

CMISTNews

Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research (CMIST)

An advanced quantitative methods research centre in the School of Social Sciences



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Welcome to the December 2015 edition of the Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research (CMIST) newsletter.

This newsletter aims at highlighting the diversity of research at our centre, showcasing research outcomes from PhD students, young researchers and more experienced members of staff, as well our involvement in larger projects where members of CMIST are taking a leading role, such as the British Election Studies and Q-step. We hope you enjoy reading about what we do

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A celebration of quantitative social research at The University of Manchester

Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research (CMIST)

We celebrated 20 years of quantitative social sciences at Manchester on the 25th of November 2015 in recognition of the 20 year anniversary of CCSR, 7 years of the Institute for Social Change (ISC) and the 1st birthday of the Cathie Marsh Institute. There were over 100 people attending, with many old friends of CCSR and ISC who had travelled from across Britain, alongside with new researchers from the Institute and other key research organisations engaged in quantitative social sciences. We were particularly pleased to welcome all the previous directors of CCSR and ISC, including a very warm welcome to Professor Emeritus Angela Dale. In commemoration of the event, Jo Wathan and other colleagues at CMIST wrote a moving tribute to Cathie Marsh and Angela Dale which can be read here:

www.cmist.manchester.ac.uk/about/cathie-marsh/remembering-our-founders

The first panel discussion discussed and debated issues related to innovations in survey and census research in the last 20 years, with some predictions of the types of data we may be using in the coming years. The illustrious panel of speakers, chaired by Prof. Natalie Shlomo, included Jane Elliot (ESRC CEO), Chris Skinner (LSE), Patrick Sturgis (NCRM Director), David Martin (UK Data Service), Nick Moon (GfK) and Mark Elliot (Manchester). Many of the speakers and audience members shared personal memories of Cathie Marsh, and her keen interest in new forms of social data. There were debates around how useful "big data" are, and a plea to maintain funding for the jewels in UK Social Science research, the large longitudinal studies across the lifecourse.

The second panel was chaired by Prof. James Nazroo and also included a range of leading authorities on inequalities- Anthony Heath (Manchester and Nuffield College), Tom Clark (*Guardian*), Omar Khan (Runnymede Trust), Brian Heaphy (Manchester), Professor Fiona Devine (Manchester) and Professor Tom Scharf (Galway). Each speaker spoke on how inequalities in different domains of social life, whether by social class, ethnicity, sexuality, and across the lifecourse had transformed Britain. There were some debates around the measurement of social class and inequalities, and why some disciplines were late to recognise the importance of social inequalities in research.

The event ended with a presentation from Anthony Heath and Tom Clark on their book "Hard Times", detailing the impact of the recession on social inequalities. The book uncovers the frightening scars in the social fabric of poorer communities – affecting mental health, family life and social bonds. The idea for the book originated from the highly successful Harvard-Manchester Social Change Initiative, led by ISC, with many contributions from CMIST researchers. The slides from the book are available here: www.theguardian.com/business/ng-interactive/2014/apr/25/hard-times-from-big-recession-to-small-society-interactive



We have come a long way since the Census Micro Data Unit was set up in 1993, with CCSR, ISC and now CMIST housing leading researchers on social inequalities and social change, applying and developing advanced quantitative methods. With this wonderful legacy, outstanding researchers, student champions, and the great amount of support and goodwill from colleagues in the quantitative social sciences, we hope that the next 20 years will be just as exciting.



Schools not social network matter for reducing poverty

Nissa Finney



The people that we know – our social networks – have come to be seen as a resource, for social and economic support and for access to information and opportunities. One influential idea of scholarship on social networks is that it is beneficial to have a mix of people in your social network. The theory is that this opens up more opportunities and access to different types of information and support.

This idea has been taken on by those interested in immigrant and minority integration, re-cast in terms of the importance of minorities having social networks that are not solely made up of people of the same ethnic group as them so as to encourage socio-economic and cultural integration.

