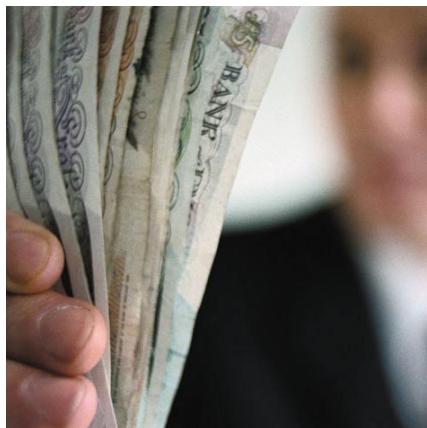


# Seven Deadly Sins

A new look at society through an old lens

Pride  
Anger  
Lust  
Avarice  
Gluttony  
Envy  
Sloth





# Seven Deadly Sins

A new look at society through an old lens

Conceived and edited by Iain Stewart and Romesh Vaitilingam

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## Foreword

Ian Diamond  
Chief Executive, ESRC

Research resources are the foundations on which social scientists can undertake work of the highest quality and relevance.

This report has been conceived as a way of demonstrating the value of social science datasets and of the top quality research that analyses them. It uses the old lens of the Seven Deadly Sins, first enumerated in their present form by Thomas Aquinas, as a way of looking afresh at modern society and some of the key social, economic and political issues we face.

Some of the most vital resource investments that the Economic and Social Research Council makes are in world-renowned large-scale datasets like the British Household Panel Survey – which has tracked a representative sample of 6,000 households year by year since 1991 – the three birth cohort studies – which collect information on groups of people born in 1958, 1970 and 2000/1 – and the British Election Study – which gathers data on long-term trends in voting behaviour.

The report showcases some of the ways in which social science data provides insights that can potentially impact upon policy and practice. We are publishing it at the start of Social Science Week 2005, an ESRC initiative taking place across the UK and intended to offer everyone – from politicians to the general public – the opportunity to discover what the UK's social scientists are doing and how social science research can contribute to better policy-making and, ultimately, a better society.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Ian Diamond'.

# Introduction and summary

## Seven Deadly Sins

A new look at society through an old lens

It is over 700 years since Thomas Aquinas described the 'seven deadly sins'. Do these traditional transgressions – of pride, anger, lust, avarice, gluttony, envy and sloth – have any relevance to society today? A full answer would probably require the input of philosophers and theologians. But they do provide an unusual lens for looking at some pressing issues of modern life: religious conflict, rage in children and adults, sexual behaviour, corporate greed, binge drinking, rising personal debt and political apathy.

Exploring these issues afresh – and often questioning conventional wisdom – demands a look at the evidence, drawing on the wealth of information now available to us on people's health, incomes, education, employment, families, relationships and social attitudes: large-scale datasets like the three big birth cohort studies of 1958, 1970 and 2000/1, the British Household Panel Survey, the General Household Survey, the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles, and the British Election Study and related surveys of political attitudes in the devolved nations of the UK.

This report brings together studies by a group of leading social science researchers, who are using these resources to provide invaluable insights into the patterns of our lives in the early twenty-first century. The following gives a brief overview of some of the most notable developments, all described in more detail in the chapters that follow.

### Pride

#### Northern Ireland: in-group pride and out-group prejudice

Ed Cairns and Miles Hewstone explore attitudes of 'pride and prejudice' among the Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland. They find that pride in one's 'in-group' can be thought of as

benign, acceptable and indeed positive in many ways. It is not inevitably linked to sectarian views. Indeed, warmth towards the in-group tends to be positively correlated with warmth towards the out-group. And bias can actually disappear when the level of sectarian conflict is relatively low – a true 'peace dividend'. Thus, a peaceful future does not have to be built by attempting to cleave individuals from their valued community identities.

### Anger

#### Anger, irritability and hostility in children and adults

Eirini Flouri and Heather Joshi document our experience of anger drawing on the 1970 and 1958 birth cohort studies, people who are now in their thirties and forties. Among their findings are the fact that children from lower social classes are more likely to have been reported as frequently irritable or having tantrums; and that angry children do not necessarily become angry or unhappy adults. For adults, women are more likely than men to report being persistently angry; and thirty-somethings with no partner are more likely to report angry feelings than their contemporaries who have partners.

### Lust

#### Changing sexual behaviour in the UK

Kaye Wellings analyses evidence from the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles to observe trends in sexual activity. This reveals that changes in sexual behaviour have been considerably more marked among women than men. For example, the proportion of women with one partner for life has fallen and the proportion reporting concurrent relationships has increased. At the same time, women are twice as likely as men to regret their first experience of intercourse and three times as likely to report being the less willing partner. And the majority of people of both sexes – four out of five – strongly disapprove of sexual infidelity.



### Avarice

#### Executive pay in the United States

Do the high levels of pay of US chief executive officers (CEOs) reflect the 'greed is good' attitude of avarice? Martin Conyon suggests that there are other equally plausible explanations that explain pay outcomes, such as the need to recruit, retain and motivate talented CEOs to manage increasingly complex organisations in the competitive global economy. The evidence suggests that CEO compensation – both current pay and aggregate shares and options owned – do provide the right incentives to focus on maximising corporate wealth. At the same time, shareholders and boards must be vigilant in the design of compensation contracts.

### Gluttony

#### 'Binge drinking' and the binge economy

An extraordinary amount of media attention focuses on alcohol consumption and its impact on public order and health. But as Dick Hobbs shows, while 'binge drinking' youths dominate the headlines, it is older drinkers in their middle years that are most likely to succumb to alcohol-related death. He argues that it is the logic of the market and not the logic derived from careful data analysis that informs government policy on alcohol. As a society, we embrace the 'night-time economy' – and the jobs, urban regeneration and taxation that it generates – while seeking to punish the routine transgressions of its primary consumers.

### Envy

#### Debt: envy, penury or necessity?

What part does envy play in the apparently spiralling stock of personal debt in the UK, which last year passed the £1 trillion mark? Looking at data from the British Household Panel Survey, Stephen McKay finds that the average man has borrowed close to £5,000 while the average woman owes around £3,000. What's more, people who are envious of what others have, and dissatisfied with their own incomes, do tend to have higher levels of credit and greater difficulties making repayments. But the size of this effect is small compared with the effects of age, income and changes in circumstances.

### Sloth

#### Turnout: a crisis in UK politics?

The last two general elections had the second and third worst turnouts since 1900. Charlie Jeffery uses the British Election Study and other surveys of political participation to understand growing voter apathy. He argues that the real problem lies not in the voters' sloth but in the failure of politicians to inspire trust, to communicate clear policy platforms and to reach out to habitual non-voters. That failure seems deeply embedded at the UK level but is also present in the devolved nations despite extravagant claims made in the 1990s about a new politics of better participation for ordinary citizens.

Romesh Vaitilingam

June 2005



# Pride

## Northern Ireland: in-group pride and out-group prejudice

### 'Bury your pride with my boy'

Michael McGoldrick, whose son was shot dead by Protestant paramilitaries, 1996

What evidence is there that even if the communities in Northern Ireland 'buried' their pride, peace would be any nearer? To explore this question, we must first understand that the conflict has existed for decades as a struggle between two communities: the Protestants/unionists/loyalists, who want Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK; and the Catholics/nationalists/republicans, who want Irish reunification (Cairns and Darby, 1998).

### Northern Ireland: changing attitudes?

Happily, after 30 years of low-intensity warfare, things are changing for the better. We would therefore expect to see an improvement in public attitudes. Indeed, Hughes and Carmichael (1998) reported an increase in positive attitudes towards the other community – the 'out-group'. But this conclusion seems to have been premature: public opinion surveys over the period 1989-2003 indicate that, on many questions, positive out-group attitudes peaked in 1995/6 (following the initial ceasefires by the main paramilitary groups) but have tended to deteriorate since (see Figure 1a).

Puzzlingly, at the time when some improvements in social attitudes were apparent, Northern Ireland was becoming more, rather than less, polarised. Commentators were starting to note the development of 'benign apartheid', particularly in public housing estates, many of which are now almost completely segregated.

This changing behaviour is reflected in voting trends.

Northern Ireland is considered to have a more and a less moderate political party within each community. For Catholics, these are the Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) and Sinn Féin, respectively; for Protestants, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The UUP under David Trimble and the SDLP led by John Hume had been instrumental in agreeing the Belfast ('Good Friday') Agreement and setting up the first power-sharing government.

While the SDLP and UUP had, at one time, the lion's share of the votes cast by their respective communities, by the Westminster election of 2001, the 'extreme' parties had risen to a position of parity. In the 2004 European elections, however, Sinn Féin received 26 per cent of the votes compared with the SDLP's 16 per cent, and the DUP polled 32 per cent compared with the UUP's 17 per cent. This trend has continued into the 2005 Westminster election with predictions that the extreme parties would 'wipe out' the moderate parties coming true, at least among Protestants voters.

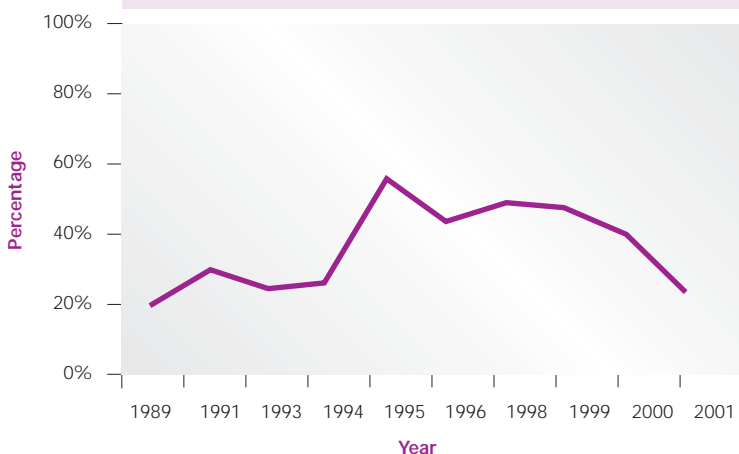
Protestant ultras have strong preferences for mixing with their own community in the neighbourhood and workplace

### Measuring pride

Data on social attitudes and voting preferences are one thing, but what about measures of *pride*? One indirect measure for the citizens of Northern Ireland is preference for specific flags. 'Pride in the flag' is not a new idea, but it is only recently that social scientists have used it as a measure (Brown and Maginty, 2003). In Northern Ireland, there is a history of flag flying provoking controversy and sometimes violence. As a result, for many years, the Unionist government outlawed the flag of the Republic of Ireland, the Irish tricolor.

Brown and Maginty analysed data from the 2001 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, in which respondents were asked which flag they thought should be flown over public buildings on special occasions. As Figure 1b shows, there was substantial communal polarisation: Catholic views were more diffuse, but Protestants emphatically endorsed the flying of

**Figure 1a:** Proportion of respondents who think that relations between Protestants and Catholics are better now than five years ago







**Catholic ultras are actually *more* disposed to mixing religions in schools than are Catholics in general**

the Union flag, with 72 per cent favouring this option. The researchers sought to explain why Protestant reactions to the idea of non-partisan symbols were more negative than Catholic reactions. They surmised that the 'Protestant sense that loss or surrender is inherent in the peace process' may be reflected in perceptions that 'alternatives to pro-Union symbols are part of a wider nationalist or anti-Union project'. Catholics 'viewed the idea of non-partisan symbols with greater equanimity'.

More recent data on flag preferences come from the equivalent 2003 survey, which asked respondents how they feel about the Union flag and the Irish tricolor on a five-point scale from 'very proud' to 'very hostile'. 71 per cent of Catholics reported not feeling either proud of or hostile to the Irish flag and 83 per cent answered the same way when asked about the Union flag. In contrast, 52 per cent of Protestants didn't feel either proud of or hostile to the Irish flag and only 45 per cent felt indifferent about the Union flag.

