

# VIEW

**Taking the Long View 2012-2013**  
Institute for Social and Economic Research



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## About ISER

The Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) specialises in the production and analysis of large and often complex datasets. It collects and uses longitudinal data – evidence that tracks changes in the lives of the same individuals over time – household and other panel studies, as well as diary studies, and cross-national and historical comparative materials.

ISER is an interdisciplinary institute, with specialists in demography, economics, sociology, social policy and social statistics. It is an independent department of the University of Essex and is core-funded by the university and the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). ISER is organised as two divisions: a research centre; and a resource centre.

### The research centre: MiSoC

The Research Centre on Micro-social Change (MiSoC) is the base for ISER's substantive research programme. The corefunded 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 resource centre: ULSC

The UK Longitudinal Studies Centre (ULSC) is the national resource centre for promoting longitudinal research and for the design, management and support of longitudinal surveys. ULSC activities include managing the new UK Household Longitudinal Survey, Understanding Society, including the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). The ULSC also runs a methodological research programme to improve longitudinal survey and analysis methods.

### EUROMOD

EUROMOD is a tax-benefit microsimulation model for the European Union (EU) based at ISER. EUROMOD enables researchers and policy analysts to calculate, in a comparable manner, the effects of taxes and benefits on household incomes and work incentives for the population of each country and for the EU as a whole. As well as calculating the effects of actual policies it is also used to evaluate the effects of tax-benefit policy reforms and other changes on poverty, inequality, incentives and government budgets.

EUROMOD is a unique resource for cross-national research, designed to produce results that are comparable across countries and meaningful when aggregated to the EU level.

EUROMOD is managed, maintained, developed and updated by the Microsimulation Unit, a team of researchers in ISER. This is done in collaboration with national experts.

### International links

The Institute has a strongly international atmosphere, with the majority of its researchers originating from outside the UK. We frequently collaborate with research teams in other countries in comparative analytical programmes, in the organisation of international conferences, in the production of cross-national datasets and in the development of new national panel surveys. ISER also regularly hosts visits from researchers and research groups on the Essex campus, offering analytical advice as well as access to data resources.

## From the Director

It has been another exciting and successful year at ISER and I hope this year's Taking the Long View gives you a flavour of some of our work and new developments.

In 2012 the University of Essex saw the arrival of its new Vice Chancellor, Professor Anthony Forster. Anthony's vision for the University is to '...contribute to society through excellence in research and excellence in education' and ISER plays a key role in delivering high quality academic and policy research to meet these aims. We are very pleased that the University has also invested in exciting new facilities to promote innovative social science research, including an experimental laboratory for the social sciences located in the ISER building. EssexLab enables expansion into a new and exciting avenue of research and ISER researchers are already designing and developing experiments to exploit this new facility. And the new on-line research and policy forum Society Central has also been established in recent months and is already proving a vibrant platform for comment and debate on key policy issues.

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ISER plays a key role in delivering high quality academic and policy research

*Heather M Laurie*

Heather Laurie  
Director

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The ESRC Research Centre for Micro-Social Change programme has continued to produce top quality publications, policy engagements and attract significant external funding. We have been very pleased to host high profile policy events including a recent event on Growing up in Recession Britain and the effects of the recession on the youth labour market. There has been high profile work on the effects of changes in the welfare system on standards of living, a range of research on migration and the integration of immigrants in UK society, and on changing religious beliefs, attitudes and behavior. We were very successful in the recent ESRC Secondary Data Analysis Initiative competition with four collaborative policy projects awarded. In addition we were very pleased that two of our outstanding young researchers were awarded ESRC Future Leader Fellowships. The comparative cross-national aspects of ISER's research continues to strengthen, and this year has seen the completion of the 27 country EUROMOD tax/benefit simulation model, which is now a central tool for assessing the effects of different policy regimes across Europe. ISER's commitment to communicating research results to a wide audience continues and we were delighted that our Research Podcast Series was awarded 6th place in the top 20 UK not-for-profit podcasts in the prestigious European Podcast Award competition.

Understanding Society, the UK household panel survey continues to go from strength to strength. Over the last year we have seen a sharp rise in the number of analysts using the data as longitudinal analysis is now possible and the benefits of the data are realized by many more research users. There have been influential reports from ONS on well-being, DEMOS on defining poverty, and from third sector organizations such as RNIB who are utilising the large sample size of the study to look at small groups within the population. A number of projects funded under the ESRC Secondary Data Analysis Initiative programme are also using the data and we look forward to seeing interesting and exciting research results emerging over the coming months. In addition the ESRC has confirmed funding for data collection of waves 6 to 8 of the study, ensuring this vital national data resource will continue to provide high quality longitudinal data to the user community.

The Understanding Society website underwent a full redesign in the last year with improved functionality and information for research and data users. If you have not yet seen it please do take a look [www.understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk) and follow the study on Twitter @usociety. The site is regularly updated with news of research coming out of the study and is an ideal way of keeping in touch with developments and how the data is being used. The biennial Understanding Society Research Conference will be held on July 24th to 26th this year at the University of Essex and we hope to see many of you there.

Data from wave 2 of the study are now deposited in the UK Data Archive as are the first nurse assessment data from wave 2. The full wave 3 data release is scheduled for October 2013 along with the health nurse assessment data for the whole sample. Waves 4 and 5 are in field and the wave 6 fieldwork begins in January 2014. In addition to the main study, four waves of data from the Innovation Panel are now available, providing a valuable resource for methodological research. At wave 5 of the Innovation Panel the use of mixed-mode data collection including web interviews was tested. These experiments have continued in wave 6 of the Innovation Panel with a view to introducing mixed mode including web collection at wave 7 of the study.

We are delighted to maintain the support of the Economic and Social Research Council, our co-funders, and the University of Essex and look forward to another exciting and stimulating year at ISER.





# MIND THE GAP

FALLING INCOMES AND  
OUR PROSPECTS FOR  
THE FUTURE AS THE  
RECESSION HITS HOME



Beginning at the end of the previous decade, the UK experienced its deepest recession since the Second World War, with national income falling by over 7 per cent between the first quarter of 2008 and the second quarter of 2009. Growth has been so weak since then that national income still remains around 3 per cent lower than the level of 2008. This fall in national income must have consequences for households' living standards: but when, how, and for whom? What are the prospects for living standards, and of inequality in living standards, at the end of this decade? And how are austerity measures likely to affect the distribution of income? These questions have been addressed in work by ISER's Professor Mike Brewer with various researchers at the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick.

Analysis of datasets measuring household incomes shows that, despite the huge falls in national income and increases in unemployment, household living standards – as measured by average net household incomes – actually increased at the end of the last decade, and at virtually identical rates to those in the immediate pre-recession years, growing by about 0.6 per cent at the median. The research identifies three important explanations.