Evidence to date is inconclusive on the significance and impact of ethnically mixed social networks and rather little exists for the UK. In a project for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation we had the specific concern of investigating how mixed social networks are related to poverty for different ethnic groups. We used recently available data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study, *Understanding Society* (wave 3).

There is a clear message from the results: the probability of being poor and of being very poor is less for individuals with mixed friendship networks than those without mixed friendship networks (Figure 1).

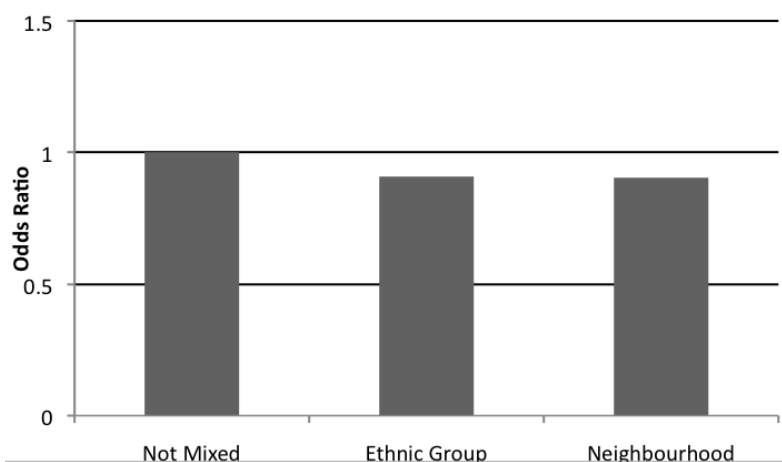
This is the case for all ethnic groups and for different types of households. For example, having a mixed friendship network could reduce the likelihood of an individual in a 'struggling family' being very poor by a third compared with not having a mixed friendship network.

But how important is a mixed friendship network for affecting poverty compared with other factors? The answer: not very. In fact, other factors such as having no qualifications or being separated or divorced are stronger predictors of being in poverty than social network composition (Figure 2).

And who benefits from mixed friendship networks? We found that the benefit of having mixed friendship networks in terms of the degree of reduction in poverty is felt most by ethnic groups with lowest levels of poverty (particularly the White British ethnic group), and least by those with highest levels of poverty (particularly the Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups).

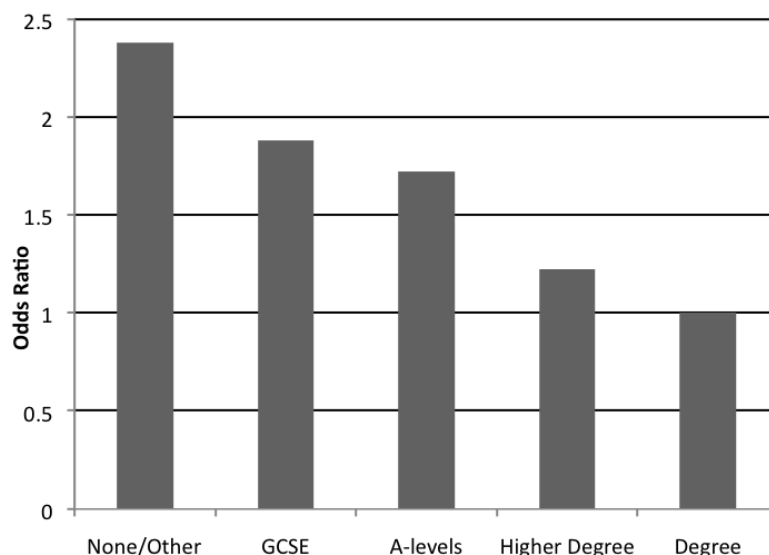
Another problem with a focus on mix is that it can miss other, more fundamental, aspects of social relations. For example, one striking result from our analysis was that social isolation is not evenly experienced across ethnic groups. Black African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean ethnic groups are most likely to have only one or no close friends; as many as 1 in 5 Black African people reported having only one, or no, close friends. The number of close friends was a stronger predictor of poverty status than how mixed somebody's social network was.

