

Contents

Inside front cover:
About ISER

- 1: Director's introduction
- 2-3: Intergenerational interactions
- 4-5: Personal communities
- 6-7: Social and economic disadvantage
- 8-9: Teenage childbearing
- 10-11: Education
- 12-13: ISER conferences in 2003
- 14-15: Surveys and methods at ISER
- 16: Further information

Inside back cover:
Research staff

About ISER

The Institute for Social and Economic Research is an independent department of the University of Essex. It is jointly core-funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the University of Essex, but nearly half of its annual income is derived from grants and contracts awarded by research councils, charitable trusts, government departments, commercial companies and European institutions.

Originally established in 1989, the Institute was reorganised in 1999 to incorporate three centres:

- The ESRC Research Centre on Micro-social Change (MiSoC) is the base for ISER's substantive research programme. The thirty-strong research staff (see inside back cover) includes specialists in demography, economics, sociology, social policy and statistics. The core-funded programme is founded on a central theme – the analysis of life chances, taking a longitudinal perspective on people's careers, incomes, family lives, health experiences and so on. Related topics include time use and consumption, and the effects of locality and ethnicity.
- The ESRC UK Longitudinal Studies Centre (ULSC) provides longitudinal data and data-related services to the wider academic and policy community. It manages the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) – an integrated operation from design through to fieldwork control, data cleaning and management, documentation and dissemination. The ULSC has overall responsibility for ESRC's investment in panel and cohort data, for promoting longitudinal research, and for devising a national strategy for longitudinal studies. Other aspects of the Centre's work are discussed on pages 14-15.
- The European Centre for Analysis in the Social Sciences (ECASS) is a 'research hotel', welcoming academic visitors from the European Union (EU). Designated a 'major research infrastructure' of the EU, ECASS provides fellowships and bursaries for study visits to the University of Essex for periods of between two weeks and three months.

Director's introduction

Once again this yearly report reflects ISER's core activities. At the heart of our work is the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and our associated programme of research using longitudinal data. Some of our recent research – on family, friends, disadvantage, teenage births and education – is discussed in the articles that follow. Together they show both the wide range of our research and its methodological diversity. Equally, the articles demonstrate the policy relevance of our work. Many of our projects are funded by government departments. They recognise the unique contributions that longitudinal studies can make to our understanding of a variety of social and economic problems.

But for the core funding of both ISER's centres – the Research Centre on Micro-social Change (MiSoC) and the UK Longitudinal Studies Centre (ULSC) – we rely on the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Both centres have been renegotiating their funding in the past year. ULSC has had a very successful mid-term review and MiSoC has submitted a bid for a new five-year contract.

Our research programme can be summarised as the study of the *dynamics of social position*, intended to take full advantage of the detailed evidence available from longitudinal surveys about the life courses of individuals within families. 'Social position' is our generic label for the various aspects of a person's situation that influence their current well-being and their future life chances. The programme brings together theory and analytical techniques from sociology and economics to provide a better understanding of the processes characterising people's life chances through the life course and across generations.

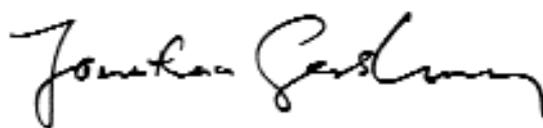
Our central innovation is a move away from the traditional focus on pair-wise comparisons of origins and destinations at widely spaced points in time. Instead, we aim to follow changes in individuals' social positions continuously. The goal is not only to count but also to explain the flows between different social positions over time. The explanations we seek are sometimes in terms of complex interactions between different domains of individuals' lives – family, employment, social networks, income and wealth – and sometimes in terms of the effects of the endowments in each of these domains at particular points in time on subsequent conditions.

This year sees both arrivals and departures on the ISER research staff. Stephen Pudney from Leicester University and Holly Sutherland from Cambridge have both accepted professorial appointments at ISER. Alison Booth has left us for a Research Professorship at the Australian National University; David Pevalin, with his newly acquired doctorate, has taken up a lectureship in the Essex University Department of Health and Human Sciences; and Elena Bardasi is on leave working at the World Bank in Washington.

Richard Berthoud has temporarily shifted his base from Colchester to London to take up a secondment in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). ISER has been increasingly engaged in such public policy-related activities over the last year with consultancies or research projects for the DWP, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Department for International Development, the Department of Health, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Social Exclusion Unit in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Cabinet Office.

Such policy research does not stop at home. ISER has led research teams in each of the successive European framework programmes for scientific research since 1990. We have now had our first success in the sixth framework programme. In partnership with ONS, the University of Warwick and partners from six other European Union member states, David Rose will be designing a new European social classification for use in comparative research across the EU. This project builds on Rose's earlier ONS work in which he designed a similar classification for the UK, the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification, now used in all government social surveys as well as for analysing data from the 2001 Census.

As always, we are eager to discuss our findings with others. Readers are invited to make direct contact with any of the researchers listed inside the back page of this report or to visit our website (<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk>) for more information.