We analysed these data by reverse-scoring the answers to the Union flag question and combining them with the answers to the Irish flag question into one scale. This produced a better measure of the range of attitudes – from pro-Irish/anti-Union to pro-Union/anti-Irish – and a more detailed, if indirect, measure of pride.

Examining the two extreme points at either end of this scale revealed that no Catholics were extremely pro-Union and no Protestants were extremely pro-Irish. But while only 6.5 per cent of Catholics could be thought of as extremely pro-Irish, over a quarter of Protestants (27 per cent) fell into the extremely pro-Union category.

The new measure of pride was also related to voting patterns. As expected, among Catholics, only 7 per cent of potential SDLP voters fell into the extremely pro-Irish 'ultra' category compared with 55 per cent of Sinn Féin voters. Among Protestants, however, the difference was much less striking, with 50 per cent of those who indicated they were likely to vote UUP at the next election falling into the pro-Union 'ultra' category, compared with 63 per cent who were DUP voters.

As Figure 1c shows, ultras in both communities were more likely to hold unfavourable attitudes towards the integration of the two communities. Protestant ultras in particular show a stronger preference than all Protestants for mixing with members of their own community in the neighbourhood and workplace. They also express a strong preference for members of their own religion in schools, but Catholic ultras are actually *more* disposed to mixing in schools than are Catholics in general.

**Figure 1b:** What flag do you think should be flown outside public buildings on special occasions? (percentages)

	Catholic	Protestant	No religion	All
Union flag	6%	72%	43%	48%
Irish tricolor	4%	0%	1%	1%
Both Union flag and tricolor	18%	4%	7%	9%
No flag at all	32%	5%	20%	15%
New neutral flag for Northern Ireland	34%	16%	25%	23%
Other answer	1%	1%	1%	1%
Don't care	2%	0%	1%	1%
Don't know	3%	2%	2%	2%

Source: Northern Irish Life and Times Survey, 2001

**Figure 1c:** Percentage of respondents who prefer their own religion only in neighbourhood, workplace and school

	Neighbourhood	Workplace	School
<b>Catholics</b>			
Percentage of all participants	17%	7%	39%
Percentage who are ultras	43%	37%	28%
<b>Protestants</b>			
Percentage of all participants	29%	19%	41%
Percentage who are ultras	68%	74%	63%



**Bias towards one's own community can actually disappear when sectarian tension is relatively low – a true 'peace dividend'**

### Extremists as impediments to peace

Religious segregation lies at the heart of Northern Irish society and, we argue, its problems (Hewstone et al, 2004). The two religious communities are extremely segregated at residential, educational and even personal-marital levels. One of the most divisive ways in which extremists may function as impediments to peace is by enforcing strict segregation, especially at the residential level. Extremists have an influence in their communities far beyond that suggested by their actual numbers.

The fear of entering areas dominated by the 'other' group can be influenced by threats, both imagined and real, set against people by members of their 'own' community (Shirlow, 2003). But not everyone who lives in a segregated setting either accepts the division or is opposed to mixing. Even highly segregated communities contain diverse populations. But those who do not share the dominant ideology opposed to mixing are unable to challenge it publicly for fear of their own safety and accusations of disloyalty.

Interestingly, Shirlow reported that non-sectarian members of the community spoke more negatively of their community, drawing attention to the deviant behaviour of some community members. But more sectarian members spoke with pride of their community, in terms of integrity, loyalty and kinship. They were also strongly opposed to cross-community schemes, viewing them as perfidious and a betrayal of community-based loyalty. Does this mean, then, that in-group pride is necessarily associated with, or even leads to, out-group prejudice? Not necessarily.

### The relationship between in-group love and out-group hate

The most direct evidence we have on this question comes from two of our own surveys of representative samples of the Northern Irish population – in 2000 and 2001 – which included explicit measures to investigate the relationship between in-group pride and out-group prejudice. These two years were especially interesting, because they captured different levels of sectarian tension.

In 2000, the peace process appeared to be making some progress, with the IRA undertaking to decommission weapons, a planned reduction in British Army troop numbers and the UUP re-entering the power-sharing government. In 2001, by contrast, political events were notably more negative, large bombs were planted in London and Northern Ireland, attributed to a dissident IRA faction, and decommissioning of IRA arms appeared to stall.

We measured pride with a scale of 'social identification' (Brown et al, 1986), including such items as 'I identify strongly with my community' and 'my community is an important part of who I am'. We measured prejudice by assessing the degree of 'warmth' felt towards respondents' own and other communities, using a 'feeling thermometer' (Haddock et al, 1993). We then computed a measure of 'in-group bias' – in-group thermometer minus out-group thermometer – as the preference for respondents' own group over the other (Hewstone et al, 2002).

Perhaps counter-intuitively, in many studies, there is actually a *positive* relationship between reported feelings towards the in-group and the out-group: as positive feelings for the in-group increase, so do positive feelings for the out-group (Brewer, 2001). Could this possibly be true in Northern Ireland? And would it depend on respondents' level of in-group pride, their religious group and current levels of sectarian tension?





**A peaceful future does not have to be built by attempting to cleave individuals from their valued community identities**

### A peace dividend?

As expected, we observed a general in-group bias effect: respondents were more positive towards the in-group than the out-group. But the effect was much stronger for those who identified highly with their religious group than for those who identified at only a low level. Thus, in-group pride was related to out-group prejudice. There was also more bias shown by Protestants than Catholics, a well-established effect.

We also found different effects for the two years of the survey. People with higher levels of 'group pride' showed in-group bias in both the relatively peaceful year and the more volatile year. But people with lower levels of group pride showed less bias in the more peaceful year. Indeed, that year, both Catholics and Protestants with lower group pride showed *no bias*. But when things became bad again, in 2001, respondents with lower levels of pride were biased in favour of their own community.

Finally, we found a modest positive correlation between in-group and out-group feelings. This is consistent with the view that in-group favouritism is not inevitably related to 'out-group derogation' (Brewer, 1999, 2001).

In many ways, these are positive findings for Northern Ireland. Pride in one's own group can be thought of as benign, acceptable and indeed positive in many ways. It is not inevitably linked to sectarian views. Indeed, in-group warmth tends to be positively correlated with out-group warmth. And bias can actually disappear when the level of the conflict is relatively low – a true 'peace dividend'.

Thus, a peaceful future does not have to be built by attempting to cleave individuals from their valued identities, which is probably impossible anyway. It is more likely to be built by helping all citizens of Northern Ireland – particularly the ultras – to learn that positive, secure social identities do not have to be based on out-group derogation.

Ed Cairns and Miles Hewstone

### Further reading

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# Anger

## Anger, irritability and hostility in children and adults

**'Sing goddess, the wrath of Achilles son of Peleus that brought countless ills upon the Achaeans'**  
Homer

Classicists, ancient historians and philosophers have long studied anger. It launches Western literature, burning in the opening line of Homer's *Iliad*, where 'wrath' is the first word in the original Greek. Anger is a universal and natural human experience, sometimes righteous, sometimes regrettable and sometimes so negative that it qualifies as a deadly sin.

In the modern biomedical paradigm, anger and irritability have been associated with both mental and physical health outcomes. Anger in childhood generally predicts disruptive behaviour as well as a risk of victimisation by peers. Outbursts of anger in adulthood are common among people suffering from depression. And irritability has been associated with a heightened risk of suicide, violence and cardiovascular disease.

In terms of physical health, hostility has been found to predict the likelihood of having coronary heart disease and is associated with poorer survival in coronary patients. And Raikonen et al (2004) show that anger predicts the progression of carotid atherosclerosis in healthy women.

**Children from lower social classes are more likely to be reported as frequently irritable or having tantrums**

### What causes anger?

The major spurs to anger are physical pain, other physically unpleasant conditions and social stresses. Some research suggests that anger resulting from an undesired event is often determined by 'coping potential', the confidence that one can effectively alter the situation (Roseman, 2004). Another trigger of anger is when somebody else's actions are intentional or negligent.

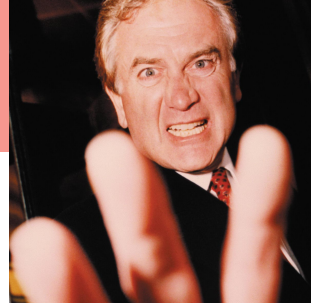
Negative emotions like anger can be used constructively. The facial expression of anger is a universal social signal, often presumed to signify threat to perceivers. In other words, since expressions of anger facilitate avoidance, they may serve socially adaptive purposes for those who show them. Recent discussions of anger in theological ethics suggest that since anger is commonly understood as a desire to rectify injustice, one might develop a disposition to experience good or 'virtuous' anger.

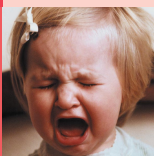
### Anger in the UK's birth cohort studies

Longitudinal evidence helps distinguish between people for whom anger is an occasional experience (and therefore quite normal) and those for whom it is more persistent. The British birth cohort studies have recorded anger in both childhood and adulthood for people born in a week in 1958 (the National Child Development Study, NCDS) and 1970 (the British Cohort Study, BCS70).

Anger in early childhood was measured by the frequency of irritability at ages 7 and 11 in the 1958 birth cohort and by the occurrence of temper tantrums at ages 5 and 10 in the 1970 birth cohort. Anger in early adulthood – at 23 and 33 in the 1958 cohort and at 26 and 30 in the 1970 cohort – was measured in both studies by the frequency of getting annoyed and irritated by others or of becoming violently enraged.

In due course, the UK Millennium Cohort Study of babies born in 2000-1 will record whether people born in the twenty-first century turn out to be more or less angry than their predecessors.





Women are more likely than men to report being persistently angry in adulthood

### Anger in children

At age 7, 11 per cent of the children born in 1958 were rated by their mothers as 'frequently irritable and quick-tempered'; 89 per cent were either 'never' or 'sometimes irritable'. At age 11, the figures were 14 per cent and 86 per cent respectively. Although the majority (58 per cent) of children born in 1958 who were frequently irritable at age 7 did not continue to be so at age 11, 42 per cent were described as frequently irritable at 11 as well. There were more boys than girls among children who were frequently irritable on at least one occasion. There was also a link between parents' social class and children's anger: children from lower classes were more likely to be described as frequently irritable and quick-tempered.

When the children born in 1970 were 5, one in eight mothers reported that their child had temper tantrums 'at least once a week', one in ten reported tantrums less often but 'at least once a month', and over three quarters said their children rarely had tantrums. At age 10, a greater proportion (84 per cent) of the children had tantrums rarely, 7 per cent had them monthly but not weekly, and 8 per cent had them at least once a week. Boys were almost twice as likely as girls to be in the minority with very frequent tantrums at both ages. As in the earlier cohort, children from lower social classes were more likely to have very frequent temper tantrums at both ages.

Less than a third of children with very frequent temper tantrums at 5 went on to have very frequent temper

tantrums at 10. This is in contrast to the 1958 cohort, where frequent anger increased with age in childhood, but this may reflect the different measures used.