Figure 1: Likelihood of being poor with mixed-ethnic group and mixed-neighbourhood social networks compared to social networks that are not mixed (controlling for demographic and socio-economic characteristics)



Source: Understanding Society, Wave 3 (authors calculations)

Figure 2: Likelihood of being poor according to educational qualification (controlling for demographic and socio-economic and social network characteristics)



Source: Understanding Society, Wave 3 (authors calculations)

This research suggests that having mixed social network composition can reduce poverty risk. However, social networks cannot be viewed in isolation and policies focusing on individual's social networks will not be a solution for integration or inequalities. Other factors, including education and social isolation, have a greater effect on levels of poverty.

Acknowledgement: This project was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as part of the Poverty and Ethnicity Programme. This research was undertaken by Nissa Finney, Dharmi Kapadia and Simon Peters in the ESRC Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity.

Find out more:
Full report and briefing: www.jrf.org.uk/publications/how-are-poverty-ethnicity-and-social-networks-related

Work of CoDE: www.ethnicity.ac.uk

BES data closer match to May's result than pre-election polls

British Election Study

British Election Study in-person survey data has cast new light on how sampling impacted on the 2015 general election polling miss.

The data reveals a closer match to the 2015 general election Conservative lead over Labour than the pre-election polls, which failed to forecast the scale of the Conservative victory.

Analysis of the new data by the BES team suggests that this closer match was made possible by using probability-based sampling methods and successful targeting of hard-to-reach groups, including non-voters.

The results of the in-person survey have been much awaited, because they have implications for understanding what went wrong with the polls in 2015.

The BES conducts an online panel study following the same 30,000 respondents over time and also an in-person probability based sample of 2,987 people in 300 constituencies.

BES Director Professor Edward Fieldhouse said: "If sampling and representativeness are important for understanding the 2015 polling miss, this should appear in the in-person post-election BES data.

"Our preliminary analysis points to this as the best explanation for why we get a relatively large Conservative lead over Labour in their sample, unlike the pre-election polls."

In the BES in-person survey, 40.3% of the voters said they voted Conservative, 32.75% Labour, 7.05% LibDem, 10.61% UKIP and 4.69% SNP.

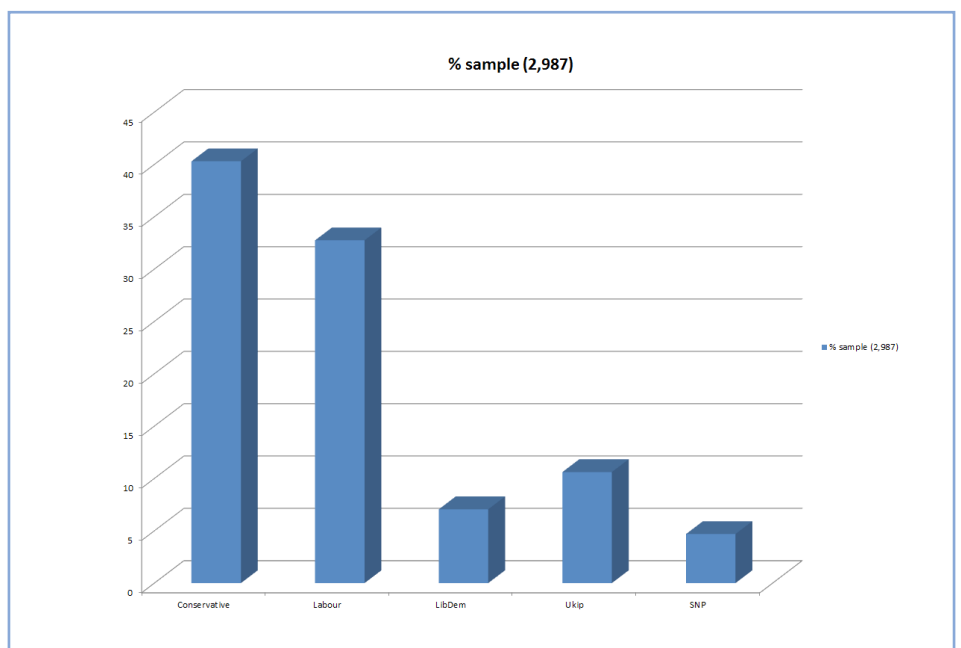
Professor Fieldhouse added: "We don't have a perfect sample of the whole population, but our data performs well with respect to lower reported turnout, and a good distribution of age. We think these two factors help us get much closer to the election result, although further research is also needed".

