



WISERD

Wales Institute of Social
and Economic Research and Data

WISERD CIVIL SOCIETY

Changing Perspectives on Civic Stratification and Civil Repair



Introduction

Our new ESRC-funded civil society centre will develop and extend the policy-relevant research from our previous civil society programme.

Over the next five years, we'll be undertaking an ambitious new programme of work to transform our understanding of how civil society is affected by forms of civil exclusion and expansion, civic loss and gain, and the potential for civil society organisations to play a key role in civil repair.

The programme includes a number of interrelated work packages that fall within four key themes:

- **Frontiers of civic exclusion and expansion**
- **Polarisation, austerity and civic deficit**
- **Contentious politics of civic gain**
- **Material resources, social innovation and civil repair**

A separate cross-cutting theme will address **data infrastructure** and **data integration**.

Through the production of new empirical evidence and analysis, the programme will address many of the key challenges facing society, such as social and economic inequality, political polarisation and disengagement, migration and multiculturalism, the changing dynamics of work and the gig economy, and the impact of new technological innovations.

This is an interdisciplinary research programme that will build on WISERD expertise and innovation, involving co-investigators across UK universities and in Europe, with international collaborators in Australia, China, India and the USA.

We'll also be working in close partnership with our colleagues from the public, private, policy and third sectors.



Frontiers of civic exclusion and expansion

The contemporary politics of 'belonging' in Britain and elsewhere is rife with tensions that throw up formal and informal types of inclusion and exclusion. This theme addresses these exclusions and the potential expansion in citizen rights.

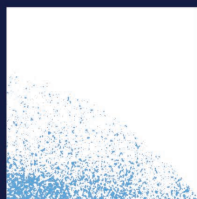
Theme Leads: Paul Chaney (Cardiff University) and Robin Mann (Bangor University)


Borders, boundary mechanisms and migration examines factors shaping civil society engagement with migration and forms of bordering through comparative international case studies and place-based ethnographies, and explores how social boundary activation mechanisms are articulated by civil society groups.

Rhys Dafydd Jones (Aberystwyth University), Bethan Loftus and Robin Mann (Bangor University)

New arenas for civic expansion: humans, animals, and Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) involves cross-national qualitative research to explore what factors shape individualism, and human and nonhuman relations in civil society, with reference to animal rights and welfare, and A.I.

Paul Chaney, Ralph Fevre and Ian Rees Jones (Cardiff University)





Children and young people's rights: formal and informal constructions of citizenship utilises an international comparison of the civic expansion of children's rights in four Western countries (including Wales), and how this can rebalance the civic deficits associated with childhood.

Esther Muddiman, Sally Power and Chris Taylor (Cardiff University)

Identity and civic divides in the UK examines the relationship between different forms of identity (disability, sexuality, religion) and political participation and well-being. It explores whether identity groups experience differential abilities to exercise rights, and possible explanations for any differences.

David Blackaby, Nigel O'Leary (Swansea University) and Melanie Jones (Cardiff University)



The bottom half of the page features a complex abstract design. It includes a large white triangle on the left, a dark blue triangle on the right, and a central white circle. A white wavy line is positioned above the circle. A dark blue figure is on the left, reaching up towards the white triangle. A light blue figure is on the right, reaching down towards the white triangle. The background is a mix of dark blue, orange, and light blue geometric shapes.

THEME 2

Polarisation, austerity and civic deficit

This theme considers the impact of austerity, and increasing economic and political polarisation on different forms of civic loss.

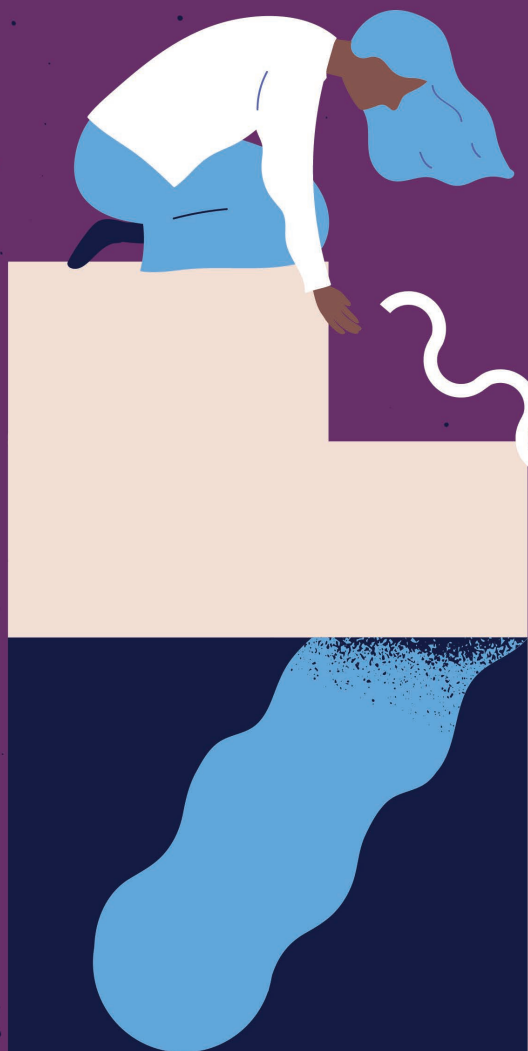
Theme Leads: Jesse Heley (Aberystwyth University) and Sally Power (Cardiff University)

Inequalities, civic loss and well-being uses innovative methods, including app-based surveys of spatial mobility and data linkages, to compare place-based and individual measures of accessibility, and explore how changing patterns of civic loss and gain relate to measures of health and well-being.