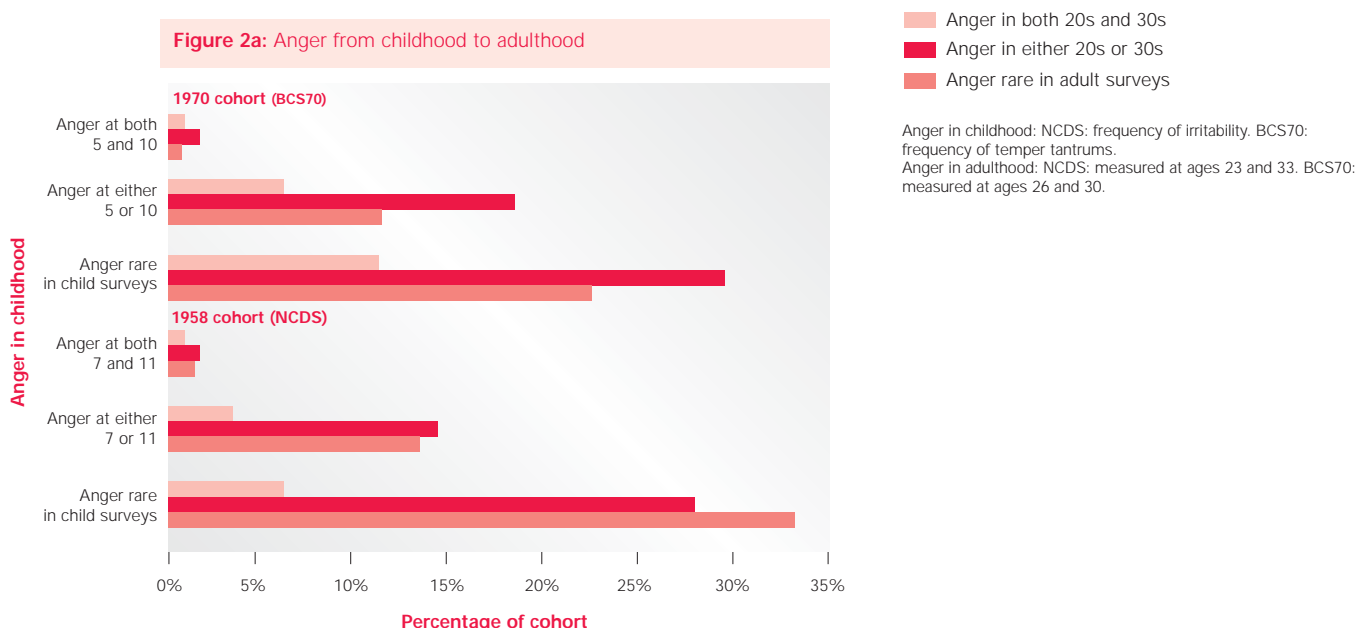
### Anger in young adults

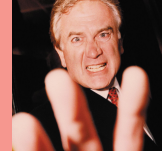
At age 23, 6 per cent of people born in 1958 reported of themselves that they 'often get into a violent rage' and 27 per cent reported that other people 'often annoyed and irritated them'. By the time this group had reached 33, they had mellowed somewhat: only 5 per cent reported often getting into a violent rage and 22 per cent that people often annoyed and irritated them.

At 26, 8 per cent of people born in 1970 reported that they 'often get into a violent rage' and 44 per cent that people 'often annoyed and irritated them'. As they got further into adulthood (30), only 6 per cent reported that they often got into a violent rage and 34 per cent that people often annoyed and irritated them.

Anger seems to have waned with age in both childhood and adulthood for the 1970 cohort, people now in their thirties, and in adulthood for the 1958 cohort, people now in their forties. But the older cohort were less angry as young men and women. It is not clear if this is because anger was measured at slightly different ages or because the 1970 cohort were generally more stressed and depressed (Ferri et al, 2003) as well as more likely to 'act out' (Collishaw et al, 2004).

Figure 2a: Anger from childhood to adulthood





It is noteworthy that 56 per cent of those born in 1970 who reported frequent anger at 26 also reported frequent anger at 30. This means that almost half of those who experienced anger frequently at 26 did not continue to do so once they reached 30. Persistently frequent anger in adulthood is not the norm for either cohort: while almost half of the 1970 cohort experienced anger at either 26 or 30, only 18 per cent experienced anger at both ages.

Those who had no partner at 30 were more likely to experience anger than those who had partners. In contrast to the boys and girls, women were more likely than men to report being persistently angry in adulthood by a small, but statistically significant, margin.

In terms of the continuity of anger for the 1958 cohort, the majority (56 per cent) of those who reported anger at 23 did not do so at 33. While more than 40 per cent had experienced anger at either 23 or 33, less than 10 per cent had at both ages. As with the later generation, people who were married at 33 were less likely to report anger than the unmarried, and women were more likely than men to be frequently angry in adulthood.

**Thirty-somethings with no partner are more likely to report angry feelings than people with partners**

### Anger from childhood to adulthood

A sizeable proportion of the persistently angry 1958 children 'recovered' by the time they reached adulthood: of those who were frequently irritable at both 7 and 11, more than 40 per cent did not report frequent anger at 23 or 33. 15 per cent of those showing recurrent anger as children exhibited frequent anger as adults but this is a very small minority of the whole 1958 cohort (see Figure 2a).

One third of those born in 1958 never reported frequent anger at any of the four ages – 7, 11, 23 and 33 – and fewer than one in a hundred reported frequent anger at all four ages. Of those in the 1970 cohort who had very frequent tantrums at both 5 and 10, more than a fifth did not report frequent anger at either 26 or 30, and only a quarter experienced anger at both 26 and 30.

Although this is not a full model of the complex pathways to anger in adulthood, there does appear to be a raised chance that people who were persistently angry as children also

turned out to be frequently and persistently angry as young adults. In the 1970 cohort, this was 27 per cent compared with 15 per cent but this is still a minority of the angriest children and, as in the 1958 cohort, a very small minority of the whole cohort.

It seems that for those born in 1970 compared with those born in 1958, there is a stronger relative risk of persistent anger in adulthood for those persistently angry in childhood. Just over one in five of the 1970 cohort reported never experiencing frequent anger at any of the four ages – 5, 10, 26 and 30 – and fewer than one in a hundred were frequently angry at all four ages.

### Is letting off steam always bad?

Angry children do not necessarily become either angry or unhappy adults. For the 1970 cohort, people who were consistently angry throughout childhood were slightly more likely to be unsatisfied with their life at age 30. But those who were angry at either 5 or 10 (but not both) were as likely as those who were rarely angry as children to report high life satisfaction at 30. For the 1958 cohort, the same analysis shows no effect of childhood anger on life satisfaction in later life.

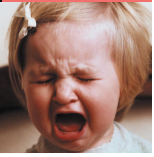
Similarly, anger in adulthood is not always associated with adverse health outcomes. Although people in both cohorts who were frequently angry throughout early adulthood were more likely to score high on psychological distress, those who were frequently angry in either their twenties or thirties (but not both) were as likely as those who were never frequently angry to score low on psychological distress (see Figure 2b).

But anger in adulthood was positively associated with poor self-reported health after controlling for gender, parents' social class and ethnicity in both cohorts. And people who were not frequently angry in the adult surveys had better self-reported psychological health than those who reported anger, particularly those who reported it at both ages. This mildly supports the idea of anger having negative (though perhaps not deadly) associations.

Anger continues to blaze through human lives, sometimes bringing trouble. The UK's birth cohort studies play a part in carrying on the torch lit by Homer, documenting how an experience that is common in a snapshot of a group of people is even more widespread when looking for people who have ever been recorded as 'angry' at four points up to mid-life. But it is also extremely rare that the same people have been recorded as angry on all these occasions.

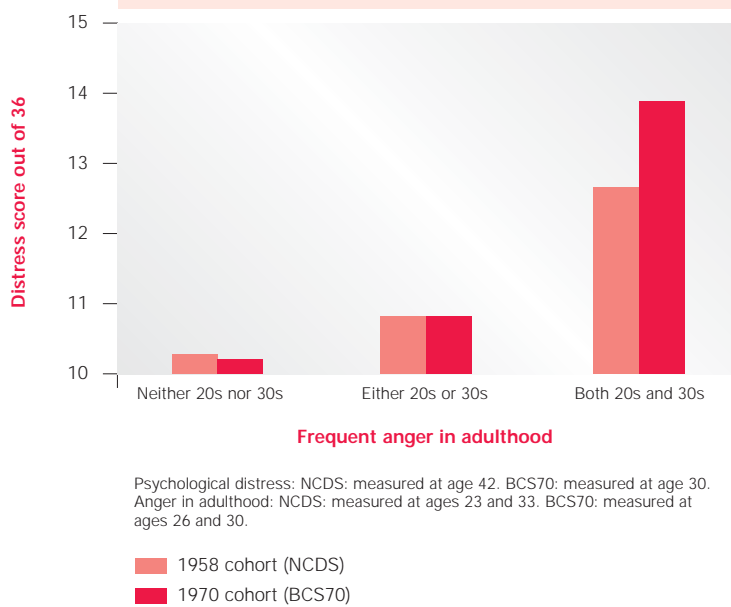
Eirini Flouri and Heather Joshi





Anger seems to wane with age – and angry children do not necessarily become angry or unhappy adults

**Figure 2b:** Psychological distress in adulthood adjusted for gender, parental social class at birth and ethnicity



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# Lust

## Changing sexual behaviour in the UK

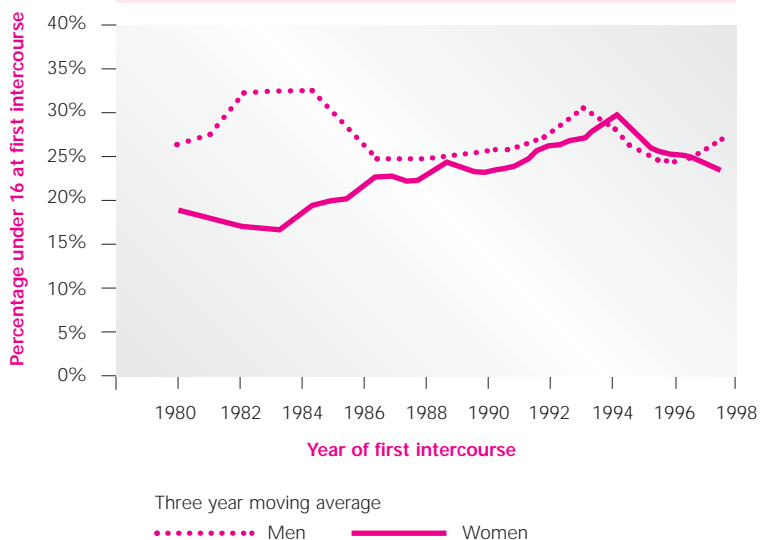
**'Lust is seldom an element in a woman's character, and she is the preserver of chastity and morality'**  
Dr O A Wall, *Sex and Sex Worship*, 1932

If there was ever any truth in Dr Wall's assertion that lust is the exclusive preserve of men, the evidence is increasingly to the contrary. There certainly has been widespread belief that men differ from women in sexual behaviour – that they have a higher sex drive, lower tolerance of sexual abstinence and are more easily sexually aroused.

Yet the past half-century has seen distinct changes in our sexual behaviour and these have been considerably more marked among women than men. Recent studies in several countries have shown a convergence in sexual attitudes and behaviour between men and women (ACSF, 1992; Laumann et al, 1994; Turner et al, 1995; Bajos et al, 1995; Michael et al, 1998).

The main source of data on UK trends – the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles or Natsal – has now been conducted twice: in 1990 and 2000 (Johnson et al, 2001). The sample in the two studies effectively spans five decades – the oldest men and women (in the Natsal 1990 sample) were born in 1931, the youngest (in Natsal 2000) in 1985 – and so allows us to observe trends over time in sexual activity.

**Figure 3a: Proportion under 16 at first sexual intercourse, by year of occurrence**



Source: Natsal 2000

### The onset of sexual activity

The status of virginity, which is still of great cultural and legal importance, is technically defined in terms of experience of sexual intercourse. The event has major health implications since it marks initiation into the sexual act, which, if unprotected, carries the highest risk of such adverse outcomes as unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection.