Jonathan Gershuny
Director

Intergenerational interactions

New data on family relationships collected in recent waves of the BHPS are making it possible to study interactions between parents and their adult children



New information on intergenerational interactions in recent waves of the BHPS (2001-2) offers the opportunity to study relationships within the extended family, notably between parents and their adult children. Research by John Ermisch is analysing the responses of both parents and children to questions about how close they live geographically, how often they are in contact and what support they provide for each other, both financial and in-kind help, such as child care.

The average age of the adult child respondent is 37 (75% are 44 or younger), while his/her mother is aged 64 on average. As an illustration of the data on contact, 13% of adult children see their mother daily and 24% telephone her daily. Another 41% see her weekly but 27% see her only several times a year or even less often.

It appears that visiting and phoning are complementary. For example, those who see their mother weekly are much more likely to phone her daily than those who see her less often – 39% compared with 7%. Perhaps there is ‘more to talk about’ if children see their mother more often. This would account for the finding that telephone calls, as well as visits, are much more frequent if children live closer (in terms of travelling time) to their mother or father, despite the fact that distance should not have a large effect on the cost of contacting a parent by phone. The BHPS data indicate that nearly 60% of adult children live within a half-hour’s travel time of their mother.

The average age of the parent responding to BHPS questions about contact and help is 60. The table shows the types of help that parents receive regularly or frequently from the adult child with whom they are most in contact, as well as the types of help they provide to that child. Getting lifts in their child’s car, shopping and home maintenance and improvement are the most popular forms of help received, but note that over 50% of parents receive no regular or frequent help from their children. Mothers are more likely to receive regular or frequent help (50%) than fathers (35%).

The most common forms of regular or frequent help provided by parents to their adult children are child care and financial help, followed by providing and cooking meals and giving lifts in their car. More than 40% of parents provide no regular or frequent help.

Women play a more important role in these intergenerational interactions than men. Adult children see and speak on the phone to their mothers more frequently than their fathers. Mothers are more likely to receive regular or frequent in-kind help from an adult child than fathers are, and they are also more likely to provide regular or frequent care for their grandchildren.

Fathers are more likely than mothers to provide financial help to their adult children. Daughters see and telephone their mother or father much more frequently than sons. Parents whose health limits their daily activities are more likely to receive in-kind help from and have contact with their adult children, and retired parents are more likely to provide child care for their grandchildren.

Affluent parents are more likely to give financial help to their adult children but they are less likely to provide child care for their grandchildren

The BHPS data make it possible to study how contact and help vary with many other attributes of parents and adult children. For example, it is interesting to examine how these vary with parents' and children's economic resources. Children's and parents' welfare are likely to be enhanced if they keep in contact with one another and receive help from the other, and giving help may also increase their welfare. Do those with more economic resources also benefit from more contact and help? Does the amount of economic resources affect the amount of contact and help given?

The research shows clearly that the greater the parents' economic resources, the less likely they are to receive in-kind help and to see their child weekly. At the same time, more affluent parents are more likely to provide regular or frequent financial help to their adult children, and they also are more likely to give regular or frequent in-kind help other than child care.

In contrast, while the percentage of parents providing regular or frequent child care at first rises (between the poorest 25% of the sample and the next 25%), it then declines with

greater economic resources. This tendency for more affluent parents to be less likely to provide child care to their grandchildren primarily reflects a tendency for more affluent parents and children to live farther apart from one another, with greater distance reducing contact and help.

The affluence-distance relationship also accounts for a finding that more affluent children see their mother or father less often, though not for the fact that parents who have more economic resources are less likely to receive in-kind help and to see their child weekly. Thus, an important part of the story about parents' contact with adult children and help provided to them concerns parents' and children's location decisions relative to each other.

The 2002 wave of the BHPS provides further scope for analysing family interactions outside the respondent's household. This wave gathered information on the travelling time and frequency of contact between children aged under 16 and a biological parent living in a different household. Associations between contact and other variables, like father's child support payments, can also be studied with these data.

Ermisch's analysis reveals that fathers living in higher-income households have more frequent contact with dependent children living outside the household, and those that have a current partner have less frequent contact. Fathers who live at a greater distance from their children see them less frequently. But while those who have a partner tend to live farther from their children, this only accounts for a small part of the relationship between frequency of contact and partnership status.

Percentages of BHPS parents reporting regular or frequent help to/from their adult child with whom they have most contact

	Help from child	Help to child
Getting lifts in their car	25%	19%
Shopping for you	18%	15%
Providing or cooking meals	12%	20%
Helping with personal needs, such as dressing, eating, bathing	1%	n/a
Washing, ironing or cleaning	5%	12%
Dealing with personal affairs, such as paying bills	7%	9%
Decorating, gardening, repairs	14%	13%
Financial help	2%	26%
Looking after grandchildren	n/a	28%
None of these	57%	43%

Personal communities

ISER research is defining the concept of 'personal communities' – the set of active and significant ties with friends and family at the heart of our lives



Over the past five years, ISER's Ray Pahl and his colleague Liz Spencer (a partner in the New Perspectives research consultancy) have been developing an empirical and theoretical programme of research on 'personal communities' – the set of active and significant ties with friends and family at the heart of our lives.

The initial stimulus for this work was the popular assumption that our society is becoming increasingly 'individualised' and that this process underlies various social and political problems. The researchers felt that not enough was known about the actual content of people's friendships and friend-like relations – their meanings, qualities and relationships. They recognised that certain relationships with kin could well be described as 'friend-like' and wanted to explore what that meant.