First, there was a delay between the big fall in national income, and the fall in employment (which was in any case smaller than expected) and in real earnings – the two main determinants of household income. Second, the previous government actively loosened fiscal policy in 2009, giving a small boost to after-tax incomes. Third, this was a period of rapidly declining inflation, which fell from 5.0% in the year to September 2008 to just 0.5%, on average, in 2009-10, and so the real value of benefits that are usually linked to inflation in the previous year saw their real-terms value temporarily rise. In work coordinated by ISER Research Associate Stephen Jenkins and colleagues, this experience of continued household income growth despite the onset of recession, mirrors that of other developed countries such as Sweden, the US, and even Ireland.

However, the impact on households' living standards was merely postponed. In 2010-11, real incomes fell right across the distribution; the 3.1% real fall at the median was the largest single-year decline seen since 1981. The falls in income at higher points in the income distribution were greater than lower down and so, between 2007-08 to 2011-12, the researchers predict that measures of income inequality will have fallen substantially.

The researchers then used microsimulation methods to predict how living standards will change in the medium-term (up to 2015-16), given current government policies on personal taxes and welfare, and current economic forecasts. If the latest macroeconomic forecasts are correct, then middle and upper-middle parts of the income distribution should not see further declines in living standards, mostly because real earnings should begin to grow.

However, the research suggests that lower-income groups will fare considerably worse over the post-recession period (between 2011-12 and 2015-16) than they did during and shortly after the recession itself (between 2007-08 and 2011-12), and this is mostly because those on lower incomes are the most affected by the substantial cuts to

the welfare budget which form part of the coalition government's fiscal consolidation programme. The resulting pattern of income changes between 2011-12 and 2015-16 is essentially the opposite of what happened over the previous four years, and the net effect is that, between 2007-08 and 2015-16, incomes are forecast to fall evenly across the income distribution. The major difference between income groups is in the timing of the reductions in living standards, rather than the magnitude.

In related work, researchers used similar forecasting techniques to look ahead to 2020. They found that living standards for working-age households in 2020 are likely to be substantially lower for those in the bottom half of income distribution than they were for households in the same position a decade earlier.

This partly reflects the dismal prospects for living standards overall, but also reflects that inequalities between the rich and the poor seem set to grow once the economy returns to a more normal path. The researchers identify three factors lie behind this growing inequality: changes in the structure of employment, with the UK likely to have both more highly skilled jobs at the top and more low skilled jobs at the bottom; changes in the way work is spread out between households; and the long-run consequences of the decision to index benefits and tax credits to the Consumer Prices Index rather than the Retail Prices Index measure of inflation.

This work was commissioned and published by the Resolution Foundation, a non-partisan think-tank concerned with the circumstances of low- to middle-income households. It proved to be a key piece of evidence drawn on by the Foundation's "Commission on Living Standards" in their autumn 2012 report "Gaining from Growth".

#### Key references

"The short and medium term impacts of the recession on the UK income distribution" by Mike Brewer, James Browne, Andrew Hood, Robert Joyce and Luke Sibieta, in the June 2012 edition of Fiscal Studies

IMPROVING  
UK SKILL  
LEVELS

WOULD  
LIFT 1.5  
MILLION

OUT OF  
POVERTY

Improving skills in the workforce is seen as fundamental to achieving a more competitive economy and maintaining productivity while policy often rests on the assumption that increasing skills levels will reduce poverty and income inequality. New research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation by ISER's Professor Mark Taylor and Professor Stephen Pudney with Tina Haux from Queen's University Belfast, investigates how expected improvements in the levels of skills in the UK between now and 2020 will affect rates of poverty and income inequality.



There are several ways in which skills may affect the risk of poverty and the distribution of household incomes. For example, better basic skills may equip people to manage their finances more efficiently and so avoid problems of over-indebtedness. They may also make it easier to understand the social security system and claim benefit entitlements. However, skills and educational attainment are likely to have the biggest impact on income and poverty through their relationship with employment and earnings. Earnings from work are the main part of most working age adults' and families' incomes. Being out of work or in unstable low paid employment therefore has a big effect on the experience of poverty and low income. This research uses data from the British Household Panel Survey to model the impact of skills on the probability of employment and on earnings derived from employment for working age people. Resulting estimates are then used to predict the distribution of earnings likely to arise from the anticipated distribution of skills in 2020 (e.g. as forecast by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills) and subsequently the distribution of net household incomes. This allows forecasts to be made about the associated levels of poverty and income inequality.

The research suggests that anticipated changes in the levels of skills in the UK by 2020 will reduce poverty rates by 2.2 percentage points using a fixed (or 'absolute') poverty line. This equates to lifting about 1.5 million people out of poverty in comparison to the pattern of skills in 2008. However, changing the skills distribution has a smaller effect when measuring poverty using relative poverty rates, reducing relative poverty by no more than one percentage point. This is equivalent to lifting about 700,000 people out of poverty.

What explains these different impacts of changes in the skills distribution on poverty when using a fixed as opposed to a relative measure? The anticipated changes to the distribution of skills imply that skills will increase across the whole distribution – the changes in skills affect both those at the bottom and at the top of the skills distribution. This raises incomes across the entire income distribution (and so reduces poverty measured using a fixed threshold), rather than raising the incomes of those at the bottom of the income distribution relative to those higher up the distribution (and so reducing relative poverty). Consequently the changes to the distribution of the skills are predicted to have only a small impact on income inequality.

The research also estimates the impact of the changing distribution of skills on poverty rates among various population subgroups. Relative poverty is predicted to fall by slightly less among women than men, probably because a larger proportion of any employment gains among women associated with up-skilling will be in part-time jobs. The changing distribution of skills is predicted to have larger effects on poverty rates among families with children than on childless working age adults, and to fall by more in Wales and Northern Ireland than in England and Scotland. The larger effects in Wales and Northern Ireland are because the current skills base in these countries is low relative to England and Scotland, and so the projected up-skilling of the work-force is larger.

Therefore the research concludes that the changing distribution of skills by 2020 is likely to reduce poverty using a fixed measure, considerably improving the absolute quality of life of large groups of people where there is clear income deprivation presently. Child poverty is strongly associated with a range of adverse life-course outcomes relating to employment, health and family stability. So there

may be long-run benefits to society as well as economic competitiveness from meeting anticipated skills levels. However, the picture is less clear when thinking of income inequality and poverty in relative terms, primarily because the changing distribution of skills results in higher incomes across the entire income distribution. This raises the relative poverty line without significantly changing the differences in incomes between those higher and lower in the distribution.