The last few decades have seen a progressive reduction in the age at which sexual intercourse first takes place and an increase in the proportion of young people who have had sexual intercourse before the age of sexual consent. For men and women reaching sexual maturity in the 1950s, the average age at first intercourse was 20 and 21 respectively; by the mid-1990s, it was 16 for both sexes (Wellings et al, 2001).

In parallel with this trend, the proportion of young people who are sexually active before the age of 16 has increased. At the end of the twentieth century, a quarter of young women had intercourse before the age of sexual consent compared with fewer than 1 per cent of those becoming sexually active in the 1950s. In this respect, too, the gap between the sexes has been narrowing over time, and by the 1990s had closed (see Figure 3a).

The fall in the age at first intercourse is a major social trend and has clear policy implications for the provision of sexual health education and services. In only a small and diminishing number of societies does the age of biological sexual maturity coincide with the age deemed acceptable for sexual activity.

The disjuncture between readiness for sexual activity and the socially approved timing of its expression underlies many of the problems relating to the maintenance of sexual health of young people. A balance has constantly to be sought between helping young people safeguard their sexual health by providing the means by which they can avoid unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection and, at the same time, avoiding appearing to encourage premature sexual activity.

**Changes in our sexual behaviour have been considerably more marked among women than men**



The proportion of women with one partner for life has fallen and the proportion reporting concurrent relationships increased

### Gender differences in first sexual experiences

Despite the convergence in the behaviour of men and women with respect to the age at which first intercourse occurs, there remain gender differences in the experience of the event. The proportion of those who are sexually competent according to the criteria adopted here – that is, the experience was consensual, free from regret, autonomous and protected from infection and unplanned pregnancy – has increased with time among men but not women. Women are twice as likely as men to regret their first experience of intercourse and three times as likely to report being the less willing partner.

With respect to the circumstances, first intercourse is much less likely to occur within a long-term relationship than was the case hitherto. Although pre-marital sex is now the norm both for men and women, the rule, until surprisingly recently, was sex within marriage. Among women becoming sexually active in the 1950s, the majority lost their virginity to their husband or fiancé, though only a minority of men lost their virginity to their wife or fiancée. 39 per cent of women and 14 per cent of men born in the early 1930s married before having sexual intercourse and a further 14 per cent of women and 6 per cent of men were engaged to be married before doing so.

By the 1990s, fewer than 1 per cent of men and women had their first experience of sex with someone they were married or engaged to, and the gender differences had all but vanished.

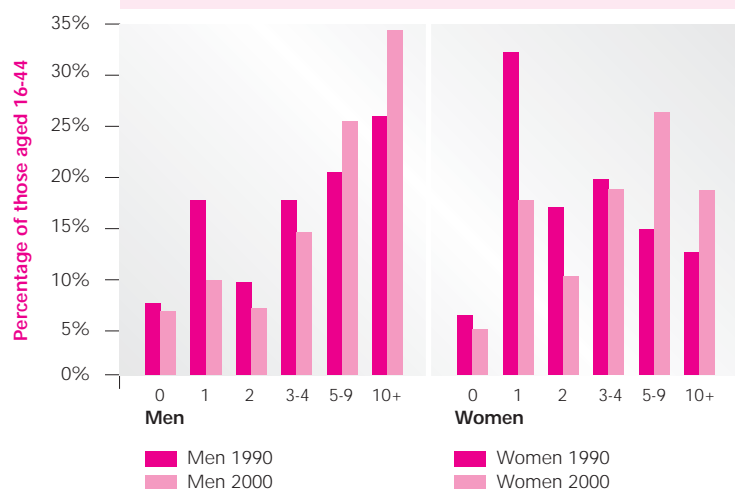
### Sexual partnerships

Not surprisingly, given the earlier onset of sexual activity, recent decades have seen higher rates of partner change. There are still gender differences in the reporting of sexual relationships (see Figure 3b). Men live up to their stereotype in being more likely to report large numbers of partners and less likely to report having been monogamous. Yet while one partner for life is still a more common pattern for women, the proportion who had had only one partner was halved between 1990 and 2000.

Compared with 1990, estimates for the prevalence of all risk behaviours were higher in 2000. Both men and women were more likely to report having had more than five lifetime partners and less likely to report having only one, and the difference was particularly striking for women. A wide range of behaviours associated with increased risk of HIV/AIDS transmission had all increased by 2000 compared with 1990, including concurrency of partnerships, numbers of heterosexual partners, homosexual partnerships, heterosexual anal sex and payment for sex.

In terms of transmission of infection, an important factor is whether these relationships are serially or concurrently conducted. Sex surveys take care to avoid using value-laden terms like 'infidelity' and 'affair'. Instead, all respondents who record more than one partner in the past five years are asked to chart the start and end dates of these relationships. It is then possible to estimate the proportion of relationships that are sexually non-exclusive. Overall, there has been an increase in reporting concurrent relationships between 1990 and 2000 (see Figure 3c) and again, the increase is relatively greater among women.

**Figure 3b:** Percentage distribution of lifetime heterosexual partners by gender, 1990 and 2000 (Natsal)





Changing sexual attitudes

Are these real changes in behaviour? Or are they the result of changes in methodology, or changes in respondents' willingness to report disapproved behaviours, or both? It has been said that sexual behaviour changes less over time than the manner in which it is reported and there are many who question whether people tell the truth in sex surveys. Certainly, as attitudes become more lenient, people are increasingly willing to report behaviours that they might once have feared were socially prohibited and, because of vestiges of the double standard in society, this may affect women more than men.

Yet the changes are consistent with other measures of sexual activity and with trends in sexually transmitted infections (Dodds, 2000; PHLS, 2000). Some part of the change over time must inevitably be attributable to increased willingness to report what might once have been considered stigmatised behaviours, but this too signifies a shift in social attitudes towards greater tolerance.

There is evidence from these surveys of an easing of attitudes towards a number of practices. There has undoubtedly been a relaxation in social attitudes towards sexual behaviour, particularly towards the sexual behaviour of the young. Attitudes towards homosexual behaviour, non-exclusive sexual relationships and sex outside of marriage have all softened over recent decades.

Women are twice as likely as men to regret their first experience of intercourse and three times as likely to report being the less willing partner

Attitudes to monogamy and casual sex

The exception is monogamy. Whatever our practices and for all our interest in the peccadilloes of celebrities, in principle, the UK public are firmly in favour of sexual exclusivity. One of the most striking findings of Natsal 1990 and 2000 was the near universal condemnation of sexual relationships outside of regular ones, which the vast majority of both men and women believe to be wrong.

The degree of disapproval varies only slightly with the degree to which the relationship is institutionalised and there are no major differences between the sexes. The majority of people of both sexes – four out of five – are strongly disapproving of sexual infidelity, either in relation to regular, live-in or marital relationships, and there are no major differences between the sexes.

The two surveys do, however, show a growing tolerance of casual sex, and again this is more marked among women. In 1990, nearly two thirds of women felt that one-night stands were wrong, twice the proportion among men. But by 2000, the gap had narrowed and women were considerably more lenient.

Figure 3c: Changes in the reporting of risk behaviours, 1990-2000



Source: Natsal 1990 and 2000





**The majority of people of both sexes – four out of five – are strongly disapproving of sexual infidelity**

### Explaining changes in sexual behaviour

For an explanation of the changes in sexual behaviour, we have to look chiefly to social factors. Very little of the fall in age at first intercourse for example can be attributed to earlier maturation, and probably none in recent decades.

The softening of attitudes towards sex is partly attributable to the increasing secularisation of society. The trends towards greater gender equality in sexual matters reflect fluctuations in the economy, increasing female participation in the workforce and the influence of the women's movement.

The increase in sexual activity of the young, and of women, is often also attributed to the so-called 'sexual revolution' of the 1960s. Although it is often said that the availability of reliable contraception has been a prime determinant in this, the evidence is more complex.

The sharpest drop in age at first intercourse occurred in the 1950s, but it was to be another decade before the advent of oral contraception in the UK in 1961 and more than two decades before the pill was generally available to single women in 1972, when family planning clinics were mandated to supply oral contraception to all women regardless of marital status. The pill was not available to women of all financial means, regardless of ability to pay, until 1976, when contraception was made available under the National Health Service.

The 1960s were certainly a decade of legislative reform around sexual matters. 1967 saw the decriminalisation of both abortion and homosexuality, followed in 1969 by reform of the divorce laws. Yet the shift in attitudes that was to lead to this liberalising legislation had begun at least a decade earlier. It is almost certainly as true to say that it was the relaxation of attitudes towards sexual matters that provided the impetus to the liberalising reforms of the 1960s, as it is to say that the reforms triggered a less censorious country.

Kaye Wellings

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# Avarice

## Executive pay in the United States

'Greed is good'

Gordon Gekko, character in the 1987 film *Wall Street*

For many years, the press, policymakers and researchers have remarked on the high levels of pay of US chief executive officers (CEOs) and questioned whether they are consistent with shareholders' interests. Some academics have gone further, arguing that problems with US corporate governance and CEO pay are so profound that excess is not limited to a few bad apples and that most CEOs are overpaid.

Is the 'greed is good' attitude of avarice really so prevalent in US boardrooms? Or are there other plausible explanations that explain pay outcomes, such as the need to recruit, retain and motivate talented CEOs to manage increasingly complex organisations in the competitive global economy? We investigated US CEO pay using a set of firms from the ExecuComp dataset.

### How CEOs are rewarded

We focus on CEO pay in publicly traded firms where ownership is distributed among many owners each too small to exercise effective control of the organisation. When firm ownership is separated from control, CEOs have the opportunity to promote their interests above those of shareholders – what is known as the 'agency' problem. Appropriately structured compensation schemes can alleviate this problem and align managerial and shareholder interests (Murphy, 1999).

Executive compensation has four basic components: base salary (usually competitively 'benchmarked' against peer firms); annual bonus (typically based on accounting performance); share options (which give the right to purchase shares at a pre-specified 'exercise' price for a pre-specified term); and other pay such as 'restricted stock grants'.

US CEOs are often handsomely rewarded. In 2000, Jack Welch of General Electric received total compensation of about \$125 million, including a \$4 million salary, a \$12.7 million bonus, \$57 million in options and \$48.7 million in restricted stock grants. This package was linked to firm performance and was therefore well structured. Welch managed a large and complex organisation and under his leadership, General Electric's share price soared. But in the wake of US corporate scandals like Enron and Tyco, even CEOs with stellar performance records have faced criticism: Welch was censured in the press for alleged non-disclosure of lavish retirement benefits.

Share options are important compensation instruments, providing the incentives for CEOs to focus on maximising corporate wealth

Despite the wide use of salaries, bonuses, options, etc., there is considerable variation in the way that CEOs are paid. For example, in 2003, Steve Jobs of Apple Computer received a salary of just \$1 and no annual bonus or options, instead receiving restricted stock grants worth approximately \$75 million. This unusual arrangement illustrates how some pay packages are riskier than others and provide powerful incentives to focus on increasing shareholder wealth. If a CEO is paid in options, then as the share price increases, the value of their holdings also increases; if the share price declines, so too does the CEO's wealth. Salaries, in contrast, are typically not related to performance.

### The pattern of executive pay

Figure 4a plots the distribution of CEOs' total compensation in current S&P 500 firms in 2003. Average annual remuneration was \$9 million and the median \$6.7 million. The distribution has two important characteristics: first, there is considerable pay dispersion; and second, the data are 'positively skewed' – they have a long right tail. This means that the majority of CEOs earn relatively low compensation and a small number of CEOs in the right tail receive excessively generous rewards.

So the idea that *all* CEOs are paid stratospheric sums is incorrect. One reason that some earn more than others is that CEO pay is positively correlated with firm size. Large, complex firms are more complicated to manage and require managers with relevant expertise. It is not surprising that such firms pay their CEOs more.