Many popular studies of friends and friendship are trivial and superficial. Simple-minded questions about numbers of friends tell us nothing of any significance without some detailed knowledge of what particular ties mean or may involve. One might as well ask how many kin people have without specifying the nature of each particular tie. Rather, we need to know more about a person's web of obligations, commitments and the trust in which they are embedded as a way of understanding social cohesion.

If friendship is an essential form of social glue holding society together through the interconnections of 'micro-social' worlds, it deserves a more rigorous investigation. The award of an ESRC grant made it possible to conduct 60 in-depth interviews, which took place in the North West and South East of England and in mid-Wales. All interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and analysed using an innovative charting method devised by Liz Spencer and Jane Ritchie. The details of this rigorous methodology are in *Capturing Personal Communities* (see page 16).

In parallel with the empirical work, Ray Pahl reviewed many of the other approaches to friends and friendship in his essay *On Friendship* (Polity Press, 2000).

It is clear that people have different kinds of friends: some may be single-stranded, whereas others may fulfil a variety of functions and purposes culminating, perhaps, in the truly

best friend or soul mate who may become, as it were, 'another self'. The combination of friends of different types, incorporating different strands, comprises a person's 'friendship repertoire'.

Over time, people develop friendship careers: some are nurtured and flourish; others decline or even end. There are clear patterns in the way people make, nurture or lose friends at different stages of their lives. These patterns are labelled 'friendship modes'.

A particular concern of the research was to explore the way family and friends play separate or overlapping roles. In particular, in their paper *Personal Communities* (see page 16), Pahl and Spencer engaged with the arguments between those who bemoan the collapse of 'traditional' families and those who over-enthusiastically celebrate 'families of choice'.

The culmination of this programme of work is, in empirical terms, establishing a rigorous method for defining people's personal communities – seen as distinctive configurations of different kinds of friends and kin relationships. The typology that emerged is based partly on the relative balance and significance of friends and family but also incorporates the relative significance of friendship repertoires and friendship modes.

The nature of people's personal communities has a direct significance for their physical and mental wellbeing and consequently for the health of society as a whole

A substantial monograph will be with the publisher later in 2004 in which the researchers relate their findings to two main concerns, which have considerable practical resonance in contemporary Western societies.

The first of these concerns is that people's attachments are focused so much on their little circle of friends and family that they neglect their wider civic and political obligations.

Arguably, there is a process of privatisation that inhibits and distracts involvement in wider social responsibilities, leading to an erosion of 'community' and social cohesion.

The second concern is that there is now very little firm commitment to any kind of wider social circle due to a process of 'individualisation' and the 'commodification' of relationships. Evidence for this lies in the social statistics on divorce and the fragmentation of family life, and the acceptance of 'liquid love' rather than enduring commitments based on deep and mature feelings.

The researchers address both of these concerns, drawing on strong empirical evidence of the continuing salience of people's micro-social worlds. Those who are concerned with the issue of social capital frequently underestimate the importance of this micro-social level, despite a growing understanding that the nature of people's personal communities has a direct significance for their physical and mental wellbeing and consequently for the health of society as a whole.

The forthcoming book – *The One Good Thing* – will provide a comprehensive discussion of 'personal communities'. The significance of this concept is likely to have wide resonance in relevant scholarly and policy-making circles for many years to come.

ISER e-bulletin

We shall soon be launching the ISER e-bulletin. This will contain news about all our latest publications and activities and links to further information. You may subscribe to this new service via the web or email. Via the web, go to:

<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/pubs/newsletters/iser-bulletin/subscribe.php>

Alternatively send an email with your name in the subject line to:

iser-bulletin-subscribe@isemail.essex.ac.uk.

If we have your email address, you will automatically receive the e-bulletin. To check this, see the letter you received with this report.

Social and economic disadvantage

ISER research is exploring the impact of combinations of disadvantages – lack of education, lone parenthood, disability, etc. – that may affect the same people



Much of ISER's research over the past decade has focused on different aspects of social and economic disadvantage: poverty, unemployment, lone parenthood, ethnic minorities, area deprivation and so on. A recent trend has been analysis that takes account of two or more disadvantages that may affect the same people – or the same families – in combination. Such studies provide a clearer picture of the impact of each specific issue net of its association with other disadvantages. At the same time, they illuminate broader concepts of inequality and social exclusion.

Disability and disadvantage

One such study, by Stephen Jenkins and John Rigg, focuses on disability, and examines its relationship with other indicators of disadvantage – age, lack of educational qualifications, non-employment and poverty. Disabled working-age people in Britain face considerable economic disadvantage. On average, they are half as likely to be in employment as their non-disabled counterparts and their household incomes are about 20% lower.

The research argues that this disadvantage may arise from three potential sources: *pre-existing* disadvantage; the *onset* of disability; and *remaining* disabled. These three factors can be disentangled by comparing the periods before, during and after the onset of disability among the 280 working-age BHPS members who have become disabled since 1991.