Hence much larger improvements in skills are necessary at the bottom of the skills distribution to have substantial effects on income inequality and relative poverty. This is particularly the case considering the data used in this research pre-dated the recent economic recession, and the methodology used did not incorporate public expenditure cuts or planned changes in the benefit system. The need to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills and to support people who lack the basic skills to access employment has been identified by the current coalition government in its skills policy. A general increase in skills across the distribution has to be part of a wider strategy to reduce income inequality and poverty as it will not reduce relative poverty or income inequality substantially by itself.




Can improving UK skills levels reduce poverty and income inequality by 2020?

Authors:  
Mark P. Taylor, Tina Haux, Stephen Pudney June 2012

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

[www.jrf.org.uk/publications/can-improving-uk-skills-reduce-poverty](http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/can-improving-uk-skills-reduce-poverty)



## New thinking on working mothers

As the government proposes to increase childcare funding to get mothers of very young children back to work, new research from ISER's Dr Emilia Del Bono and others has highlighted the value of supporting working mothers in pregnancy and after they return to work. There are implications for mothers, babies and employers.

Breastfeeding facilities in workplaces help women return to work earlier after giving birth as well as allowing babies to be breast fed for longer according to a new ISER study.

The study, part of a major Economic and Social Research Council funded programme of ISER research into breastfeeding, found that of all mothers who returned to work by the time the child was 8-10 months old, those who could breastfeed at work were eight per cent more likely to have returned to work before their child was six months old and five per cent more likely to return before four months. However, this effect is only seen among better educated mothers (educated to age 19 and above). For less-well educated working mothers the availability of breast feeding facilities seem to have no bearing on when they return to work.

The Department of Health advises that children should be exclusively breastfed up to the age of at least six months. The benefits of breastfeeding range from lower incidence of asthma, allergies and lower rates of hospitalisation and better cognitive development. But many women are forced to stop breastfeeding when they return to work.



Dr Del Bono, co author of the research with Dr Chiara Pronzato at the Università di Torino, explains: “Lower educated mothers have shorter maternity leave periods due to income constraints, so the availability of breastfeeding facilities has little impact on their decision to return to work. More educated mothers, by contrast, have more choice in relation to the duration of their maternity leave and are also more likely to breastfeed longer, so the availability of breastfeeding facilities is more important in this group.”

The study is based on a sample of more than 3,000 mothers, who took part in the government’s nationwide 2005 Infant Feeding Survey (IFS) and who had returned to work by the time their child was 8 to 10 months old. It found that 53 percent of better educated mothers were back at work when their child was six months old, compared to 46 percent of lower educated mothers. Of these working mothers, a third of higher educated women and approximately one in six less-educated mothers were still breastfeeding at six months. There was, however, only a small difference in access to breastfeeding facilities at work, with more educated mothers only 3.5 percent more likely to have such facilities in their workplace.

The research also looked at different family-friendly policies more commonly offered, such as part-time working, flexi-time and extended breaks, to analyse whether there is any correlation between these policies and the duration of breastfeeding or the duration of maternity leave. The research did not find any significant positive association between breastfeeding or earlier return to work and these family-friendly policies. In addition, there was evidence that access to these policies varied according to mother’s intentions to breastfeed, so that any direct link would be confounded by maternal characteristics.

Conversely, there is no evidence that mothers with stronger propensity to breastfeed choose firms or employers who offer access to breastfeeding facilities. What this indicates for the research findings is that the higher percentage of better-educated mothers who return to work by the time their child is six months old and continue to breastfeed can be directly attributed to the availability of breastfeeding facilities at work. Dr Del Bono, co-author of the research, concludes: “What these findings tell us is that there is an economic benefit to employers of providing breastfeeding facilities at work, such as facilities to express milk or actually breastfeed, as it can shorten the time taken off work by better-educated female employees.”

Dr Del Bono points out that a more comprehensive analysis of the effects of breastfeeding facilities on maternal labour supply cannot be conducted at present: “Unfortunately, we are limited by the data available to us. Ideally, we would like to have information on breastfeeding facilities and family friendly policies availability for all mothers who are working during their pregnancy. This would allow us to analyse whether these workplace characteristics influence women’s likelihood to return to work after the birth of their child as well as the duration of their maternity leave. The IFS asks questions about the availability of breastfeeding facilities only of mothers who are back at work when their child is 8-10 months old so we do not know anything about the characteristics of the workplace for mothers who are still on maternity leave or who have left the workforce. There is no UK dataset at present which would allow us to answer these questions and this needs to be rectified.”

Other research by Dr Del Bono and ISER Associate Professor Marco Francesconi has found that mums-to-be who work through their pregnancy are increasing the chances of giving birth to smaller babies. Women who worked to the eighth month of pregnancy risked giving birth to babies half a pound lighter – an equivalent detriment to smoking in pregnancy.

The research, widely reported in the national and international media, opens important policy questions on the health implications for working pregnant mothers and their unborn children.

The researchers identified 1,339 children whose mothers were part of the British Household Panel Survey, which was conducted between 1991 and 2005, and for whom data was available.

A further sample of 17,483 women who gave birth in 2000 or 2001 and who took part in the Millennium Cohort Study was also examined and showed similar results.

Professor Francesconi said the government should consider incentives for employers to offer more flexible maternity leave to women who might need a break before, rather than after, their babies were born.

He said: “We know low birth weight is a predictor of many things that happen later, including lower chances of completing school successfully, lower wages and higher mortality. We need to think seriously about parental leave, because – as this study suggests – the possible benefits of taking leave flexibly before the birth could be quite high.”

The study also suggests British women may be working for longer now during pregnancy. While 16% of mothers questioned by the British Household Panel Study, which went as far back as 1991, worked up to one month before the birth, the figure was 30% in the Millennium Cohort Study, whose subjects were born in 2000 and 2001.

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Intrafamily resource allocations: a dynamic structural model of birth weight by Professor Marco Francesconi, Dr Emilia Del Bono and Professor John Ermisch, is published in the July 2012 edition of the *Journal of Labour Economics*, published by the University of Chicago.

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Does Breastfeeding Support at Work Help Employers and Mothers at the Same Time? Emilia Del Bono and Chiara Pronzato, ISER Working Paper Series: 2012-06.



**SOCIAL  
MOBILITY  
AND THE  
SHAMING OF  
FREE  
SCHOOL  
MEAL  
CHILDREN**

ISER PhD student Angus Holford's groundbreaking research into the way children reacted to anonymising their eligibility for school dinners, has had an immediate impact on practice in schools. The ISER Working Paper 'Take up of Free School Meals: Peer Effect and Price Effects', has opened up discussion about how the poorest children in society are being denied both the hot meal and nutrition they need as well as the Pupil Premium, the government measure designed to boost social mobility, because of a fear of stigmatisation in the dinner hall.



Free School Meals are a component of state support for families on low income – and trigger payment of the Pupil Premium, the extra targeted funding for schools to help those from poorer backgrounds – but take up amongst the entitled is dropping. Over 1.1 million children are entitled to FSMs but around 300,000 are not taking up or registering for the benefit.