He continued, "We do not think the results are due to people knowing the outcome of the election either. For this 'rationalisation' to occur, we would expect to find more Conservatives the longer from the election the person was interviewed. Our analysis suggests this is not a feature which explains the result".

The BES team found no evidence for popular explanations, including Shy Tories, late swing or systematically different preferences among "don't knows", to explain why the polls were wrong before the election.

The new analysis now points to unrepresentative samples as an important explanation for the polling miss, a problem which is largely offset by the methods used in the BES in-person survey.

Dr Mellon said: "Opinion pollsters are very good at making their samples reflect the general population, using a system of weighting.



"But the general population and the electorate are very different things, because around 40% of adults don't vote."

Chris Prosser said: "The 40% who don't vote are also less likely to answer political polls"

"This means there are too many voters in polls among low turnout groups such as young people."

In the BES in-person survey, 43% of the under 30s said that they didn't vote. However, polls will often find less than 15% of them saying they didn't vote.

Dr Mellon added: "There are far too many young voters in polling samples and not enough young non-voters.

"Because young people tend to be more Labour leaning, this means we end up with too many Labour voters in the polls, as happened before the election in May.

"This appears to be part of the reason why there was a bias in favour of the Labour party in May."

Social climbing makes the English happier than Americans

Bram Vanhoutte



In a recent article, Bram Vanhoutte & James Nazroo examine the impact of socio-economic trajectories on later life wellbeing in England and the US, and give insight into mechanisms that reproduce social inequality.

The pay-off of social mobility in terms of wellbeing strongly varies between the US and England. While mobility is substantially less common in England than in the US, a steep rise in the ranks of society from working class upbringing to retiring as a professional adds about 2% to people's feeling of control and autonomy, above the benefits implied by better health and higher wealth. In the US, climbing the ladder either has no, or even a negative, association with wellbeing. Climbing down the ladder in both countries is negatively associated with life satisfaction. In both countries, a substantial amount of upward and downward mobility is tied in with educational achievements, but more so in the US than England. We equally found that people who were born in a working class family in Britain are actually more satisfied with life compared to those born in a high class family once we take living conditions into account. In the US, being raised in an advantaged family does breed more advantage in terms of wellbeing later in life.

A number of factors could account for these country differences:

- The gains in terms of prestige of this social rise could be offset by the low US standard of provisions that matter in later life, such as healthcare and pensions. What use is it to have climbed the social ladder, if this does not enable you to take adequate care of your health? Living the American dream in practice seems to have less merit than rising in the ranks of the British class society, when taking into account the provisions of the welfare state for the generation of our study (aged 55-90 in 2004).
- Life courses are shaped by historical context. Going up the societal ladder in terms of occupational class could well mean worse job circumstances, given the transition from an industrial to a service economy. For example a factory worker who was laid off and now works in a service job with a temporary casual contract. Maybe this was more common for in the US compared to the UK, which explains the negative impact of social mobility in the US?
- Who are we comparing these social risers to? These are slightly different groups in both countries, due to the large differences in social stability by parental position: While one out of two born in a working class family also will retire from a working class job in England, this is only a third in the US. This means that the "stable mobility" group in the US comprises more people born in middle and high class families than in our English data. In other words, social mobility is not only more prevalent in the US, but at the same time occurs more often at the bottom layers of society.