Jenkins and Rigg find that people who became disabled were typically more disadvantaged beforehand than others who did not become disabled. The rate of becoming disabled was twice as high for people in their fifties and for people without qualifications as for younger and better qualified people. Both age and lack of qualifications are associated with poorer job prospects, and people who were about to become disabled were also less likely to be in paid work. On average, their pre-disability income was 12% lower than incomes of those who did not become disabled.

So people were already relatively disadvantaged before becoming disabled. But the results also highlight an adverse change in economic circumstances around the time they became disabled: the proportion in paid work fell by 26%, average income fell by 10% and the proportion on low incomes rose by 15%.

The employment rate continued to decline as disability spells lengthened. Only 25% of people who had been disabled for

four or more years were in work, compared with 42% of the same group in their first year of disability. The marked decline in income from employment was only partially replaced by income from benefits and pensions.

So the poor outcomes for disabled people arise in two ways: as expected, disability leads to economic disadvantage; but economic disadvantage also appears to lead to disability in the first place.

Multiple disadvantage

More than six million adults of working age in Britain depend on transfers, mainly social security benefits, from outside their family – that is, they do not have a job, and they do not have a partner with a job either. Most of them are poor. The number of people who live in non-employed families has fallen in the past ten years, but it is still more than double what it was in the 1970s.

We already know quite a lot about the kinds of social disadvantage that are associated with labour market exclusion. People are more likely to live in a non-employed family:

- if they do not have a spouse or partner, especially if they are lone parents;
- if they lack educational qualifications and occupational skills;
- if they are disabled;
- if they are over 50;
- if they live in an area where jobs are scarce;
- if they are members of certain ethnic minority groups, especially Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

Richard Berthoud has analysed a sample of more than half a million adults of working age to find out what people's job chances are if they have two or three or even more of these six disadvantages. Is there an 'exponential' effect, with additional disadvantages compounding each other to increase non-employment risks more and more rapidly? Or a 'logarithmic' effect, with one disadvantage creating a risk but extra problems making less and less difference?

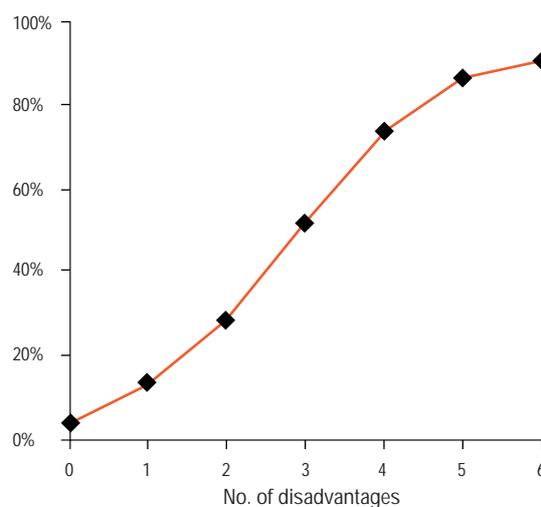
Some problems are already associated with each other, so that combinations of them are quite common – for example, many lone parents are of Caribbean origin; and there is a systematic combination of low skills, middle age and disability. Other combinations, such as lone parents over 50, are rather rare. Overall, there is not a very strong tendency

for the population to polarise between the 'not-at-all-disadvantaged' and the 'multiply-disadvantaged'.

Some combinations of two or three disadvantages result in *higher* rates of non-employment than might be expected if the component problems were independent of each other – for example, older Pakistanis and Bangladeshis with poor qualifications and skills are exceptionally likely to be non-employed. But other pairs and triplets are *less* disadvantaging than might have been expected – Caribbean lone parents are rather less likely to be out of work than their white counterparts (though they are still much worse off than couples with children).

Given that some combinations exacerbate while others ameliorate the risk of non-employment, the overall conclusion is that multiplicity itself is not an issue. The number of disadvantages makes little difference once the effects of each of them have been taken into account. Nevertheless, the research identifies people with strikingly high levels of risk – nearly 10% of working age adults have characteristics that give them a risk of non-employment higher than 50%. Only a handful have all six disadvantages – but more than 90% of that small group are non-employed (see chart). Their chances of work are close to zero and their future prospects seem equally bleak.

Probability of non-employment by number of disadvantages



This strand of research continues. Mark Taylor, Richard Berthoud and Stephen Jenkins have been commissioned by the Social Exclusion Unit to review the links between low income and a range of other kinds of disadvantage to see whether these associations are becoming stronger or weaker over the years. The report is due in 2004.

Teenage childbearing

What are the longer-term consequences of giving birth as a teenager – for both the mothers and their children?



During the past two years, a team of ISER researchers has been examining the long-term consequences of teenage births for mothers and their children. The findings indicate that, in general, giving birth as a teenager is not as damaging for mothers as previous research suggested. But they do fare less well in the 'marriage market' in the sense that they partner with men who are poorly qualified and more likely to suffer unemployment. The children of teen mothers tend to have considerably poorer outcomes throughout their childhood and young adult lives.

The main source of data for the project – sponsored by the Teenage Pregnancy Unit and the Department of Health – was the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70). This follows all children born in a week in April 1970 with information collected at birth and ages 5, 10, 16, 26 and 30. Further data came from the BHPS and the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Consequences for teen mothers...