Figure 4b shows how the level of CEO compensation has changed in S&P 500 firms between 1992 and 2003. The 1990s were good times: average CEO pay increased throughout the decade, reaching a peak in 2001 at about \$7.6 million and falling back slightly since then.

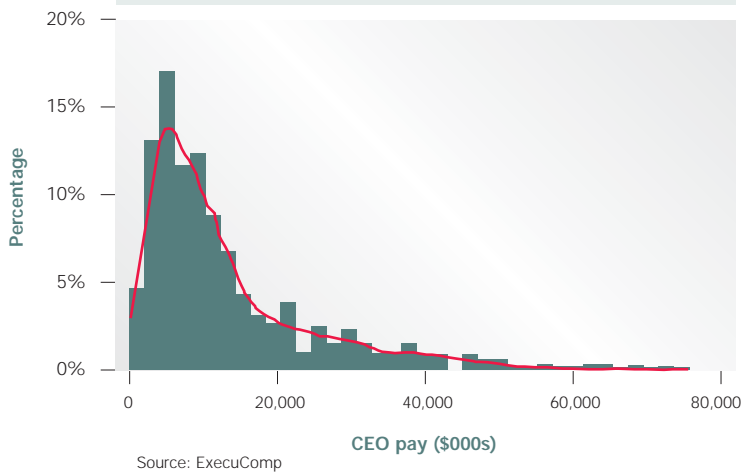
Figure 4c illustrates how the make-up of CEO pay has changed radically. Most importantly, the use of options exploded while salaries became a much less significant part of the overall pay package. In 1992, salaries accounted for approximately 37 per cent of total pay and options a relatively modest 22 per cent. As the decade wore on, options became the single most important pay element while salaries declined in importance. Now, salaries account for about one fifth of total pay and while the percentage of pay received as options has fallen to just over one third, it still remains the largest element.



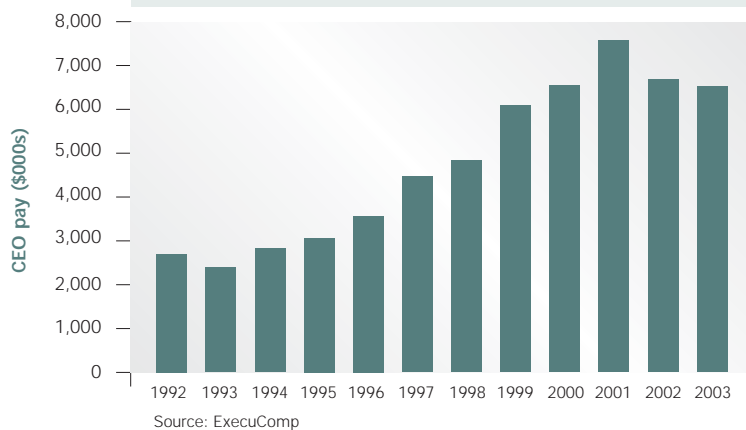


Financial incentives arise not only from current pay but from the aggregate amount of shares and options owned

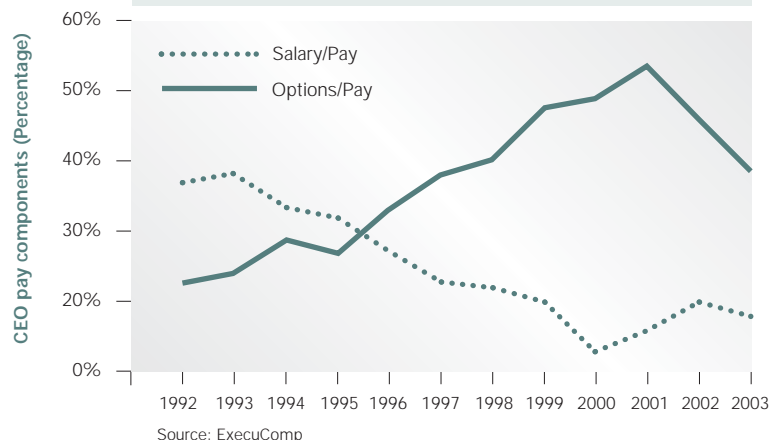
**Figure 4a:** The distribution of CEOs' total compensation in S&P 500 firms, 2003



**Figure 4b:** CEOs' total compensation in S&P 500 firms, 1992-2003 (median pay in thousands of constant 2003 dollars)



**Figure 4c:** The structure of CEO compensation in S&P 500 firms, 1992-2003



## The CEO pay controversy

Providing an explanation for CEO pay has proved controversial. There are two broad approaches. One is the 'managerial power' model (exemplified by Bebchuk and Fried, 2003, 2004), which argues that current compensation arrangements are bad for shareholders. The alternative, 'optimal contracting' approach (exemplified by Core et al, 2003) suggests that pay practices are designed to benefit shareholders.

The managerial power theory claims that pay practices have become distorted because CEOs exert managerial power over weak or compliant boards of directors. The theory predicts that powerful CEOs receive inappropriately high levels of pay and, just as important, pay that is insufficiently linked to performance. This is a world view in which CEOs are presumed avaricious and self-serving.

Bebchuk and Fried cite an array of empirical evidence to support their view. First, research shows that CEO pay is greater when boards are weak or relatively powerless – for example, when the board is large, making it difficult for directors to oppose the CEO; or when the CEO has appointed the non-executive directors, making them beholden to the CEO; or when board members serve on many other boards, making them too busy to be effective monitors; or when the CEO is also chairman of the board.

Second, they argue that compensation consultants who provide expert advice to board remuneration committee have incentives that benefit CEOs at the expense of shareholders. Consultants whose advice adversely affects CEO pay are unlikely to be hired in the future. Moreover, their incentives may be further distorted if they carry out other profitable assignments within firms or anticipate they may do so in the future.

Third, and perhaps most important, Bebchuk and Fried argue that it is difficult to find a robust positive correlation between current pay and firm performance. Moreover, the typical option plan does not filter out general share price increases that are attributable to market or industry trends and therefore unconnected to the CEO's own performance. This means that in rising markets, the value of a CEO's options increase even if firm performance is worse than the market.



The managerial power model has not gone unchallenged. The optimal contracting theory predicts that pay practices are designed to promote shareholder interests. An optimal contract is one that 'maximises the net expected economic value to shareholders' (Core et al, 2003). It does so by balancing the separate costs of contracting, monitoring and potential 'shirking' by managers to minimise total costs. Note that this does not mean that contracts are perfect or that agency problems are eliminated completely.

### Executive compensation and incentives

So is CEO pay effectively linked to performance? Advocates of the managerial power theory claim not, but a considerable body of research demonstrates the contrary. For example, Core et al (2005) argue that US CEOs have significant financial incentives, making an important distinction between pay received in a given year and the aggregate amount of shares and options that CEOs maintain in their companies.

For example, a CEO may receive 100,000 options this year, adding to 400,000 options granted in previous years. Since the CEO cares about the whole stock of 500,000 options, not simply this year's 100,000, compensation received in any given year provides only a partial picture. A CEO who owns a significant amount of shares has powerful incentives to act in the interests of shareholders.

In 2003, the median value of total annual pay for CEOs in S&P 500 firms was about \$6.7 million. But according to Core et al (2005), the median total value of exercisable and un-exercisable shares was \$30.1 million, nearly five times greater. Moreover, they estimate that a 1 per cent increase in the share price would increase the value of these holdings by \$430,000. This means that if the share price were to fall by 20 per cent, then CEO wealth would decline by \$8.6 million, which is more than total compensation.

Precipitous falls in share prices clearly have adverse consequences for CEO wealth, and so provide important incentives. The corollary is that CEOs who increase the share price become wealthy, which is precisely the point of incentives – to align managerial and shareholder interests. The important point is that incentives arise not only from current pay but from the aggregate amount of shares and options owned.

The evidence therefore suggests that US CEOs have both high pay and greater incentives. Comparing the pay and incentives of US and UK CEOs, Conyon and Murphy (2000) conclude that US managers receive greater compensation and hold more of their companies' shares (though UK CEOs are catching up).

But it is important to know what factors drive equity incentives for managers. Core et al (2003) suggest that incentives are determined by economic and financial variables, evidence in favour of optimal contracting. For example, firms with more growth opportunities, or firms operating in uncertain environments, provide their CEOs with greater incentives compared with firms in mature industries or more stable environments. The idea that contracts are set in a random or arbitrary way does not seem consistent with this evidence.

Finally, it is important to stress that greater incentives might lead to unintended consequences that adversely affect shareholder wealth. For example, too many options might lead managers to withhold, manipulate or misrepresent important earnings information, which could lead to Enron-like situations. These are fundamental concerns and shareholders and boards must be vigilant in the design of compensation contracts, ensuring that they motivate the right behaviour from the top management team.

Firms with more growth opportunities provide their CEOs with greater incentives than firms in mature industries



## Executive compensation and performance

Executive compensation is a complex issue. High pay itself is not evidence of avarice but may simply reflect the market for CEOs and the pay necessary to attract retain and motivate talented individuals. Boards of directors need to design compensation contracts to align the interests of owners with managers. One test of whether the corporate governance system is working appropriately, including executive compensation arrangements, is to evaluate economic performance.

Holmstrom and Kaplan (2003) investigate the state of US corporate governance in the wake of corporate scandals. They conclude that the US economy has performed well, both on an absolute basis and relative to other countries over about two decades. Importantly, the economy has been robust even after the scandals were revealed. This is not to deny that improvements in governance arrangements cannot be beneficial. Furnishing CEOs with appropriate compensation and incentives is desirable for a healthy economy. But ensuring that the contracting process is not corrupted by avarice is an important goal for corporate governance.

Martin Conyon

**Ensuring that the contracting process is not corrupted by avarice is an important goal for corporate governance**

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# Gluttony

## 'Binge drinking' and the binge economy

'Gluttony is not a secret vice'  
Orson Welles

In recent years, an extraordinary amount of UK political and media attention has focused on alcohol consumption and its impact on public order and health. But despite the quasi-medical connotations of the term 'binge drinking', with daily limits measured in units of alcohol, the precise definition is disputed: one Home Office publication defines a binge drinker as someone who reports 'feeling very drunk once a month' (Richardson and Budd, 2003), while a clinical definition describes drinking over a day or more until unconscious (Newburn and Shiner, 2001).

The government's definition is someone who drinks twice the recommended daily amount at least once a week; for men, that's a maximum of four units; for women, a maximum of three. This means that a man who has three pints of premium lager during one, perhaps quite long, night out is, officially, a binge drinker. Similarly, a woman who drinks three (standard) glasses of wine in one night is on a binge.

Yet beyond the realm of public health professionals and campaigners, the term is rarely used to describe the drinking habits of anyone other than young denizens of the 'night-time economy'. Binge drinking is seldom linked with alcohol-related diseases, with accidents in the home or with domestic violence. Indeed, since publication of the government's alcohol strategy (Strategy Unit, 2004), where a binge drinker is described as someone who drinks to get drunk, the term has become a remarkably pliant device to implicate individuals perhaps more accurately described as 'young people drunk and disorderly in public places'.

As such, binge drinkers are indispensable folk devils for the new millennium. They are noisy, urinate in public and are frequently violent. This brings them into conflict with an undermanned police force, which can be depicted on most nights of the week wrestling heroically with foul-mouthed, vomit-stained youths in an attempt to restore the city centre to daytime levels of comportment.

These stage-managed battles between the representatives of the state and violent youth make great copy for lazy TV journalists who in previous eras were obliged to set up their cameras at football grounds or seaside promenades on bank holiday weekends to be guaranteed visceral footage of young people fighting.

### Alcohol producers and consumers

Despite alcohol being our drug of choice, the source is not typically regarded as a problem. Alcohol is a legal drug and consequently there are no attempts to bring down the 'Mr Bigs' of the alcohol industry. Indeed, the main dealers are ensconced with the police and local politicians in various multi-agency crime reduction committees and urban regeneration partnerships.