This study raises three issues. Firstly, social mobility was relatively rare for the English working class. When it did happen and was substantial, it has positive effects on wellbeing in later life. In the US on the other hand, social mobility happened more often, but seems inconsequential in later life. We suspect this is partly due to a lack of advantages associated with social rising, or its limited impact given the high cost of healthcare and other provisions important in later life

A second issue is that education has been a major gateway to social mobility. To let current generations enjoy these benefits, it is of vital importance that access to (higher) education remains in reach for all.

A last remark is that these findings are "historical", in the sense that they reflect the experience of the baby boomers, who enjoyed the heyday of the welfare state. It remains to be seen that what extent social mobility will have a similar impact for other generations, who can rely less on social solidarity.

Vanhoutte, B. & Nazroo, J. (2015) [Life Course Pathways to Later Life Wellbeing: A Comparative Study of the Role of Socio-Economic Position in England and the U.S.](#) *Journal of population ageing*, DOI 10.1007/s12062-015-9127-x

Class, culture and ethnicity: a study of young people's educational attainment in England

Mollie Bourne



This thesis examines social-class inequalities in educational attainment. The central aims of the thesis are to assess the applicability of Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory and Goldthorpe's rational choice theory. Drawing on the Millennium Cohort Study and the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, the thesis conducts rigorous analyses on class differences in educational attainment (termed 'primary effects') and in educational decision making, controlling for previous attainment (termed 'secondary effects').

The analyses find support for Bourdieu's notion that cultural competence and particular class-characterised dispositions can generate educational advantage. For young children, however, these are not found to mediate the link between class and cognitive performance substantially, and are unable to account for the

growing divergences that occur in the first few years of compulsory schooling. For older children, these are shown to be the main mechanism through which those from advantaged homes realise educational success.

The thesis also examines trends in continuation in post-compulsory academic study and evaluates the usefulness of rational action theory for understanding the secondary effects of social class. Choice-based differences are shown to be of little importance for understanding the further disadvantage some pupils face once attainment has been controlled for. However, this finding is subject to the important caveat that the secondary effects of social class differ for white and non-white pupils. The thesis considers the implications of this finding for the Breen–Goldthorpe (1997) model of educational decision making and suggests the

important assumption of relative risk aversion may not be appropriate for non-white groups.

A range of statistical methods are used in this thesis, including some advanced techniques such as multilevel growth curve modelling. The thesis also makes a series of methodological recommendations for future studies.

Finally, the analyses in this thesis show the overriding importance of parents' education for children's cognitive and educational attainment. This is demonstrably the most influential way in which social origin perpetuates differences between the advantaged and disadvantaged, at all stages of pupils' educational careers. This thesis contributes to existing knowledge in this field in the theoretical, substantive and methodological domains.

The role of income and income status on well-being in parents and children

Elisabeth Garratt Glass



The links between higher income inequality and lower well-being have been widely researched, but the individual-level mechanisms that are thought to underpin these associations lack a clearly specified theoretical basis. Specifically, whether income is relevant to well-being primarily by capturing material resources or psychosocial status has not been unambiguously determined. In this thesis these individual-level mechanisms are examined in relation to psychological distress in parents and behavioural problems in children in a large, nationally representative UK sample. Two key pathways are examined: first, individual-level income status comparisons, and second, the role of inequity in workplace rewards.

The first pathway – individual-level income status comparisons – is explored by examining the associations between absolute income, distance from the regional mean income, regional income rank and parents' psychological and children's behavioural problems. Specifically, these studies examine rank theory, which states that people are sensitive to their ordinal income position due to an evolutionary based cognitive capability. Income rank has previously been associated with adults' well-being, but rank theory has never been examined in children. In parents and children,

material and psychosocial mechanisms were both associated with well-being: higher absolute incomes were associated with improved well-being at all incomes, while higher rank was only beneficial to well-being at higher incomes. Status differences therefore appear to be more salient to parents and children living in higher-income households. These associations were also replicated for children's internalising and externalising behaviours. The possibility that income interacts with measures of socioeconomic disadvantage in its associations with well-being is also explored, identifying both reinforcing and mitigating effects of socioeconomic disadvantages. These studies provide the most rigorous examination of rank theory in adults to date, and also offer the first evidence that psychosocial mechanisms contribute to children's well-being.