One part of the project examined the immediate consequences of teenage childbearing for mothers' mental health. The results indicate that during the first three years after the birth, teen mothers in the BHPS had a significantly lower level of mental health – a 30% higher score in a standard measure of 'common mental illness' – than older mothers or teenagers who were not mothers. In addition, losing a channel of social support was associated with a 20% decline in mothers' mental health.

Longer-term effects of teenage childbearing on the mother are generally more difficult to identify since unobserved attributes of women that make them more likely to become teen mothers are probably correlated with later outcomes. This research used BCS70 information on pregnancies and miscarriages to reduce the influence of such 'selection' when estimating the effects of teenage motherhood. In effect, there was a 'control group' of women who had had a miscarriage as a teenager but would otherwise have been teen mothers.

The results suggest that there is little adverse effect of a teen birth on a woman's qualifications, employment or earnings at age 30, or the probability that she has a live-in partner. But a teen birth does significantly increase the probability that a woman's partner at age 30, if she has one, has no education beyond the age of 16 and is more likely to be unemployed.

These effects are large: compared to postponing childbearing beyond her teens, the probability that a teen mother's partner does not have education beyond 16 is about 20 percentage points higher and the probability that he has a job is about 20 percentage points lower. Having a teen birth also substantially reduces the probability that a woman is a homeowner at age 30.

Another part of the project used the large samples in the LFS to explore differences among ethnic minority groups in the longer-term consequences of teenage childbearing. The 'outcome' considered was whether a woman was in a 'working family', that is, whether she or her partner, if she had one, was in employment at the time of the survey, when on average the women were aged 30.

Teen mothers hurt their marriage prospects; their children have reduced chances of success in education and employment

This analysis focused on the change in the probability of being in a working family associated with postponing a first birth by a year. It reveals that except for Bangladeshi and Chinese women, postponing childbearing is associated with a higher probability of being in a working family. The advantages of postponing (the disadvantages of a teen birth) are largest for whites, followed by a group including Caribbeans, Africans and Indians, for whom the impact is half as large. The disadvantages of a teen birth are smallest for Pakistanis.

These results suggest that young mothers face higher penalties in cultures where young motherhood is unconventional. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, for example, have the youngest average ages at first birth (22 and 20, respectively) and both have two of the smallest associations between age at first birth and the probability of being in a working family aged 30. It seems likely that the relationship between being in a working family and age at first birth may partly reflect the cultural norms that surround the acceptance of early motherhood.

... and for their children

Analysis of the BCS70 showed consistent associations through childhood and early adulthood that generally indicate poorer outcomes for children whose mother was younger at their birth. For example, babies of younger mothers were more likely to be born prematurely or with low birth weight. At age five, they scored significantly lower on a standardised vocabulary test and higher on a measure of 'child problems'. They were also shorter in height.

At age 10, children born to younger mothers were less likely to have a father figure in the home, moved home more frequently and lived in poorer quality housing. They were also more likely to have been in care; they were still significantly shorter in height; and their teachers were more likely to rate them as below average on general knowledge, less popular with their peers, less co-operative and less able to concentrate. In adulthood, these children were more likely to have had a child themselves before the age of 20 and less likely to have A-levels.

To explore the extent to which early childbearing rather than other factors leads to these later outcomes, further analysis controlled for the influence of family background by looking at a special BHPS sample of young adults, each of whom has a sibling born when the mother was older.

Daughters of teen mothers are more likely to become teen mothers themselves

The comparisons of siblings indicate that being born to a teen mother is associated with lower educational attainment, greater risks of economic inactivity (not being in employment or education or looking after children) and a higher probability of having low earnings. Daughters of teen mothers are also more likely to become teen mothers themselves. In general, these findings suggest that children born to young mothers are, on average, less successful than children of older mothers over a range of aspects of young adult life.

Education

For many young people, the decision to stay in school is probably marginal and characterised by considerable uncertainty



Analysis of a variety of issues related to education is an important part of ISER research activity. Recent work includes studies of the incentives to stay in school after the age of 16, the working patterns of schoolteachers and the effects of university expansion on social inequality. These projects use a range of datasets, including the British Youth Panel (BYP), an adjunct to the BHPS based on interviews with young people aged between 11 and 15, and the UK Time Use Survey, which collects the time diaries of people in 6,400 households recorded on particular days in 2000/1.

Why leave school, but why stay on?

The incentive to remain in education depends on the qualifications achieved or likely to be achieved, the costs of continuing in education and what kind of jobs particular qualifications are expected to 'buy' in the job market.

The first of these depends on the individual. The second is more complex. Some countervailing incentives have been removed with the loss of eligibility for benefits for 16-17 year olds and the fall in the wages of young people relative to those of adults. Both make it less worthwhile to leave education early. Yet uncertainty over whether the job they might eventually get will repay the investment can be a strong deterrent. The third factor – the jobs that qualifications will 'buy' – is therefore critical.

Research by Malcolm Brynin analyses BYP data on young people's intentions to stay in education. On average over time, 73% say yes, they will stay on; 17% do not know; 10% say no. What's more, positive attitudes increase as the prospect of leaving school gets closer: the proportion of 'don't knows' falls from 23% to 10% and more than 75% say they wish to stay in school after age 16 when they are about to make their decision.