The financial cost to parents of not using FSMs is estimated at around £400 a year per child, but missing out on the important nutritional content of the meal may also have a detrimental impact on the health of the nation's poorest children. Schools also lose extra funds of £600 per child from the Government's Pupil Premium scheme.

The research used data from the Scottish government's experiment to introduce universal entitlement to FSMs in areas of high deprivation raised take-up among those already entitled both during and after the experiment. Elsewhere, anonymised payment schemes – where parents pre-register to pay or to receive the benefit online for example – also raised take-up substantially.

The study looked at every primary school in Scotland and analysed the choices of children and parents there to see that making sure FSM-registered children are not identifiable is only one way to improve participation. Getting more unregistered pupils to take school meals will also be effective. Higher peer-group take-up both reduces the probability that an FSM-participant is forced to eat apart from his friends, and also sends a signal that school meals are enjoyable and of good quality.

Segregation in the school hall at lunchtime and the stigmatisation of receiving free school meals (FSMs) from the state are key factors for parents who are opting for sending children to school with packed lunches instead.

The research was of interest to policy makers and local authorities who are anxious for schools to promote take up of FSM but face the challenge of asking reluctant families to reveal their financial status to school staff. Schools are only able to claim the government's new social mobility money, the Pupil Premium, for children whose parents have declared themselves eligible for FSM.

The reaction from schools and local authorities has been for immediate change in practice where possible and has galvanised urgent steps to reduce stigmatisation. The Children's Food Trust and supermarket giants, ASDA have used the evidence to promote the take up and eligibility for free school meals. Some 300,000 children in the UK stand to benefit from the impact of the research. This research has highlighted the simple steps which could make a massive difference to children's health, wellbeing and educational attainment.

Angus explained his research shows peer pressure and prejudice is affecting parents' choices in applying for FSM.

*“Peer pressure is undoubtedly important. Results show that in a typical school a 10 percentage point rise in peer-group take-up would reduce non-participation by almost a quarter. This is both because children would rather eat with their friends, and because people set greater store by the actions of their friends and classmates than information from authorities. Schools should let all classmates eat together, at the same time, to reduce any stigmatisation. Introducing anonymised payment schemes would also dramatically increase take-up. Government initiatives to increase take-up would be best targeted at year groups in the most deprived areas rather than at individuals, as children are obviously responsive to the choices made by their school friends.”*

The Children's Food Trust applauded the research findings and joined forces with supermarket chain Asda to promote FSM take up through their community champion scheme in every store in the UK. Claire Rick, Children's Food Trust spokesman said:

*“At a time when many families are struggling to make ends meet, it's never been so important to do everything we can to encourage them to register for free school meals if they qualify, and to make sure that children then take up their meals once they're registered. Research shows that when children eat better, they do better in class, and for many children their school lunch can be the only proper meal they eat in a day. Strategies like allowing all children to eat together – regardless of the type of lunch they have, and making sure that children having free school meals can't be identified as such, are good starting points for any school wanting to work on this.”*

The research received widespread media coverage and then a reaction began to galvanise steps to immediately reduce stigmatisation in the school hall. The research reached the attention of the local authorities who provide the school meal service in all state-run schools across the country. The national chair of the Local Authority Caterers' Association issued a statement, saying: *“We must do all we can to ensure that parental concern over their children being singled out, does not force parents to opt for packed lunches.*

*With peer pressure being an important motivator, this is one solution to driving FSM take up. Head teachers can implement simple, cost neutral measures to ensure pupils can eat together, even if space is at a premium, such as by staggering lunch breaks.*

*As was found in the ISER study, initiatives such as anonymous payment schemes for parents to either pay or receive the benefit, can help to increase take up.*

*The introduction of cashless payment systems either online or by smart cards, ensure that all children are treated the same at lunchtimes. Sensitive liaison with families is also needed by schools in order to identify those who are unaware of their eligibility for FSMs, so that they can be encouraged to register for their entitlement.*

*With the reform of the welfare system underway and the possible changes to entitlement levels, LACA is, along with a number of other children's health and welfare bodies, working hard to ensure that the Government maintains free school meal eligibility for all families who will be in receipt of the new Universal Credit.”*

This research has had a far-reaching and immediate impact on campaigners, lobbying groups, policy makers, parents, schools and children themselves in a very short space of time. It is extremely relevant research which has the potential to impact on the lives and lifetime outcomes of hundreds of thousands of children.



**Take-up of Free School Meals: price effects and peer effects** by Angus Holford, *ISER Working Paper Series: 2012-12*



# Colour and money

Examining the difference in  
pay for ethnic minorities.

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Dr Malcolm Brynin analyses the  
changing picture of discrimination in  
pay for workers since 1993.



Do ethnic minorities earn less than the white majority? The answer is not simple, or at least a simple answer is not sufficient. For instance, pay obviously varies enormously across occupations. If there is a pay gap to the disadvantage of ethnic minorities is this across the board, regardless of the occupations, or does it apply to some occupations rather than others? A general pay gap strongly suggests wage discrimination but it might instead be that minorities are more likely to work in low paid occupations. If so, this might indicate that they have difficulty entering better paid occupations, possibly as a result of discrimination at the point of entry (though even then it is equally possible that the minorities themselves prefer some occupations over others, perhaps as a result of chain migration – following others from the same community to a particular area or type of work).

To test the impact of occupational segregation on wages, the analysis used British Labour Force survey data for the years 1993 to 2008. First I calculated the average hourly wage for nine ethnic minorities was calculated to compare this against the average pay of whites (whether British or not). This simple figure tells us the overall wage gap. This is in favour of white people, who clearly earn more than the minorities, if not necessarily by much. The differences in the wages of white people against each minority in around 80 occupations were then calculated to see whether or not the ethnic minorities are paid less within these. While a wage gap still exists it is much lower within occupations, and indeed the gap is sometimes in favour of the minorities. As pay within occupations tends to be more equal this means that people tend to get paid roughly the same for doing roughly the same sort of work regardless of their ethnicity. The general wage gap found in the first analysis is the result of the inability of minorities to break into better paid occupations in sufficient numbers.

Putting some numbers on this, the overall hourly pay gap for Pakistanis is a huge deficit of £1.17 but averaging within occupations this falls to 65p. The figure for Bangladeshis is even more dramatic, falling from £1.92 to 70p. For some groups the gap goes from negative to positive. For instance, Black Africans generally earn 31p per hour in the period relative to whites but averaging within occupations puts them 15p ahead. One group, Black Caribbeans, is actually better off than whites on both counts, earning a very small amount more than whites per hour overall (8p) but seeing this rise to 42p when averaged within occupations. Two groups, however, do worse within occupations than they do overall, though the final difference is not great. Indians see a tiny gap of 2p grow somewhat to 16p within occupations while the Chinese see a gap in their favour of 20p become negative by 6p.