Despite the enormous costs generated by alcohol, estimated by the Strategy Unit at over £20 billion, there is no government-led 'war' to match the war on drugs. Instead, by using a quasi-medical term to deal with what is clearly an economically inspired problem, the emphasis is shifted to the faulty individual pathology of young drinkers. The private matter of alcohol consumption only becomes a public concern when there is perceived threat to public order. The home drinker may have private troubles but the teenage drinkers frequenting the city centre at night constitute a public issue of violence and disorder.

If kept private, alcohol-inspired maladies or domestic mayhem seem unlikely to attract the same stigma of being accused of imbibing twice the recommended daily amount in one session. But as Figure 5a suggests, the scale of excessive drinking of people who may not partake in public binge drinking also remains a matter of medical concern.

Figure 5a: Percentage of adults drinking over specified levels of alcohol by gender and age

Age	16-24	25-44	46-64	65+	All
<b>Men</b>					
More than four units and up to eight units	12%	18%	20%	12%	17%
More than eight units	37%	28%	17%	4%	21%
<b>Women</b>					
More than three units but up to six units	18%	17%	12%	3%	13%
More than six units	23%	11%	4%	1%	8%

Source: General Household Survey, 2005

As a society, we embrace the night-time economy while seeking to punish the routine transgressions of its primary consumers



### The night-time economy

As a society, we have embraced the night-time economy while making much political capital out of punishing the inevitable and routine transgressions of its consumers (Strategy Unit, 2004). Consequently, the cumulative impact of market forces is ignored in favour of the creation of a drink-sodden folk devil.

Until the start of the 2001 general election campaign, there was a general reluctance on behalf of government agencies, and in particular the police, to acknowledge problems related to the night-time economy. But Labour's campaign that year coincided with the publication of figures on alcohol-related assaults uncovered by the 2000 British Crime Survey. These indicated that teenage males who frequently visit pubs and nightclubs and drink heavily are most at risk from violent assault (Budd, 2003).

Yet government statements about the night-time economy remain guarded in relation to any possible link with violence. This reluctance needs to be understood in the context of capital investment in the night-time economy running at around £1 billion a year and growing at an annual rate of 10 per cent, with the turnover of the pub and club industry constituting 3 per cent of GDP, numbers of licensed premises having increased by over 30 per cent during the past quarter of a century and the sector employing around one million people, creating 'one in five of all new jobs' (Home Office, 2000).

The night-time economy has had a transformative influence on UK cities, and is part of our society's shift from industrial to post-industrial economic development. Successive governments have embraced this new economy as an alternative to the nation's increasingly decrepit manufacturing base, and proud city centre shrines to our industrial past have been revitalised by shiny outlets for alcohol consumption.

The numbers of young people flocking into these new centres of alcohol consumption are unprecedented (Hobbs et al, 2003). For example, in 1997, the licence capacity of Nottingham's tiny city centre was 61,000; by 2004, that had risen to 108,000, while Manchester city centre has a stunning capacity of 250,000.

The Labour Party signalled its intention to embrace the night-time economy during the 1997 general election campaign, when they enthusiastically solicited the student vote with text messages that read: 'Cldnt gve a XXXX 4 1st

ords? Thn vte Labr on thrsday 4 extra time'. As the new decade progressed, the real story behind the '24-hour society' began to emerge, and the concentration of huge numbers of young alcohol consumers has created environments where aggressive hedonism and disorder is the norm. Three quarters of local governments reported that alcohol was related to public order problems (Home Office, 2000), violent hotspots were overwhelmingly found within concentrations of licensed premises and violent incidents peaked between 9pm and 3am on Friday nights/Saturday mornings and Saturday nights/Sunday mornings.

But rather than reject a major facet of their own economic policies, and recognise the night-time economy as a criminogenic zone that was having a negative impact on their own crime and social order targets, official discussion has focused on the problematic consumer in the 'tired and emotional' shape of the binge drinker.

**Binge drinking youths dominate the headlines – but it is the obscene binge of economic greed that stymies effective political action**

### Changing licensing laws

Meanwhile, the Labour Party's infamous text message of 1997 has been operationalised in the form of revolutionary changes in the nation's licensing laws, which will remove 'obstacles to the further development of the tourism, retail, hospitality and leisure industries', slash regulatory 'red tape' for businesses, introduce 'relaxed trading hours' that will 'provide greater choice for consumers... allowing England and Wales' night-time economy to rival their European counterparts' and introduce a 'crucial mechanism for the regeneration of areas that need the increased investment and employment opportunities that a thriving night-time economy can bring' (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2004).

But as Hadfield (2005) shows, the entire research community was opposed to the Act, citing evidence that to have an impact on alcohol-related harm, it is vital to reduce consumption by imposing more extensive supply-side controls rather than fewer (Hobbs et al, 2003; Room, 2004). Yet despite its insistence on 'evidence-based' policy-making, the government's agenda of market-led liberalisation of the retailing of alcohol continues unabated.



### Alcohol-related deaths

What's more, the emphasis on disorder tells a very partial story. Public health data suggest that the longer, less apocalyptic view is even more daunting. It is older drinkers in their middle years who are most likely to succumb to an alcohol-related death. And as Figure 5b indicates, alcohol-related death rates have been rising.

This longer view shifts our attention from the immediate realities of violence and disorder to the long-term impact of alcohol use on the wider population. It is clear that problem drinking, binge or otherwise, has become quite normal. No longer a terrain limited to society's outcasts, the impact of problem drinking can fall anywhere, with up to 1.3 million children affected by parental alcohol problems (Strategy Unit, 2004).

There seems to be a distinctly hypocritical attitude to alcohol. Despite its enormous social cost, the government continues to value the jobs, the associated urban regeneration and the £7 billion pounds in taxation that it derives from the industry. Widespread international evidence has linked alcohol availability to alcohol-related harms but this evidence, in particular that relating to the number and density of alcohol outlets and to opening hours, is absent in the Strategy Unit document (Hadfield, 2005).

### The binge economy

When we consider this hypocrisy, we might also consider the ludicrous tainting of drunken youths as binge drinkers and the reluctance to reflect too carefully on the binge economy so readily embraced by successive governments. The Strategy Unit document did a good job in setting out the available evidence and suggests more education, working in partnership with the alcohol industry, improved treatment facilities and a clampdown on disorder in the night-time economy.

Yet as Room (2004) notes, these approaches have been ineffective in reducing alcohol-related maladies, of which public drunkenness is merely the most vivid. This ineffectiveness is, of course, highlighted by the government's campaign to deregulate the licensing laws, a market-led campaign move designed to increase availability.

The total value of the UK alcohol industry's promotional activity is in excess of £500 million, and research shows that such campaigns are mainly directed at the younger end of the adult market. Teenagers identify alcohol advertising as their favourite category of adverts, adverts that link alcohol consumption with sexual and social attainment (Dring and Hope, 2001).

Growing concerns in the medical profession with alcohol marketing campaigns directed at young people have led the British Medical Association to call for such deliberate targeting to be made illegal. As Figure 5c suggests, alcohol consumption now plays a major role in children's lifestyles.

The issue of binge drinking highlights many of the problems that are apparent in modern society. Yet despite the plethora of research that engages with these problems, the terrain remains contested. Currently, it is the logic of the market and not the logic derived from careful data analysis that informs the everyday reality of the government's policy on alcohol. In such a confused environment, the binge drinker has captured the nation's headlines. Yet it is the obscene binge of simple economic greed that stymies effective political action.

Dick Hobbs

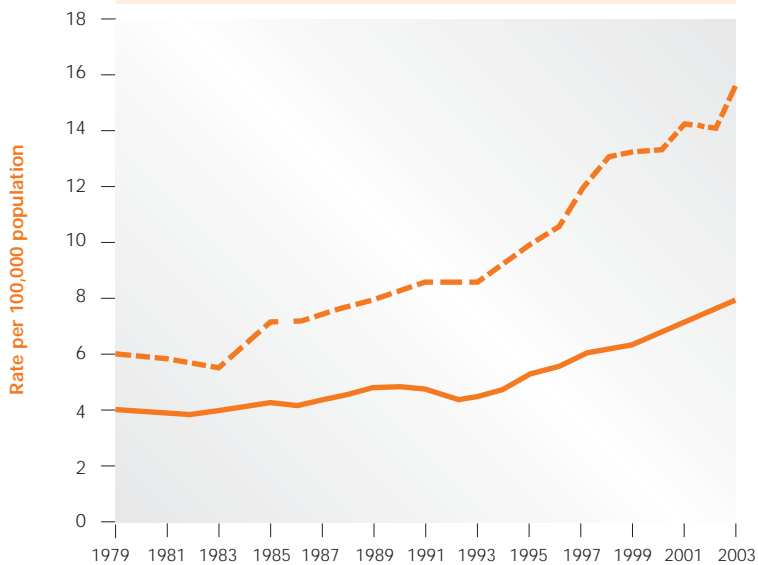
Alcohol-related death rates have been rising – and it is older drinkers in their middle years who are most likely to succumb





Despite the social costs of alcohol, the government values the jobs, urban regeneration and taxation that it derives from the industry

Figure 5b: Alcohol-related death rates by gender, 1979-2003



Source: Office for National Statistics, *Health: Alcohol-related deaths*, March 2005

--- Males      — Females

Figure 5c: Percentage of children drinking alcohol at least once a week in England by gender and age

Age	Boys	Girls
11%	5%	5%
12%	11%	9%
13%	18%	19%
14%	34%	31%
15%	52%	46%

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2005

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# Envy

## Debt: envy, penury or necessity?

**'Few men have the natural strength to honour a friend's success without envy'**  
Aeschylus, 525-456 BC

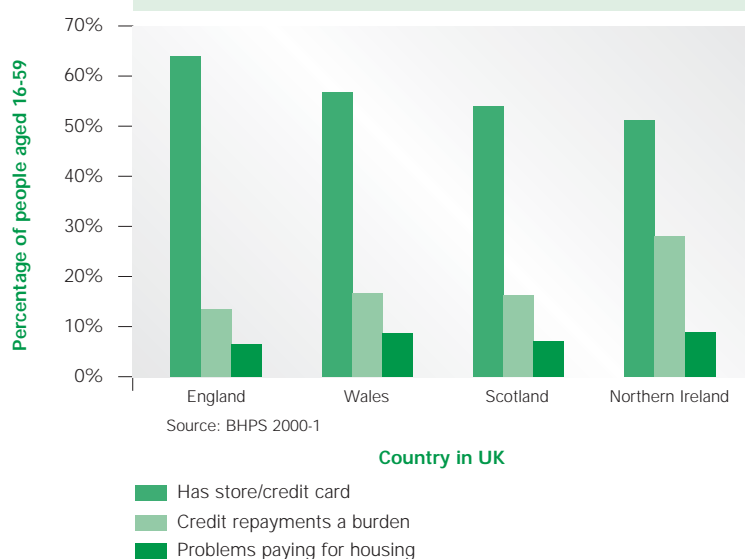
In July 2004, the Bank of England confirmed that the stock of personal debt in the UK had passed the £1 trillion mark – one thousand billion pounds – for the first time. Personal debt now represents well over 100 per cent of total annual income, and some parts of the media have been keen to play up the negative consequences, highlighting the lax budgeting that, in their opinion, gives rise to such a situation and warning of 'a nation up to its eyeballs in debt' (BBC News), heading towards a 'debt disaster' (*Daily Express*).