At face value, these responses suggest that there is no underlying motivational problem with staying on and, encouragingly, uncertainty seems to fall over time. In reality, though, there is a great deal more uncertainty, with considerable fluctuation in apparent motivation over an individual's secondary school career. For example, 23% of 17 year olds who appear to wish to remain in education leave. There is some making-good of this shortfall through intending leavers actually staying on. But equally, a

significantly higher proportion of those who are uncertain about staying on eventually decide to leave rather than stay.

Much of the uncertainty relates to how young people feel about school-life, and such feelings are in turn no doubt influenced by fears about the prospect of examination success and uncertainty about the employment value of continuing with education. This value is perhaps not always as positive as is generally believed. There is a danger for some young people of investment into possibly rather poor returns to education, and where either ability or motivation are marginal this uncertainty might be a highly significant factor.

Moreover, not all young people are either motivated to remain in education or motivated to leave. For many the decision is probably marginal. More needs to be understood about exactly why some young people change their minds over time if we are to encourage higher staying on rates.

Teachers' working patterns

Research by Muriel Egerton for the Department for Education and Skills has analysed Time Use Survey (TUS) data to examine teachers' working patterns. Accurate monitoring of these patterns in normal surveys can be tricky, as the nature of teachers' employment contract (often based on an annualised number of hours) and the requirement to undertake work outside the workplace often mean that their usual day is 'atypical'. The TUS provides the opportunity to analyse how much time is spent by teachers in teaching-related activities inside and outside school hours and normal working hours.

The data show that most teachers travel to work between 6am and 8am, and most begin work by 8am. 90% of them are working at peak times and of those not working, 3.5% are typically on leave and 2% are sick or not working for another reason. Their day has a predictable pattern with mid-morning and lunch breaks, though many teachers work through lunch or take short breaks. By 4pm, 55% of teachers are still working; by 6pm, less than 10% are working; but at 8pm, 20% are working.

The average working time for full-time teachers during the school term is seven and a half hours, while working time out of term averages just over two hours. The average for

women teachers is slightly higher than for men during term, but is similar out of term. The survey also reports weekend working: on average, full-time teachers work two and a half hours at weekends during term.

University expansion and social inequality

Muriel Egerton has also been involved in an international project comparing the effects of university expansion on social inequality in higher education attainment. Her research on the UK's experience analyses data from two birth cohorts: the National Child Development Study (NCDS), all the children who were born in one week in 1958 and who therefore matured before university expansion; and the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70), all the children born in one week in 1970 for whom expansion began as they were leaving school.

Expansion of the UK's university system has not reduced social inequality in entry into traditional universities

Comparing the educational attainment of the NCDS cohort in 1991 (when the cohort was aged 33) with that of the BCS70 cohort in 2000 (when the cohort was aged 30) shows that children from semi- and unskilled manual families have increased their educational attainment by age 19. Relatively more of these children in the BCS70 cohort had gained university entrance qualifications by that age.

This improvement in earlier educational attainment was followed by a relative increase in university entrance on the part of children from disadvantaged families. What is clear, however, is that they entered colleges and polytechnics rather than traditional universities. Social class disadvantage in entry to traditional universities has not decreased between the two cohorts.

ISER conferences in 2003

ISER conferences brought together an international group of social and economic researchers to analyse the changing patterns of families' lives in Europe



In July 2003, ISER hosted two concurrent research conferences on the analysis of household panel surveys. BHPS-2003 built on the successful 2001 conference, which brought together an international group of social and economic researchers using BHPS data to analyse the changing patterns of families' lives across Britain. EPUNet-2003 was the inaugural conference of the new EuroPanel Users' Network. This network has been established with funding from the European Commission to provide communications and support for new and experienced analysts of the European Community Household Panel (ECHP).

Researchers from more than ten countries spoke at these conferences on a host of issues, including social structure and social position; health; income, wealth and assets; poverty dynamics; the family; fertility; education; work and unemployment; pay gaps; multiple job-holding; and migration and mobility. Findings included:

Housework and paid work

British women do almost four times the amount of housework that their partners do, according to research by Xavier Ramos: husbands average five and a half hours a week on housework, while wives spend around 19 hours. The situation in the labour market is the opposite with married men spending many more hours in paid work than their wives: on average, married men spend 45 hours a week on paid work whereas married women spend 30 hours on paid work.

As a result of these two very different patterns at home and in the workplace, married men and women end up working almost the same amount of hours per week when they have a full-time job – 50 hours. But married women with part-time jobs have a much higher total workload than married men – 13 hours more, most of it housework.

Pay and job satisfaction

Low paid workers appear to be more satisfied with their jobs than higher paid workers, according to research by Rannia Leontaridi and Peter Sloane. What's more, higher pay does not seem to increase the job satisfaction of low paid workers, though it does for higher paid workers. Nor does movement out of low paid jobs into higher paying jobs always lead to higher job satisfaction.

According to the European Commission, workers who are low paid suffer a double penalty since their jobs are also of low quality. These results do not support the Commission's negative view with respect to low paid work.