Some of these figures are not large but are sufficient to indicate that the main problem for the pay of minorities seems to be that on average they tend to concentrate in lower paid occupations. Within these their pay differs relatively little from white people doing roughly the same sort of work. This could lead to a simple policy conclusion. It is possible that wage discrimination is becoming less problematic than in the past. The need is therefore either to encourage more members of ethnic minorities to seek to enter better paid occupations or, if it is perceived that there are unfair barriers to entry, to develop better policies and procedures to remove these. This is one important policy implication of the result.

This fairly positive picture, insofar as it limits the problem more to barriers to entry into certain occupations than to a more general problem of wage discrimination, is undermined by two important factors. First, the research also finds that the pay gap over the above period has deteriorated on both counts. In 1993 the general wage gap was 18p in favour of whites but by 2008 this had grown to 43p. The average gap within occupations was actually in favour of the minorities by 3p at the outset of this period but had become 18p in favour of whites at the end. So something has happened in this time to worsen the relative wage situation of the ethnic minorities. Second, when calculating the hourly pay of the minorities relative to whites taking into account their circumstances – that is, assessing what these groups should be expected to earn on average given differences in average age, education, how long they have been in their job, and so on – there is always a deficit. No minority group earns more than the white majority. It cannot be assumed, therefore, that wage discrimination is a thing of the past.



the overall hourly pay gap for Pakistanis is a huge deficit of £1.17 but averaging over occupations this falls to 65p.



Some of these figures are not large but are sufficient to indicate that the main problem for the pay of minorities seems to be that on average they tend to concentrate in lower paid occupations.

**Further reading:**

Understanding the ethnic pay gap in Britain by Malcolm Brynin & Ayse Güveli

**Published in:**

Work Employment and Society, August 2012

[wes.sagepub.com/content/26/4/574.full.pdf+html](http://wes.sagepub.com/content/26/4/574.full.pdf+html)



# MIXING IT UP

## THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF INTERVIEWING SURVEY PARTICIPANTS USING DIFFERENT MODES

Interviewing survey participants in their own home has several advantages. People are generally more likely to agree to take part if they are asked face-to-face and if someone has made the effort to visit their home. The interviewer can also help the interviewee by explaining what is required and answering queries.

However, surveys carried out in this way are expensive. For a survey to be nationally representative, it has to employ interviewers in all parts of the country, and to pay them for the considerable time that they will spend travelling to and from the homes of sample members, in addition to time spent actually carrying out interviews.

In two recently published pieces of research, survey methodologists at ISER have been looking at the benefits and challenges of employing other modes of interview including the telephone and the web.





The Innovation Panel is a 1,500 household panel used as a testbed for the main Understanding Society study. It is available to all researchers for both methodological and substantive research. Further information about the Panel and its associated Annual Competition can be found on the Understanding Society website.  
[www.understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk)

Using Understanding Society's Innovation Panel, Annette Jäckle, Peter Lynn and Jon Burton analysed an experiment in which one group of households was approached for face-to-face interviews in the usual way, while the other group was first invited to complete the survey online. Participants who did not complete the survey online after two weeks were then approached for face-to-face interviews.

The sample included original members of the Innovation Panel, now taking part in the survey for the fifth time and also members of a 'refreshment sample' who were taking part for the second time.

One in five (21%) of original sample households and one third (34%) of the 'refreshment sample' households participated fully by web. The difference seems to be explained by higher monetary incentives being offered to the refreshment sample.

Surprisingly, response to the youth questionnaire for 10 – 15 year-olds was significantly lower with the mixed mode sample (49%) compared to the face-to-face sample (77%). Of those in the mixed mode sample who responded, only 11% responded by web compared with 89% who completed a paper questionnaire.

One conclusion is that the potential for cost savings is great. Most of the households who responded entirely by web did not require any interviewer visit.

What didn't bode so well was that the mixed mode design resulted in a smaller proportion of households fully responding, a smaller proportion of previously-cooperative individuals responding, and more refusals. However, some glimmers of hope did emerge. With the refreshment sample, the individual response rate was no lower with mixed modes than with face-to-face interviewing, which may be an effect of the higher incentive levels offered, so even higher web completion rates may be possible if respondents are offered higher-value monetary incentives. Also, the proportion of households who respond fully by web may further increase if all were offered a conditional bonus for completing online.

Respondents in the mixed mode sample were also less likely to respond to some important questions in the survey, such as those related to income. Further research is being carried out currently to seek ways of improving item response rates in web interviews.

A separate piece of research by Peter Lynn and also using the Innovation Panel looked at whether it was possible to save field work costs by introducing telephone interviews, but without damaging the proportion of people willing to participate.

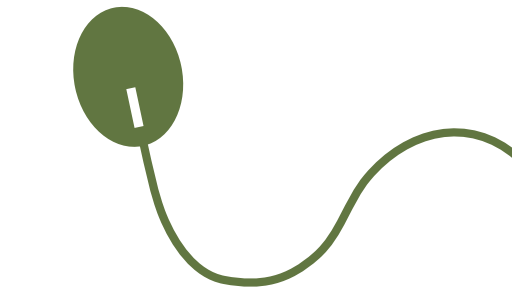
The research showed that the odds of taking part were reduced by one third for people who were initially asked for a telephone interview, before then being asked for a face-to-face interview if the telephone attempt was unsuccessful. This was compared to people who were simply asked for a face-to-face interview and was a substantial effect.

The research also found that when subsequent waves of the survey were carried out using just face-to-face, the overall response rate difference between the mixed mode group and the face-to-face group eroded. This suggests that the occasional implementation of a mixed-mode wave on a longitudinal survey may not have a long-term negative impact on cumulative response rate, even though there may be a short-term effect. The mixed-mode interview may encourage those people who would eventually drop out anyway to do so earlier. But it is important that the right mixed mode design is used.

#### Further reading

**Going Online with a face-to-face household panel:** initial results from an experiment on the Understanding Society Innovation Panel. Annette Jäckle, Peter Lynn and Jon Burton. Understanding Society working-paper 2013-03

**Mode-switch protocols:** how a seemingly small design difference can affect attrition rates and attrition bias. Peter Lynn. Understanding Society working-paper 2013-07



# INFORMING FUTURE POLICY-MAKING IN EUROPE

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It has been a big year for EUROMOD, the European-wide tax-benefit microsimulation model, based at ISER. Professor Holly Sutherland reports on the first release of EUROMOD covering all 27 member states and on how research using it is providing evidence or policy-making in times of crisis at EU and national levels.

