - 30th October 2012 at Cardiff University

### TALISMAN NCRM Node

TALISMAN develops methods for geospatial data analysis and simulation with the aim to act as a catalyst for methodological innovation by forging strong links between research and capacity building. TALISMAN is based at the University of Leeds and the University College London.

## An Introduction to Impact Evaluation Methods

22nd November 2012 at Cardiff University

### PEPA NCRM Node

PEPA aims to stimulate a step change in the conduct of programme evaluation and maximise its value by improving the design of evaluations and improving the way that such evaluations add to the knowledge base. This is achieved through research into programme evaluation methods, a range of training and capacity building activities, and a set of substantive applications which serve as exemplars in the field. PEPA is based at the Institute for Fiscal Studies and cemmap.

Information about all of the ESRC funded NCRM nodes is available here: [www.ncrm.ac.uk/research](http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research)

Future events in the series, to be confirmed soon, will include a course on Mobile Methods linked to narrative approaches (presented by the NOVELLA node), an event on Multilevel Modelling (presented by the LEMMA 3 node) and an event hosted by MODE.

Please check the WISERD website for updates.  
[www.wiserd.ac.uk](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk)

ESRC National Centre for  
**Research**  
**RM**ethods

# Training Events

October 2012 to March 2013

# WISERD

Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research,  
Data & Methods

## Monday 29th – Tuesday 30th October 2012

GIS for Criminology and Law

### Course Leaders:

Dr Nick Malleson and  
Dr Alison Heppenstall  
(School of Geography,  
Leeds University)

### Venue:

WISERD,  
46 Park Place, Cardiff

## Thursday 1st – Friday 2nd November 2012

Teaching Quantitative Methods  
Workshop 3:  
Teaching Data Collection  
and Analysis

### Speakers:

Professor Marc Swyngedouw,  
Centre for Sociological Research,  
University of Leuven;

Professor Donald Treiman,  
Distinguished Professor of Sociology  
Emeritus, UCLA;

Professor Richard L. Zijdeman,  
Department of Sociology,  
Utrecht University

### Venue:

Institute for Social Change,  
University of Manchester

## Thursday 22nd November 2012

An Introduction to Impact  
Evaluation Methods

### Course Leader:

Mike Brewer,  
Institute for Fiscal Studies and  
University of Essex

### Venue:

Glamorgan Building,  
Cardiff University

## Monday 25th – Tuesday 26th March 2013

Teaching Quantitative Methods  
Workshop 4:  
Embedding Quantitative  
Methods in Political Sociology,  
Race, Ethnicity & Migration

### Speakers:

Professor Michael Hout,  
Department of Sociology,  
UC Berkeley

Professor Marc Swyngedouw,  
Centre for Sociological Research,  
University of Leuven;

### Venue:

Aston University,  
Birmingham

## Upcoming conferences

# WISERD 2013 Conference

**25th-26th June 2013**

**Venue: University of Glamorgan**

The fourth annual WISERD Conference will be held on 25th-26th June 2013 in the University of Glamorgan Conference Centre.

We are delighted to confirm Professor David Martin, Professor Lindsay Patterson and Professor Laura McAllister as keynote speakers.

**Call for papers is open! Please see pages 6 and 7 for more information**

Full details of all courses and events are available on the WISERD website [www.wiserd.ac.uk](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk)

To enquire about WISERD events, please email [wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk) or call 029 2087 5345



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