Women's relative pay

The gap between the wages paid to British men and women is over 25% in today's labour market: women earn on average less than £7.50 an hour compared with men's average wage of £10.27 an hour. According to research by Sylvia Walby and Wendy Olsen, a significant part of this 'gender wage gap' is due to women earning low wages when working part-time and/or returning to work after having children. They conclude that to reduce the gender pay gap, attention should be focused on the training needs of part-time workers and 'returners-to-work'.

The research finds that part-time work has a negative effect on the hourly wage rate. What's more, an individual's work history has a significant effect on their current wage: the longer the time spent in full-time work, the higher the current wage. For example, with seven years of full-time work experience, a 15% increase in hourly wages can be expected (compared with no work experience). For each year of family care, which is unpaid, the individual loses 2% of this gain.

Getting out of poverty

Getting access to employment is the most effective way for women to get out of poverty. In contrast, separation from a partner (divorce or some other partnership dissolution) has the greatest impact on men's probability of exiting from poverty. These are the central findings of research by Cecile Bourreau-Dubois and colleagues.

The researchers note that changes in family composition (union, death, childbirth, etc.) and/or changes in employment status (unemployment, access to employment, etc.) can act as routes out of poverty. Equally, they may increase the risks of falling into poverty. But these demographic and labour market events do not necessarily have the same impact on men and women. Analysis of the entries into and exits out of poverty of 36,600 men and 39,500 women in the ECHP shows that there are considerable gender differences in the impact of significant family and employment events on movements into and out of poverty.

Women's employment and fertility rates

The availability of part-time jobs and child-care services has a significant positive impact on both women's fertility and their participation in the labour force. That is the conclusion of research by Chiara Pronzato, which contrasts the experience of Southern European countries, where both fertility and labour force participation are low, with Northern European countries, where both fertility and participation are high.

British women do almost four times the amount of housework that their partners do, averaging nineteen hours a week compared with five and a half hours a week

In Northern countries, part-time employment is very widespread and represents most of the opportunities offered to women. In contrast, it is extremely rare in Southern European countries and its absence is an important explanation for the low employment rates of married women, particularly those with children.

Unlike the North of Europe, Southern European labour markets are still characterised by strict rules on the hiring and firing of workers and the employment arrangements available. These labour market regulations have been largely responsible for the high unemployment rates of women and youth.

Child care and the self-employed

One commonly held reason that many entrepreneurs, women in particular, go into business for themselves is in order to have the flexibility to spend more time caring for their children. But according to research by Donald Williams, time spent caring for children can reduce success rates among the self-employed.

The research finds that an increase in the number of hours spent caring for children leads to a decreased length of survival in self-employment in five out of the eight European countries studied. The effect appears to be strongest in France, Greece and Italy. Interestingly, the effect is as strong for men as for women.

Surveys and methods at ISER

Longitudinal studies have become increasingly important for understanding social and economic change and the effects of public policy interventions



The UK Longitudinal Studies Centre (ULSC) is responsible for the provision of longitudinal data and for supporting and promoting longitudinal research. It has also been working with the ESRC National Longitudinal Strategy Committee to develop a strategy for longitudinal studies in the UK.

ULSC is coming towards the end of its first five years of ESRC funding. A mid-term review of the centre was carried out by ESRC in 2003, which came to very positive conclusions about its activities and future prospects. On the basis of the recommendations, ULSC has prepared plans for the next five years, including plans for the BHPS. ESRC is currently considering a funding application based on these plans.

UK longitudinal studies

Longitudinal studies have become increasingly important for understanding social change and the effects of public policy interventions. They have also underpinned substantial improvements in the methods used in social science research. The UK possesses a uniquely rich portfolio of longitudinal studies. A number of these studies already make a major contribution to social research, including our own BHPS, the National Child Development Study and the 1970 British Cohort Study (both run by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies, CLS, at the Institute of Education) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Longitudinal Study. In addition to these mature studies, a number of new studies are starting to emerge:

- The *Millennium Cohort Study*, a study of children born in 2000-1 run by the CLS, released data from its first sweep in 2003 and has started its second sweep, when the children are aged three.
- The *English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA)*, a large study of those aged 50 and over, run by a team based at University College London and the National Centre for Social Research, launched the report on its first wave of data collection in December 2003.
- The Department for Education and Skills has commissioned a *Longitudinal Study of Young People in England*, with the first wave of data to be collected in 2004.

There are many more longitudinal studies being carried out in the UK. Information about them can be found in ISER's electronic database *Keeping Track*, developed in partnership with ONS. The range of UK longitudinal studies provides

opportunities for complementary research using multiple studies, which are not readily available in other countries.

The British Household Panel Survey

Fieldwork for the thirteenth wave of the BHPS finished in early 2004. It has collected data from around 16,000 adults and 1,300 young people aged 11-15 in more than 9,000 households, with significant boosts to the sample in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

A large part of the BHPS questionnaire consists of core measures repeated each year. There is also a variable component, for items that are expected to change less frequently or are collected for very long-term analyses. The following pattern of variable components is proposed for the next five years:

- Wave 14 (2004): questions about national identity and views of UK governance, additional health measures and measures of work attitudes and work stress.
- Wave 15 (2005): questions about wealth, assets and debts to follow up data on these issues collected in waves 5 and 10.
- Wave 16 (2006): questions about ageing, retirement, health and quality of life, which it will be possible to compare with data from ELSA.
- Wave 17 (2007): questions about children and parenting, non-resident parents and the aspirations of young people. These will provide baseline information on the next generation of BHPS respondents and also support analysis of intergenerational relationships (see pages 2-3).
- Wave 18 (2008): questions about neighbourhood and expectations of relationships and marriage in the future, which will provide important information on the context and networks within which respondents live.