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EUROMOD helps to bridge the gaps between academic enquiry and the analytical needs of policy-makers, and doing so within an internationally collaborative framework promotes policy learning and the sharing of expertise.

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EUROMOD is the tax-benefit microsimulation model for the EU27 member states of the European Union, based on household microdata from Eurostat's European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions. It is designed for consistent and comparable cross-country analysis of the effects of tax-benefit policies, and policy reforms, on national budgets, the distribution of household incomes and work incentives. It can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of current policies, to explore the implications of change to policies or economic conditions, or to design new policies with particular goals. Results may be evaluated for individual countries on their own or in comparison with each other, for the EU as a whole or any sub-group of countries.

EUROMOD is managed, maintained, developed and exploited by a team of ISER researchers in collaboration with a network of national experts from institutions in each of the 26 other member states of the EU. About 100 people are involved at any one time, across the full spectrum of seniority and experience. Some are academics, some work for independent research institutes and some are government analysts or statisticians. This rich mix ensures the quality of EUROMOD and its outputs both for academic policy-relevant research and to enhance the evidence base for policy making. It helps to bridge the gaps between academic enquiry and the analytical needs of policy-makers, and doing so within an internationally collaborative framework promotes policy learning and the sharing of expertise.

To encourage wide use of EUROMOD we provide training courses and user support; to foster collaborations and state-of-the-art applications we organise an annual research workshop (open to all researchers in alternate years). These have been hosted in countries without a strong tradition of using microsimulation for policy analysis, inviting local policy-makers and NGOs to the event (in Latvia, Romania and this year in Portugal).

In 2012 we launched the first version of EUROMOD covering all 27 member states. For the first time this offers the opportunity to carry out analysis for the EU as a whole and of potential EU level policy changes, exploring the distributional implications between countries as well as within them.

Recent dramatic changes due to the financial and economic crises have posed challenges both for public policies affecting personal incomes and for analysis of income distribution and its evolution. In terms of public policies, recent research using EUROMOD has been able to explore the implications of unemployment for household incomes, the distributional effects of austerity measures, the distributional properties of alternative sources of tax revenue and in particular tax on imputed rent, and designing policies for effective and efficient family and child support. Comparing across countries provides new perspectives and allows for mutual policy learning.

Our analysis of the distributional effects of the recent austerity measures in 9 EU countries (Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy; Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania; Romania and the UK) updates and extends a similar study from a year ago (reported in the TLV 2012). The study demonstrates how different policy choices addressing similar policy problems can have very different implications for income distribution and for the population groups bearing the cost of austerity in each country. It also shows the evolution of the effects of austerity measures, as some governments take further measures and others start to relax the degree of fiscal consolidation. These comparative papers have also served to inspire some individual national analysis of austerity measures and income distribution using EUROMOD in countries without their own national models or traditions of using this type of evidence-for-policy tool (Latvia, Greece, Cyprus). These studies not only have the potential for impact but, in the case of Greece for example have been used to inform the design of the latest austerity package. The value of such research is increasingly recognised by the European Commission and it was extensively made use of in the recent DG-EMPL annual report "Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2012".

Income distribution statistics based on data referring to 2-3 years previously are not adequate for understanding current policy needs. To address this we have explored methods for using EUROMOD to "nowcast" the current income distribution, taking explicit account of labour market changes. The work is still ongoing but the prospects for having regular "advance warning" estimates is being considered by Eurostat as part of its strategy for improving timeliness of indicators of inequality and poverty risk.

EUROMOD is financially supported by PROGRESS funding which is managed by the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission. For further information and to sign up for EUROMOD news please see [www.iser.essex.ac.uk/euromod](http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/euromod)

**Further reading:**  
The distributional effects of fiscal consolidation in nine EU countries  
EUROMOD Working Paper Series:  
EM2/13

Silvia Avram,  
Francesco Figari,  
Chrysa Leventi,  
Horacio Levy,  
Jekaterina Navicke,  
Manos Matsaganis,  
Eva Militaru,  
Alari Paulus,  
Olga Rastrigina,  
Holly Sutherland



This year ISER has been awarded a further £25 million by the Economic and Social Research Council to continue with the next phase of the scientific leadership of this ground-breaking research programme.



# In it for the long run: A year of Understanding Society

It's been a momentous year for Understanding Society, ISER's long-term academic study of the socio-economic circumstances, health, attitudes and beliefs of individuals in thousands of UK households.

Beginning with 40,000 households in 2009, Understanding Society is building a picture over time of the changing nature of life in the United Kingdom, creating a vast bank of data which can be analysed and accessed by policy-makers, academics, the third sector and business.

This year ISER has been awarded a further £25 million by the Economic and Social Research Council to continue with the next phase of the scientific leadership of this ground-breaking research programme.

2012 saw the publication of the latest findings as academics explored the first wave of data released to consider subjects as diverse as regional and ethnic cultural identity with 'Britishness', the actions and attitudes of teenagers staying out late, how we use emotional support from families and friends, and who is benefitting from increased access to university places.

ISER received widespread media coverage for these and other research projects using Understanding Society data, including the influences on children's well-being and happiness, the impact of growing up in the recession on young people's educational aspirations, and our attitudes to recycling as housework responsibilities. The collection of data, the generation of statistical information and the methods of the study are also framing significant new research in the field of survey methodology and quantitative research, an area of ISER expertise.

Elsewhere the first wave of data was also used by the thinktank Demos to create new profiles of modern poverty for policy makers seeking new approaches to social mobility. The Office of National Statistics used the data for its Life in 2012 report on well-being. NatCen used the data to produce a study for the Royal National Institute for the Blind on the disadvantages facing people with sight loss and impairment. Iain Duncan Smith's Social Justice report for the Department of Work and Pensions analysed the data to reveal two thirds of children from the poorest families in the UK are not living with both parents.

In early 2013 the second wave of data was released to researchers, opening up new opportunities for longitudinal analysis. The data contains interviews in 2010 and 2011 with 54,600 adults and 5,000 children (aged 10-15) in 30,500 households in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The data release represents a major milestone for the study as longitudinal research can now begin in earnest. Hundreds of new Understanding Society research projects are now beginning, combining the two sets of data for the very first time.

Highlights in wave 2 include the first interviews with participants from the former British Household Panel Survey, which has been superseded by Understanding Society and most significantly the release of combined data on health assessments which has been collected by 20,000 separate nurse visits to participants.

The release of the health assessment data will help researchers analyse the impact of socio-economic circumstances on our health outcomes, helping policy makers and medical science to understand the link between heart disease, obesity and health conditions, with the way we live our lives.

The health data includes blood samples, grip strength, lung function, blood pressure and height, weight, body fat and waist circumference. Already researchers are using this data to look at how active commuting might significantly improve health outcomes, and analysing grip strength as a fitness measure in young people to see if this has bearing on their later life health.