The second pathway – inequity in workplace rewards – is explored in relation to parents' psychological distress and self-rated health and children's behavioural problems. Workplace inequity is associated with impaired well-being in employees, but objectively defined measures of workplace inequity have been neglected despite their potential methodological advantages. The potential relevance of parents' workplace inequity

to children's well-being has also never been examined. Using a definition of workplace inequity based on wages and occupational social class, under-rewarded parents had a higher likelihood of poor overall health and higher psychological distress, while over-rewarded parents had a lower likelihood of poor overall health. Behavioural problems were lower in children of over-rewarded fathers, but behavioural problems were not associated with fathers' workplace under-rewards, nor with mothers' workplace rewards. Objectively measured experiences of workplace inequity are therefore relevant to well-being in parents and children.

These results highlight that income status – whether defined as income rank or inequity in workplace rewards – is associated with well-being in parents and children. Policy interventions should focus on increasing absolute incomes, addressing multiple socioeconomic disadvantages and considering the wider issues of status comparisons and their negative associations with well-being.

How are social networks associated with mental health service use? A comparison between Pakistani women, and women of other ethnic groups in the United Kingdom

Dharmi Kapadia



Pakistani women in the UK have high levels of mental illness, alongside low levels of outpatient mental health service use, compared with women of other ethnic groups. Further, previous studies have suggested that Pakistani women have particularly low levels of social support, and high levels of social isolation which may reduce their chances of coming into contact with mental health services. However, to date, there has been little empirical evidence to support this.

This thesis investigated the mental health service use, social networks' structure and function, and the relationship between the two, for Pakistani women compared with women of other ethnic groups. This was done using a systematic review of the relevant literature, and statistical modelling using two large nationally representative datasets from the UK. The first dataset, Understanding

Society, was used to formulate latent classes of support networks, subsequently used in regression models to compare the support available in Pakistani women's networks with women of other ethnic groups. The second dataset, Ethnic Minority Psychiatric Illness Rates in the Community (EMPIRIC), was used to ascertain the influence of social networks (perceived social support, contact with relatives and friends, network composition, and size) on the use of outpatient mental health services, using logistic regression modelling. These data were also used to build a structural equation model to test the direct and indirect effects of social networks on outpatient mental health service usage, via their impact on mental illness.

Pakistani women (along with Bangladeshi women) had the lowest rate of mental health service use, compared with women in other ethnic groups.

Further Pakistani women were more likely to be socially isolated than White majority women, but there were largely no differences between Pakistani women and other ethnic minority women in the structure and function of social networks. Finally, there was evidence to suggest that social networks indirectly reduced mental health service use via their impact on mental illness. There were only small ethnic differences in the indirect effect of social networks on mental health service use, and these differences did not explain Pakistani women's under-use of mental health services.

Parental migration, care-giving practices and left-behind children's nutritional health in rural China: A mixed-methods approach

Nan Zhang



China's rural-urban migration has resulted in 61 million children living apart from their parent(s) in rural communities. Previous studies have failed to examine the long-term effects of parental migration on left-behind children's nutritional health, and have not examined the gender differences (of parents and children) in those associations. This research uses a mixed-methods design that incorporates quantitative and qualitative techniques to explore links between parental migration, care-giving arrangements and left-behind children's nutritional health in rural China.

The quantitative analyses draw on a longitudinal dataset – the China Health and Nutrition Survey (CHNS) (1997, 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2009) to examine the relationships between children's nutritional outcomes and different patterns of parental migration including being left behind in different stages of childhood, and being left behind by the father or the mother. The qualitative component consists of analyses of interviews with 32 caregivers (21 grandparents, 9 mothers, and 2 uncles/aunts), and children's diaries (26 children aged 6-12, 21 left-behind children and 5 non-left-behind children) to explore the care-giving practices for left-behind children from

the perspectives of a group of children and their caregivers in rural northern central China.