Surveys of Bosnia and Albania

In addition to UK-based activities, ULSC has been working on a number of international projects, including new national panel studies in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, funded by the UK Department for International Development. Such data can be enormously valuable for monitoring rapid social and economic change during the transition to a market economy and for informing policies on housing, health, education and employment, the key areas of social policy for poverty reduction and development.

Some interesting findings are beginning to emerge from the two years of data now available for the two countries. In Bosnia, for example, people's employment prospects are highly dependent on their levels of education. Those with college or university qualifications are significantly more likely to be in paid employment than those with no qualifications or those educated only to primary and secondary level. Of the total working age population, less than half (45%) are in paid employment, 12% are unemployed and 43% are not active in the labour market. Of those with university qualifications, 56% are in paid employment compared with 14% of those with no qualifications at all.

In Albania, emigration is a major policy concern. The data reveal that relatively few people migrated from rural areas to the capital city, Tirana, between the two waves. The majority of those migrating chose to leave the country altogether. At wave 2, 20% of households had lost someone living there at wave 1 but who had since moved out of Albania. Of those leaving the country the majority were male (75%) and relatively young – 13% aged under 17 years, 73% aged 18-35 and 14% aged 36-55.

Methodological research

ISER continues to have an active programme of methodological research. For example, first results from a large-scale experiment have shown that 'dependent interviewing' (where responses from the previous wave are fed forward and incorporated into the wording of questions in the current wave) produces significantly higher reports of income sources than traditional independent interviewing.

A study of 'consent propensities' – where respondents were asked for permission both to link their survey data to administrative data held by the Department for Work and Pensions and to contact their employer for details about their current job – has identified implications for studies that rely on respondent consent for particular follow-ups. Other recent and current studies address the technical and substantive implications of carrying out data linkage between survey and administrative data sources, methods for doing employer surveys and the effectiveness of refusal conversion strategies in the long-term maintenance of panel samples.

Further information

Details of the research discussed in this report may be found in the following publications, many of which are available free of charge on the ISER website (<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk>) or from ISER's Communications Adviser Romesh Vaitilingam (iserpress@essex.ac.uk):

Research on parents and their adult children

Parent and Adult-child Interactions: empirical evidence from Britain by John Ermisch, ISER Working Paper 2004-02, April 2004

An Economic Analysis of the Family by John Ermisch, Princeton University Press, 2003

Research on personal communities

Personal Communities: not simply families of 'fate' or 'choice' by Ray Pahl and Liz Spencer, ISER Working Paper 2003-04, March 2003 (revised version in *Current Sociology*, March 2004)

Capturing Personal Communities by Ray Pahl and Liz Spencer, in *Social Networks and Social Exclusion* edited by Chris Phillipson, Graham Allan and David Morgan, Ashgate, 2004

Research on disadvantage

Disability and Disadvantage: selection, onset and duration effects by Stephen Jenkins and John Rigg, ISER Working Paper 2003-18, August 2003 (forthcoming in *Journal of Social Policy*, July 2004)

Multiple Disadvantage in Employment: a quantitative analysis by Richard Berthoud, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2003

Research on teenage childbearing

Long-term Consequences of Teenage Births for Parents and their Children, Department of Health research briefing no. 1, January 2004 (<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/pubs/reports/pdf/doh-ermisch.pdf>)

Six ISER Working Papers (2003-28 to 2003-33) by Richard Berthoud, John Ermisch, Marco Francesconi, Tim Liao, David Pevalin and Karen Robson, October-November 2003

Research on education

Why Leave School? Why Stay On? The dilemmas facing 16 year olds and the policy implications by Malcolm Brynin and John Bynner, ESRC, December 2003 (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/esrccontent/DownloadDocs/SeminarSeriesEducation.pdf>)

The UK Time Use Survey from a Labour Market Perspective by Richard Williams, *Labour Market Trends*, February 2004 (http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/LMT_Feb04.pdf)

Surveys and methods

Development of a Sampling Method for Household Surveys in Post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina by Peter Lynn, ISER Working Paper 2003-26, October 2003

Developing Quality Standards for Cross-national Survey Research: five approaches by Peter Lynn, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, November 2003

BHPS data are released through the Data Archive at the University of Essex: <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk>

BHPS documentation is available online: <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/bhps/doc>

Keeping Track: a guide to longitudinal resources edited by Kimberly Fisher et al, <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/projects/ldr4ss/index.php>

For details of the UK birth cohort surveys, see <http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk>

For details of training on using longitudinal data provided by ULSC, see <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/methods/Training/Courses1analysis.php>

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Richard Berthoud, Marco Francesconi, Maria Iacovou

Information technology and the use of time: Jonathan Gershuny

Ben Anderson, Malcolm Brynin, Muriel Egerton, Kimberly Fisher, Noah Uhrig, Killian Mullan

Income dynamics and poverty: Stephen Jenkins

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