New research also commissioned by the ESRC Secondary Data Initiative will allow researchers the opportunity to combine the data from Understanding Society with other government data sets, such as school records and household energy consumption, to create rich studies of the impact of government policies on our society. (More on this on pages 18-19).

New research and findings are now showcased on the new and much-improved Understanding Society website, which also includes downloadable podcasts from researchers and analysts working with the study, and clear information about how to access and use the data. The website also has information on the Innovation Panel Competition, allowing researchers the opportunity to become directly involved with influencing and developing Understanding Society, while developing their own research interests.

The first Understanding Society Research Conference will take place in July 2013 at the University of Essex and will see the presentation of over 60 new research papers from academics from around the world, using Understanding Society and other longitudinal data. The presentations will be covering aspects of sociology, economics, politics, social psychology, research and survey methods, and other studies.

Finally, as part of our consultation on the collection of information during Waves 6-8, beginning late in 2013, we are asking for your views on what you think we should be asking participants as Understanding Society moves into its next five year phase. Please do get in touch.

# Secondary Data Analysis – making the most of ISER’s expertise

Four interesting new ISER research projects, funded by the ESRC’s Secondary Data Initiative, will reveal more about UK society through analysis of Understanding Society alongside other government data.

## Does free universal childcare make a difference?

The effect of free childcare on maternal labour supply and child development is the most comprehensive UK study of the causal effect of free childcare on working mothers and on child development.

A joint project between ISER and the Institute for Fiscal Studies, and in partnership with the Daycare Trust and the Institute for Public Policy Research, it explores the effects on child development and maternal labour supply of different types of free childcare, available at different ages and, in some cases, for children from different family backgrounds.

The UK government spends billions of pounds a year to ensure that all 3 and 4 year olds have access to childcare and early education for 15 hours a week, 38 weeks a year.

There is ongoing debate about whether (and by how much) to increase families’ entitlement, as well as a specific plan to extend the entitlement to 2 year olds in England from low-income families. But there is surprisingly little evidence on the causal impact of free childcare.

This project aims to address the gap in understanding by considering whether free provision of childcare affects maternal outcomes other than participation and hours of work, such as working patterns, search behaviour and participation in further education.

It will also look to establish the effects of free childcare provision on a child’s mental and physical development.

This study will make several contributions to the existing research in this area. In particular, in particular it will:

- provide new evidence for the UK
- extend the range of maternal and child outcomes to include previously neglected or unavailable variables
- analyse the groups of children and mothers that benefit most
- offer an overview of the external validity of existing estimates.

The results will be of immediate relevance for assessing the likely impacts of the planned extension of free nursery entitlement to disadvantaged 2 year olds, and to the continuing debates about whether the free entitlements should be expanded further.

The research programme is composed of four projects:

### Project A: Pre-school provision for disadvantaged children

Project A will analyse whether the provision of pre-school education targeted at the most disadvantaged families affects maternal labour supply and early childhood educational outcomes.

The project will match data from the School census on the number of full-time and part-time pre-school places in maintained nurseries or in nursery classes in primary schools to data from a special license version of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) using geographic identifiers at the LEA level to provide maternal employment outcomes.

The National Pupil Database (NPD) provides Key Stage 1 test scores from 1997/98 and Key Stage 2 test scores from 1995/96. The large sample size will enable the team to focus their analysis on more deprived areas by matching school location to indices of area deprivation.

### Project B: Universal pre-school provision

The main objective of this analysis is to understand whether universal provision of pre-school education affects maternal and child outcomes.

The team will use maternal outcomes from Project A. They will analyse child outcomes using both Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) scores and Key Stage 1 test scores. This will provide physical and emotional outcomes as well as educational.

### Project C: Access to free part-time or full-time childcare

This project examines mothers of children born before and after the three cut-off points governing access to free part-time childcare for 3 year olds and compares their employment and labour force participation status, as well as their working patterns, search behaviour and participation in further education in the following term.

The team will also analyse the labour supply of mothers of four year old children born either side of the August 31st cut-off point.

The large sample size offered by the LFS will allow separate analyses for different subgroups of the population, for example lone and partnered mothers and by socio-economic status.

### Project D: Differences in the amount of pre-school education received

This project examines whether children potentially exposed to a different period of time in pre-school (up to one term) – but who start school in the same year and at the same age – experience differences in early educational outcomes.

Data from the National Pupil Database combined with the Millennium Cohort Study, which provides information on British Ability Scales (BAS) measured at ages 3, 5 and 7, and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) on pro-social behaviour, hyperactivity, emotional, conduct and peer problems, also measured at ages 3, 5 and 7.



## How green are we?

The distribution and dynamics of UK citizens' environmental attitudes, behaviours and actions is a project led by Simonetta Longhi, Research Fellow at ISER, Peter Lynn, Professor of Survey Methodology at ISER and Ben Anderson, Senior Research Fellow at the Faculty of Engineering and the Environment, University of Southampton. It uses Understanding Society to analyse the environmental attitudes, behaviours, and actions of people living in the UK.

The research aims to provide policy makers seeking to legislate for and to encourage 'environmentally-friendly' attitudes and behaviours with a clearer understanding of what factors in people's lives influence and shape how green they are in what they think and what they do.

The Department for Energy and Climate Change aims to reduce UK greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% by 2050. To achieve this, people living in the UK will have to radically and permanently change their behaviour to use significantly less carbon-intensive products and services and to reduce overall energy demand

Energy overuse at the national level is both a direct and an indirect result of the millions of decisions made in homes across the UK. Directly through things like household energy and transport choices (how much gas and electricity we use, whether we take the car or travel by public transport) and indirectly through the consumption of goods and services provided by the industrial and service sectors.

Until now, the almost total absence of large scale longitudinal data in this field means that we know very little about the way in which attitudes, behaviours and actions change over time in the context of changes in a household, changes such as retirement, moving house, the birth of a child or the introduction of new 'green' technologies.

This project aims to see how these events and changes shape and influence environmental attitudes and actions.

The research team will:

- analyse similarities in pro-environmental behaviours across household members, including children
- identify the key factors influencing the overall environmental behaviour/impact of the household
- investigate the impact of changing family structure, changing economic conditions and changes in the local environment (neighbourhood or region) on energy use
- explore the impact of environmental 'events' and media coverage of those events on attitudes and behaviours e.g. University of East Anglia's 'climate-gate' and of the yearly climate summits

In addition, the researchers will explore the possibility of linking the Understanding Society data to the Department of Energy and Climate Change national household energy consumption (NEED) data to provide a unique dataset for future use.

## Caring for older people- understanding what works

Disability and care needs in the older population: disability benefits, social care and well-being is an 18 month project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, which aims to provide robust, independent empirical evidence to sharpen policy judgements on reform of care services and disability benefits for older disabled people.