Results of the quantitative analyses show negative associations between parental migration, especially maternal migration, and left-behind children's nutritional outcomes indicated by anthropometric measures and macronutrient intakes, and this is particularly true for boys left behind during early life in rural China. The qualitative findings highlight the importance of socio-cultural factors, since there seems to be a paradox of intergenerational obligations for boys in a culture where sons are more valued than daughters. This is because parents migrate to save for their sons' adult lives, reducing the remittances sent to support their sons who stay behind. There is less pressure to save for daughters' adult lives and so more potential for remittances to support their nutrition.

The research also recognizes the importance of grandparents as carers, and their experiences and beliefs about healthy eating for children. Grandparents, particularly on the paternal side, are expected to fulfil social obligations to care for left-behind grandchildren even without immediate financial returns. Inadequate financial support from the migrant parents of left-behind boys in

rural China, in particular boys cared for by paternal grandparents, may result in greater risk of poor nutrition during the early childhood. This potentially renders such left-behind boys vulnerable to developmental delays. These findings are important for policy-makers to develop effective interventions to improve left-behind children's nutritional well-being in rural China.

Data, Data, Everywhere: Celebration event for 2015 Q-Step internships



A step-change in quantitative social science skills
Funded by the Nuffield Foundation, ESRC and HEFCE

Q-Step Centre

The University of Manchester's Q-Step Centre (www.manchester.ac.uk/q-step) has enabled 48 students to undertake a paid internship over the summer in collaboration with organisations in the public, private and third-sector.

We hosted an afternoon of celebration for these students on 20th November, in the stunning Whitworth Art Gallery to showcase what our students have been up to in Manchester and London, in organisations including YouGov, IpsosMori, AgeUK, BBC, The Times, The Home Office and Department for International Development, General Medical Council, New Economy, Santander and the World Bank.

The internships run in the summer of the second year and provide a fantastic opportunity for social science and humanities undergraduates to take their quantitative learning from the classroom into the workplace. We've been busy sharing our experiences with others across the UK through a series of talks and presentations including at the Royal Statistical Society's annual conference in September, the University of Manchester's Policy Week event in a session called 'How Big is that Number? And Does it Matter?' on 5 November, and at a jointly organised event with the Association for Survey Computing and the RSS on 29 September (www.asc.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/2015-09-29-ASCRSS-Event-The-Q-Step-Programme-Flyer.pdf). We also presented at an international social science data conference in June, in Minneapolis, eliciting the response that this is 'truly visionary'.

Our first success in terms of employment resulting from a summer internship was reported in September, when Anna Kiel, Politics and International Relations graduate, secured a job with Shoreditch-based company, AudienceNet. **Anna's story** is a wonderful example of how applied data analysis is far more a result of motivation in social issue than mathematical aptitude – her passion for politics brought to life the project she undertook in her placement in 2014. Other students from 2014 have graduated and some have chosen to continue with quantitative career tracks – including studying on our own SRMS Master's programme.



The following quotes from 2014 Q-Step interns demonstrate the value to students of undertaking an internship.

"Now I have something at the top of my CV which I'm really proud of and which really advanced my skillset" – Mia, politics student

"I gained so much experience for so many contexts I could end up in" – Bella, sociology student (now Master's)

"Data analysis and quantitative skills are increasingly important in linguistics research, so the skills I developed are very important for my future career" – Donald, linguistics student (now PhD)

We look forward to seeing what the 2015 cohort do next. Please do follow Q-Step progress on @UoMQStep. If you'd like us to come and talk about the internships do contact Jackie Carter on j.carter@manchester.ac.uk

Photo of Giuseppe Maio on panel session on 5 November talking about his Q-Step summer internship which he will be presenting at the World Bank, Washington DC, on 17 Nov 2015.

General Enquiries

Philippa Walker
tel 0161 275 4721
email p.walker@manchester.ac.uk

CMIST

Humanities Bridgeford Street
The University of Manchester
Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL

Consultancy

Kingsley Purdam
tel 0161 275 4719
email kingsley.purdam@manchester.ac.uk