Is there evidence for such claims? Debt-related inquiries to Citizens Advice Bureaux have been rising strongly, as have calls to National Debtline and the Consumer Credit Counselling Service. The numbers of personal insolvencies seem set to break records this year. So it is possible to convince oneself that the level of indebtedness is a significant new feature of the economy – with doom to follow. But what are the reasons for this apparently spiralling stock of debt and what part does envy play?

### Keeping up with the Joneses

Envy is when people judge their own standard of living by comparing it with others' – in short, the desire to 'keep up with the Joneses' or set the mark to which the nearby Joneses themselves would aspire. Are people borrowing to keep up with the kinds of lifestyles they see around them?

**Figure 6a: Credit and payment difficulties by country within the UK**



These sentiments were given lengthy exposition in Thorstein Veblen's 1899 classic, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. In developing his theory of people's apparent need for conspicuous consumption, he noted that 'the motive that lies at the root of ownership is emulation'.

Some writers have viewed envy as entirely a destructive longing, a wish to destroy the wealth of others rather than add to one's own (the latter being classified more as jealousy). An example is in Schoeck's (1966) review of envy: 'The envious man thinks that if his neighbour breaks a leg, he will be able to walk better himself'.

In this analysis, we take envy in its wider sense of a desire to catch up with the lifestyles of others. Whichever definition applies, envy is generally thought to be more concerned about the wealth of people who are relatively close in status, such as neighbours and colleagues, and not more distant people, no matter how wealthy.

### Debt: how much and why?

Despite the increasing importance of borrowing and credit use in people's money management, datasets that collect information on credit are few. Those relevant to feelings of envy are fewer still. Our analysis draws on two sources: the British Household Panel Study (BHPS) and an Office for National Statistics study (ONS, 2000). The results are placed in the context of the latest data on debt and borrowing (Kempson, 2002).

The most recent BHPS figures (for 2000-1) show that the average adult owes around £4,000. Men and women are almost equally likely to have taken out credit and to have store or credit cards, but men have borrowed rather more money – close to £5,000 on average while women typically owe around £3,000.

As Figure 6a shows, having a store or credit card is most common in England. But problems repaying credit commitments (and paying for housing) are more common in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – indicating that it is not just the availability of credit that drives problems with repayments, but a mix of factors, including low incomes.

**People who are envious of what others have tend to be more in debt and have greater difficulties making repayments**



## Debt: the role of lifestyle envy

*Times* journalist Daniel Johnson has explained some people's debt position squarely in terms of envy: 'The middle class is in debt as never before because they envy other people's lifestyles'. The link between envy, personality and borrowing has been tracked in a number of studies. In the UK, researchers have found a link between mental health problems and being in arrears (Meltzer et al, 2002). US research finds that when inequality of incomes is high, borrowing tends to increase as people who are worse off try to attain the lifestyles of the better off (Morgan and Christen, 2003; Brown, 2004).

Analysis of the BHPS indicates that there is a link between individuals' satisfaction with their household income and whether they have outstanding credit commitments. As Figure 6b shows, one third of people who are 'completely satisfied' with their income owe any money, compared with half of those expressing the least satisfaction. Those expressing the least satisfaction with their income are also the most likely to describe their loan repayments as a burden. The higher people's satisfaction with their income, the less likely they are to believe that their repayments are a burden.

Analysis looking more directly at envy depends on the ONS study in which respondents were asked two specific questions: 'are you often envious of others?' and 'do you feel that others are often envious of you?' We can look at the association between these views, and whether people have had difficulty paying for credit/bills, and whether they have needed to borrow for day-to-day needs from a range of more informal sources – friends, family, pawnbrokers, moneylenders.

As Figure 6c shows, among a group of people aged 16-59, 13 per cent had experienced arrears in the past year, while 16 per cent had resorted to more informal kinds of borrowing. Among those saying they were often envious of others, 18 per cent had experienced arrears and 23 per cent had used informal borrowing, especially from family. There was little effect on credit for people believing that others were envious of them.

Figure 6b: Income satisfaction and outstanding credit

Satisfaction with income of household	Percentage who owe any money on credit commitments	Unweighted base (individuals aged 16-59)
1: not satisfied at all	48%	664
2	53%	827
3	51%	1,618
4	49%	2,391
5	48%	2,936
6	40%	1,900
7: completely satisfied	33%	821
<b>All individuals aged 16-59</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>11,363</b>

Source: BHPS 2000-1

Figure 6c: Envy, arrears and borrowing (percentages)

	Is often envious of others	Others are often envious of you	All
Has had <i>arrears</i> in last year	18%	15%	13%
council tax	7%	6%	5%
Any <i>informal</i> kinds of borrowing	23%	17%	16%
from friends	8%	7%	5%
from family	20%	14%	14%
<b>Base (all individuals aged 16-59)</b>	<b>1,205</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>6,463</b>

The size of the effect of envy on debt is small compared with the effects of age, income and changes in circumstances



### Debt: the significance of age, income and changed circumstances

Without looking at other factors, envy might appear to be increasing the rate of arrears, appreciably so but by less than 50 per cent compared with the population average. This might be an important factor in some borrowing, but other factors seem to play a much larger role in why different groups of people are more likely to have borrowed or experienced arrears. Our research indicates that families who have experienced a fall in their income in the past 12 months have twice the level of arrears as those whose income has stayed the same or risen (Kempson et al, 2004).

Among the most important factors in borrowing and in difficulties meeting repayments are age, income and changes in circumstances. For example, Kempson's (2002) research finds that arrears are at their highest among families where the heads of household are in their twenties, more than a third of whom are currently in arrears, 22 per cent with bills and 25 per cent with consumer credit commitments. Among those in their thirties, arrears drop to one in five.

The effect of income on problems meeting debt payments is also very strong. Arrears affect one third of people with annual incomes of £7,500-£14,999, dropping to just one in ten of those with annual incomes exceeding £35,000. Clearly, being on a low income is among the strongest influences on having problems repaying debts, and these are magnified by drops in income and other changes in circumstances.

### The big picture

Despite the rising overall level of borrowing, recent Bank of England research finds no evidence of more people believing loan repayments to be a burden now compared with 1995 or 2000 (Tudela and Young, 2003). Moreover, mortgage reposessions and arrears are at low levels. Nearly 85 per cent of total debt comprises mortgages and this is where growth has been most rapid, in large part responding to house price increases. The proportion of people's incomes dedicated to servicing debt has been constant for the last five years and about half the level of the early 1990s (OXERA, 2004).

Debate on consumer credit has also tended to ignore the main way that families tend to borrow in times of need: by delaying paying bills. As only half of households are repaying credit commitments, a subset – including some of the poorest families – will not be at risk of consumer credit arrears simply because they have no credit.

Conversely, almost all families receive bills for their utilities. For many people, those with children in particular, being behind on household bills is rather more significant than credit. Our research finds a much stronger link between low income and arrears on bills than with consumer credit problems (Kempson et al, 2004).

Whatever the ability of most borrowers to repay their debts, there is clearly a group finding it more difficult to pay either credit or bills. 18 per cent of households have arrears in paying bills or credit on time, and this rises to 30 per cent of families with children and half of lone parents. People who say that repayments are a heavy burden tend to be younger than average and more likely to have children (especially lone parents). Those saying that repayments are a burden also appear to owe larger amounts.

### Government policy on debt

The government has been paying considerable attention to levels of debt. As well as proposed reforms to consumer credit legislation, the 2003 Consumer Credit White Paper sets out the government's plans for tackling the problem of over-indebtedness. More recently, there has been an 'action plan', with annual reports tracking indicators of over-indebtedness (DTI/DWP, 2004).

The initiatives to tackle indebtedness emphasise tackling illegal moneylenders, improving free debt advice and increasing availability of affordable credit for those on low incomes. But it remains to be seen how far alternative models of credit can cater for lower income groups, most of whom will be receiving benefits and/or tax credits. Despite recent expansion, not-for-profit lenders like credit unions still only provide loans on a small scale.

There is a link between people's satisfaction with their income and whether they have outstanding credit commitments



The strategy also places great emphasis on financial capability, but lack of understanding is rarely cited as a reason for running into arrears. Instead, nearly one third of families with children attribute their arrears to a sudden loss of income. This generally occurs through redundancy or job loss, relationship breakdown or sickness or disability. The risks of such events, while perhaps somewhat predictable, are not really about financial capability.

What's more, at a time when entering higher education seems predicated on the idea that debt is perfectly acceptable, delivering a message against taking on more debt is going to be difficult to sell.

Those envious of what others have, and dissatisfied with their own incomes, do tend to have higher levels of credit and greater difficulties making repayments. But the size of this effect is small compared with the effects of age, income and changes in circumstances. In looking at the reasons for people borrowing, and particularly those having difficulties repaying, it is these other kinds of factors rather than envy that are the most important in explaining levels of debt.

Stephen McKay

The average man in the UK has borrowed close to £5,000 while the average woman owes around £3,000

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# Sloth

## Turnout: a crisis in UK politics?

**'By much slothfulness the building decayeth'**  
*Ecclesiastes 10:18*

One of the biggest stories in UK elections in recent years has been people not bothering to vote. General election turnout fell to 71 per cent in 1997, slumped to under 60 per cent in 2001 and only just scraped above 61 per cent in May 2005. The last two elections had the second and third worst turnouts since 1900. Only 1918 was worse – and that was amid the chaos of demobilisation after the First World War. No wonder ESRC's British Election Study team complained in 2001 that 'if this is not a crisis of domestic politics in Britain, then it is hard to know what would be' (Whiteley et al, 2001).

Their complaint has plenty of echoes. The Commission on Parliament in the Public Eye reports that the UK is now very close to the point where a government could not claim democratic legitimacy. The Rowntree-funded Power inquiry, set to report in 2006, was prompted by falling turnout to explore the health – or better the ill-health – of the 'connections between the public and the political process'. And the Electoral Commission (2003a), the elections watchdog, has clearly read its *Ecclesiastes*, and fears the decay of UK democracy: 'All those with an interest in sustaining democracy have a responsibility to examine how they can secure the confidence of the public.'

### Why hasn't devolution increased turnout?

There is an irony about this era of democratic slothfulness: the Labour government came to power in 1997 with an ambitious programme of democratic renewal, with devolution at its heart. Devolution was about doing politics differently to Westminster, with its arcane language and 'Masonic rituals' like the Queen's Speech. The 'new politics' of devolution, more open and transparent, was about bringing government closer to the people, building a new sense of engagement and participation in parts of the UK neglected by a Westminster-dominated political system.

But if turnout is any measure, it hasn't worked. In the devolved elections in Scotland and Wales in 1999 and 2003, turnout was lower than in all Westminster elections since 1997, and fell markedly in between: from 59 per cent to 49 per cent in Scotland and from 45 per cent to 38 per cent in Wales. Even in Northern Ireland, where turnout in non-Westminster elections is normally high, turnout fell from

**Elections – in their role in expressing citizenship – are increasingly revealing social inequalities**

70 per cent in the first Assembly election in 1998 to 64 per cent in 2003.

So why hasn't devolution delivered increased participation? The reasons are complex. Some reflect 'home-grown' factors, others the wider trends that have led to falling turnout in general elections too.

### Devolution: expectations and reality

The electorates of the devolved nations seem to feel that devolution has not made much difference. Figure 7a shows data on the perceived impact of devolution on education policy, and the picture is much the same for other policies. Yet the Scottish Parliament is a busy and innovative legislature, producing more Scottish Acts than Westminster used to, and introducing some policies that are quite distinctive from Westminster. Even in Wales, with a less powerful form of devolution, new policies have been introduced in areas like health, education and childcare.