Gary Higgs and Mitch Langford (University of South Wales)

Populism, conflict and political polarisation examines the links between shifting political behaviours and changes in employment structures, as well as how populist politics are fostered within places and how civil society can act to address this.

David Blackaby (Swansea University), Stephen Drinkwater (University of Roehampton), Rhys Dafydd Jones and Mike Woods (Aberystwyth University)





Patronage, elites and power relations explores systems of patronage within civil society and the connections between civil society, civic stratification and elite formation. It considers the origins and destinations of patrons in civil society organisations and institutions, as well as the significance of different educational institutions and occupational profiles in affording privileged access to elite positions within civil society.

*Jesse Heley (Aberystwyth University)
and Sally Power (Cardiff University)*

Trust, human rights and civil society within mixed economies of welfare explores different territorial welfare mixes in China and the UK.

*Paul Chaney and Dan Wincott
(Cardiff University)*

Contentious politics of civic gain

This theme considers challenges to established structures and processes of governance and how new civic demands and forms of mobilisation are articulated through civil society.

Theme Leads: Anwen Elias and Mike Woods (Aberystwyth University)

Shifting forms of governance and the grassroots politics of separatism


will undertake comparative case studies in regions where separatist movements are in flux, to understand perceptions of and engagement in separatist conflicts from the bottom-up.

Anwen Elias, Rhys Jones and Elin Royles (Aberystwyth University)

New repertoires of contention and social mobilisation: shifting dynamics of civic stratification and the marketisation of social justice in the energy transition utilises comparative case studies in the UK and Australia to explore how new, technologically-enabled transnational repertoires of social mobilisation contribute to the shifting dynamics of civic stratification in the age of uncertainty. It will interrogate the relationship between the state, the market, individuals and civil society in the politics of the energy transition.

Mike Woods (Aberystwyth University) and Sophie Wynne-Jones (Bangor University)





Trade unions, grass roots activism and solidarity uses case studies from Europe, India and the UK, to examine forms of worker representation that are directly related to the changing role of women in work and society, and associated issues of civic gain and expansion.

Helen Blakely, Rhys Davies, Jean Jenkins (Cardiff University) and Alex Bryson (University College London)

Experts, expertise and citizen science: a case study of air quality monitoring draws on theories and participatory methods from science and technology studies to explore the role of citizens and experts in democratic debates relating to science and the environment.

Rob Evans and Jamie Lewis (Cardiff University)



Material resources, social innovation and civil repair

This theme addresses practical responses to the current economic and political crisis that draw on social innovations at a local Foundational Economy level.

Theme Leads: Kevin Morgan and Ian Rees Jones
(Cardiff University)

Foundational economy, citizenship and new forms of common ownership

explores place-based solutions and experiments with social mechanisms and new institutional forms that provide the material basis for citizenship. It looks at how Foundational Economy approaches can promote civic gain and address contemporary social and economic policy concerns at regional and local levels, focusing on food, care, housing and the environment.

Filippo Barbera (University of Turin and Affiliate, Collegio Carlo Alberto) and Julie Froud (Manchester University)

Machines, platforms and capabilities utilises mixed methods to examine the significance of different sectors of the gig economy within local labour markets, and includes the study of co-operative alternatives to more dominant forms of platform capitalism.

Helen Blakely, Wil Chivers and Rhys Davies
(Cardiff University)



The background is a dark blue field with various abstract elements. In the top right, there is a white inverted triangle. A vertical band of blue and white speckles runs down the upper middle. A wavy orange line is in the upper left. In the lower left, a small blue circle with a white speckle and a pink flame-like shape is visible. A white curved bar is above the large orange circle. The bottom half of the page features a stylized illustration of a woman with blue hair in a bun, wearing a white top, looking towards a large orange circle with a white speckle and a black wavy line. An orange curved bar is at the bottom left.

Civil society, and place-based strategies for sustainable development undertakes regional policy studies in Wales, UK and Europe and action research in specific foundational sectors. Drawing on place-based social innovation approaches, it considers to what extent regional growth policies focus on foundational sectors and address inclusive growth through social innovation.

David Beel (Manchester Metropolitan University) and Martin Jones (Staffordshire University)



Data infrastructure and data integration

This theme incorporates the WISERD DataPortal and the WISERD Education Data Lab and will construct a national search, discovery and mapping platform. The theme will develop and support data portal interfaces for the Welsh Government and external partners with an emphasis on data search, discovery, mapping and visualisation. The theme will also form the basis for the Centre's Training and Capacity Building programme.

David Blackaby (Swansea University), Rhys Davies, Scott Orford and Chris Taylor (Cardiff University)

Who we are

The Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (WISERD) is a national, interdisciplinary, social science research institute. Established in 2008, we are a collaborative venture between the universities of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, South Wales and Swansea – working together to improve the quality and quantity of social science research in Wales and beyond.

Using innovative approaches, our research spans the fields of economics, sociology, geography and political science and effects change by influencing the development of policy and practice across a range of sectors. We have been designated by the Welsh Government as a national research centre.

Get in touch

If you are interested in finding out more about what we do, please contact us.

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