Professor Stephen Pudney and Dr Cara Booker from ISER will be working alongside Professor Ruth Hancock and Dr Marcello Morciano from the University of East Anglia.

Using advanced statistical methods, the research team's objectives are to:

- understand the impacts of public support including the effect of disability on wellbeing; whether care services and disability benefits have a significant alleviating effect; the effects of cash benefits compared with care services
- assess the responsiveness of public support to changes in older people's care needs including examining the existence and consequences of any delays between the onset or increase in severity of disability and the receipt of benefit or services
- provide evidence on the likely impacts of potential policy reforms; seeing if there is a strong case for a change in the balance of cash benefits and care services within the system of support for older disabled people in terms of improvements in their wellbeing and in use of public resources
- assess the role of different configurations of disability within the households of older people; looking at couples where one or both have a disability and how that relates to the receipt of benefits/care services

The team expects to make a significant contribution to the body of objective and independent evidence on the likely impacts of reform of care services and disability benefits for older disabled people. Ultimately they expect this to improve the public debate and sharpen policy judgments in this area.

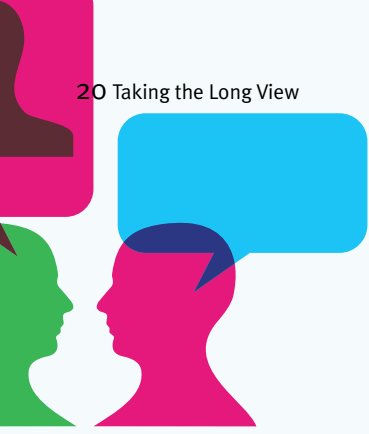
## How our travel behaviour changes with our lives

ISER is working with the Department for Transport and the Centre for Transport and Society at the University of West of England on Life Transitions and Travel Behaviour, and 18 month project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. Emerging research has established that significant changes in travel behaviour are often associated with life transitions. Life transitions involve a change in personal circumstances, typically marked by observable life events such as joining the labour force, moving home, having children or retiring. This research project sets out to explore the relationship between such life events (like moving home) and travel behaviour changes (like the number of cars owned or mode choice for getting to work).

The project will use data from the Understanding Society survey and the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). Together, these surveys have tracked the lives of a nationally (UK) representative sample of individuals over multiple years. They have recorded information concerning household car ownership and commuting behaviour, as well as a variety of other information about people's lives such as their relationships, employment, attitudes and health. Accordingly, the survey data offers a unique opportunity to examine how individuals make changes to their travel behaviours over time in relation to life events.

The project sets out to meet the following objectives:

- To identify the extent to which life transitions are associated with major turning points in travel behaviour related to car ownership and commuting;
- To understand in what circumstances life transitions are likely to lead to turning points in car ownership and commuting behaviour;
- To use the understanding gained above to identify how policy interventions can achieve desirable outcomes for transport; and
- To build capacity in the transport field to use large-scale, longitudinal data sets to inform policy analysis.



## New research

ISER's reputation for world class socio-economic research continues to attract significant funding, allowing researchers to examine in detail how our society is changing in the 21st century



## Job Polarisation

**DR ANDREA SALVATORI**

Dr Andrea Salvatori received the prestigious ESRC Future Leaders Award in 2012 to research the growth of job polarisation as the gap widens between high pay professions and low pay jobs.

Labour markets across Europe have become increasingly polarised, as the number of bad (low-pay, low-skills) jobs and good (high-pay, high-skills) jobs has increased relative to mid-ranking jobs.

The aim of this research is to advance our knowledge about this process of polarisation, its causes, its implications and its links with other aspects of job quality. In particular, the research will produce the first empirical evidence on how job polarisation has changed and interacted with the organisation of firms in the UK.

The analysis will also extend to other EU countries to investigate changes in other aspects of job quality in increasingly polarised labour markets and to explore the implications for government budgets and redistributive policies of the growth of jobs at the two ends of the pay distribution.

Finally, the research will study the implications of the hollowing out of the labour market for wage mobility in the UK, and, in particular, for the chances of the low-pay to progress up the career ladder.

The research will therefore contribute to our understanding of the changing labour markets providing important insights for policies for skills, social mobility, and aimed at improving the quality of jobs and, ultimately, people's wellbeing.

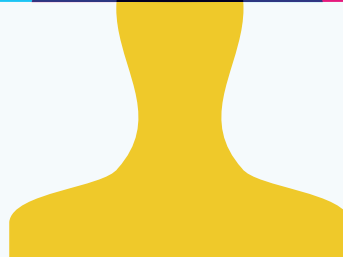
## The social impact of moral change

**PROFESSOR DAVID VOAS**

David Voas is directing survey and experimental research into contemporary values and behaviours. The research team are planning to organise a half-day workshop in London on our emerging findings and the implications of this research for a variety of policy areas, particularly youth crime and community cohesion. They are specifically concerned with testing the relevance of Jonathan Haidt's six moral foundations and the positive and negative consequences of "groupishness" and loyalty.

The focus for the workshop will be on the tension between the social importance and destructive potential of moral communities and social identities. Loyalty can be inspired at a local level by groups as diverse as religious organisations, sports clubs, and criminal gangs, but of course such groups are not equally suited to promoting pro-social behaviour. The question is how one can best harness the natural desire to belong (to something) to achieve civic engagement, while safeguarding community cohesion and reducing conflict between groups.

Professor Voas is organising an event in June 2013 at the RSA that targets policy-makers and third sector practitioners, including invited contacts from CLG, the Home Office, HM Treasury, Theos, the British Humanist Association and London Citizens. Some participants will be asked to report briefly on their own findings and experiences. The aim is to have a discussion covering policy ideas that would address concrete issues, building on theoretical and empirical research.





# The Research Team at ISER

Director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research:  
Professor Heather Laurie MBE

Deputy Director/ Director of the UK Longitudinal Studies Centre:  
Professor Nick Buck

Director of The ESRC Research Centre on Micro-social Change and Professor of Economics:  
Professor Mike Brewer

Director of Research and Professor of Economics:  
Professor Mark Taylor

Director of EUROMOD and Research Professor:  
Professor Holly Sutherland

Professor of Economics:  
Professor Adeline Delavande

Professor of Economics:  
Professor Stephen Pudney

Professor of Economics:  
Professor Sonia Bhalotra  
\* from summer 2013

Professor of Population Studies:  
Professor David Voas

Professor of Survey Methodology:  
Professor Peter Lynn

Professor of Social Statistics:  
Professor Paul Clarke  
\* from Sept 2013

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Reader:  
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Senior Research Fellow and Innovation Panel Director:  
Dr Annette Jackle

Senior Research Fellow and Director of Graduate Studies:  
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Senior Research Fellow:  
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