Against this background, the perception that devolution has made little difference is paradoxical. It is partly to do with unrealistic expectations at the outset, especially in Scotland. But as Figure 7b indicates, there is also a feeling that Westminster still dominates. Prior to devolution, over 40 per cent of Scots thought the new Parliament would have 'most influence over the way Scotland is run'. By 2001, only 15 per cent thought the Parliament had the most influence in

**Figure 7a: Has devolution improved standards of education? (percentages in 2001)**

	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Increased standards	27%	22%	24%
Decreased standards	5%	3%	12%
No difference	59%	64%	43%
Don't know/ too early to say	9%	11%	21%

Sources: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, Welsh Election Study and Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 2001





**Figure 7b:** Which has most influence? (percentages)

	<b>Scotland before devolution</b>	<b>Scotland 2001</b>	<b>Scotland 2003</b>	<b>Wales before devolution</b>	<b>Wales 2001</b>	<b>Wales 2003</b>	<b>Northern Ireland 2001</b>
Devolved Assembly/ Parliament	40%	15%	24%	30%	17%	22%	28%
Westminster	39%	66%	50%	44%	61%	58%	51%

Sources: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (1999, 2001, 2003), Welsh Assembly Election Survey (1999), Welsh Election Study (2001, 2003), and Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (2001)

practice. By 2003, the figures had closed a little but nonetheless the story is clear: many Scots had very high and largely unrealistic expectations about the impact of devolution, and now feel disappointed.

The background of more limited devolution in Wales meant that expectations were not as high as in Scotland. Only 30 per cent felt prior to devolution that the Assembly would have most influence over how Wales is run. The perception of devolution's practical impact then fell just as in Scotland, but recovered by 2003. Data for Northern Ireland suggest a similar pattern while devolution was in operation in 2001.

Because voters think that devolution has not made much of a difference, it's easy to think it's not worth going out to vote. While 56 per cent of Scottish voters thought in 1999 that it made a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot' of difference which party won the Scottish election, only 42 per cent of Scots still felt this in 2003. In Wales and Northern Ireland, the equivalent figures in 2003 were 43 per cent and 38 per cent. The implication for willingness to vote is clear.

It has to be said that the political context for the 2003 devolved elections didn't help. In Scotland, controversy over the escalating costs of the Parliament building fed on a wider UK atmosphere of cynicism about politics. In Wales, there was very low awareness of the operation of devolution, reflecting both the Assembly's low profile and the absence of

a genuinely Wales-focused national media. And the campaigns in both nations were dull, with the parties crowding round a centrist agenda focused on management of public services, and none of the leaders setting out distinctive policy visions or winning much of a public profile.

Analysts should be careful to draw the right conclusions from this apparent sloth in devolved elections. First, it does not signify hostility to devolution per se. In all three nations, devolution is the most popular constitutional option, with support, if anything, hardening since 1997, especially in Wales. People may be disappointed with devolution but are not against it.

Second, in pretty much every other country with equivalent forms of devolved government, turnout in devolved elections is normally 5-10 per cent lower than in general elections. The UK situation doesn't look too far out of line.

Third, low turnout in devolved elections does not just reflect 'home-grown' factors, but in many respects exactly the same UK-wide factors that depress turnout in general elections.

**Younger people are as little motivated to vote as those from the most socially disadvantaged groups**



People who join pressure groups, sign petitions or go on protest marches are also those most likely to vote

UK-wide trends: the low interest ghetto

Falling turnout is not caused by falling interest in politics. Indeed, levels of interest in politics are remarkably stable. MORI figures show that 60 per cent of voters were very or fairly interested in politics in 1973, and 40 per cent not very or not at all interested. The equivalent figures for 2001 were 59 per cent and 40 per cent (Worcester and Mortimer, 2001).

What seems to be happening is a fall in our capacity to mobilise those least interested in politics to turn out. And there is no ‘compensation effect’ in new, more direct forms of political activity. Those who join pressure groups, sign petitions or go on protest marches correlate very tightly with those most likely to vote.

What is happening is the creation of a ‘ghetto’ of the least interested, whom politics increasingly fails to reach. That the least interested are often also the most socially disadvantaged, especially in inner-city seats, adds to the problem. Elections, in their role in expressing citizenship, are increasingly revealing social inequalities in the UK.

UK-wide trends: losing the young?

In both devolved and general elections, younger age groups turn out far less than older age groups. Figure 7c reports surveys conducted after the Welsh Assembly elections in 1999 and 2003, which asked voters to recall whether or not they had voted.

In Wales, as elsewhere in the UK, age is by far the most consistent demographic influence on turnout, much more than gender, which explains stark differences in other contexts. This has partly to do with levels of interest. Younger people are as little motivated as those from the most socially disadvantaged groups. They are more likely than other age groups to justify non-voting in terms of not being interested in elections.

Such non-voting has typically been part of a ‘life-cycle’ in which younger people come to take a fuller interest in politics as they become older, amid mortgages, parenthood and so on.

There is no clear evidence as yet that this cycle is breaking down, though the Electoral Commission (2003b) has voiced concerns that today’s young people are more cynical about politics than their predecessors and this may translate into a permanent disengagement from the electoral process. The Commission’s recommendation that more should be done to communicate politics to younger people is well-founded.

UK-wide trends: politicians and the problem of the ‘foregone conclusion’

We do not like politicians very much. We do not think much of their integrity, and we expect them, if not to lie, then to ‘spin’ and manipulate us. These were the findings of public opinion research by the Committee for Standards in Public Life (2004). And the cynicism about politics they reflect has an impact. Among those who make a deliberate decision not to vote, perceptions of politicians and political parties as self-interested and lacking honesty clearly play a role.

We are also not engaged by elections that either at the level of overall results or in individual constituencies appear uncompetitive. There are two senses to this ‘foregone conclusion’ problem. One is that the parties do not offer distinctive policies or ideologies, but crowd around the centre ground (as it appeared to voters in Scotland and Wales in 2003): so if it ‘makes no difference’ who wins, why bother voting?

The other sense is where the outcome of an election appears clear before it is held. This was the case in what Pippa Norris (2001) called the ‘apathetic landslide’ in the 2001 general election, and is the case in many individual constituencies (in both devolved and general elections) that have the status of safe seats.

Figure 7c: Age and voting in Welsh elections (percentage who recalled that they did not vote)

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
1999	69%	59%	48%	34%	33%	29%
2003	84%	79%	70%	63%	44%	43%

Sources: Welsh Assembly Election Survey (1999 – ‘percentage who did not vote’), and Electoral Commission (2003b – ‘Did you manage to vote at the National Assembly election on 1 May?’)

The real problem is not voters' sloth but politicians' complacency and failure to reach out to habitual non-voters

### Tackling our 'sloth'

Does falling turnout 'decay' our democracy in the sense of the sloth condemned in *Ecclesiastes*? We should be careful not to condemn non-voters themselves, avoiding any echoes of Bertolt Brecht's satirical poem *The Solution*: 'the people had forfeited the confidence of the government and could win it back only by redoubled efforts. Would it not be easier for the government to dissolve the people and elect another?'

The real problem lies not in the voters' sloth but in the complacency of politicians. One leading politician once commented on the fall in turnout at a recent election: 'Who cares? We won!' His remark captures the failure of politicians to inspire trust, to communicate clear policy platforms in straightforward ways and to reach out to habitual non-voters. That failure is what needs tackling. It seems deeply embedded at the UK level but also present in the devolved nations despite the extravagant claims made back in the 1990s about a new politics of better participation for ordinary citizens.

The Electoral Commission (2003a) wrote in 2003: 'The level of voter participation at the May 2003 Scottish elections leaves all those concerned with elections and electoral processes with a serious challenge. Action is needed across all fronts to prevent further falls and to engage the electorate in Scotland at all levels of government.' But more 'politics as usual' seems unlikely to do the trick.

Charlie Jeffery

### Further reading

Whiteley, P, Clarke, H, Sanders, D and Stewart, M (2001) 'Turnout', *Parliamentary Affairs*

Commission on Parliament in the Public Eye (<http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/publiceye>)

Committee for Standards in Public Life (2004) *Survey of Public Attitudes towards Conduct in Public Life* (<http://www.public-standards.gov.uk/research/researchreportt.pdf>)

Electoral Commission (2003a) *Scottish Elections 2003* ([http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk/files/dms/Scotlandelectionsreport\\_final2\\_114408843\\_\\_S\\_\\_.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk/files/dms/Scotlandelectionsreport_final2_114408843__S__.pdf))

Electoral Commission (2003b) *The National Assembly for Wales Elections 2003* ([http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk/files/dms/WalesElectionReportEnglish-newmap\\_14696-8855\\_\\_E\\_\\_N\\_\\_S\\_\\_W\\_\\_.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk/files/dms/WalesElectionReportEnglish-newmap_14696-8855__E__N__S__W__.pdf))

Norris, P (2001) 'Apathetic landslide: The 2001 British general election', *Parliamentary Affairs*

Power: an independent enquiry into Britain's democracy (<http://www.powerinquiry.org>)

Worcester, R and Mortimer, R (2001) *Explaining Labour's Second Landslide*, London: Politicos



# About the datasets

## Pride

The Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey was launched in 1998. It took the place of the Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey (NISA), which ran from 1989 to 1996. The mission of the NILT is to survey people in Northern Ireland annually in order to provide a time series and a public record of how attitudes and behaviours develop on a wide range of social policy issues. The survey is run on a modular basis with two modules – *Political Attitudes* and *Community Relations* – repeated every year. More information can be obtained from ARK, the Northern Ireland Social and Political Archive.

NILT: <http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/about/>

ARK: <http://www.ark.ac.uk/>

## Anger

The 1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS) and the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) are world-renowned longitudinal birth cohort studies based on nationally representative samples. The NCDS started life as the Perinatal Mortality Survey, which took as its subjects every child (17,414 in number) born in Britain in a single week in March 1958. This cohort has been re-interviewed at the ages of 7, 11, 16, 23, 33 and 42. In 2004, at age 46, members of the cohort took part in a telephone survey – they will be interviewed again when they reach 50 in 2008.

BCS70 runs along similar lines to the NCDS, having first studied 17,198 babies born in one week in April 1970, and then following them as they grew up at the ages of 5, 10, 16, 26 and 30. The latest survey of cohort members (at age 34) was completed in April 2005. Plans for further follow-ups extend to 2008 and beyond.

The follow-up surveys have collected detailed information across all major life domains, including education and employment, family and parenting, physical and mental health,

and social attitudes. The studies are incomparable data sources for investigation of change in individuals over time. They are housed in the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS), Institute of Education, University of London, and funded by ESRC. CLS is also the home of the UK Millennium Cohort Study, a study that is following 18,819 children born between September 2000 and December 2001.

CLS: <http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk>

## Lust

The National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal) is the main source of data on UK trends in sexual behaviour. It has now been conducted on two separate occasions: the first in 1990, the second in 2000. The sample in the two studies effectively spans five decades – the oldest men and women (in the Natsal 1990 sample) were born in 1931, the youngest (in Natsal 2000) in 1985 – and so makes it possible to observe trends over time in sexual activity.

Natsal: <http://qb.soc.surrey.ac.uk/surveys/nssal/nssalintro.htm>

## Avarice

Compustat ExecuComp, a product of Standard & Poor's (S&P), is a unique database for effective executive compensation analyses available from Wharton Research Data Services. The ExecuComp report library accesses more than 100 up-to-date compensation and financial items. The database includes firms in the S&P 500, the S&P MidCap 400, the S&P SmallCap 600 indices and companies in the S&P supplemental indices. The data are annual and available from 1992 onwards. The dataset contains information on over 2,000 companies and 20,000 executives (top five executive officers per company).

ExecuComp: <http://wrds.wharton.upenn.edu/>



### Gluttony

The General Household Survey (GHS) is a continuous survey carried out by the Social Survey Division of the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which collects information from people living in private households in the UK. The survey collects data on household and family information; housing tenure and household accommodation; consumer durables including vehicle ownership; employment; education; health and use of health services; smoking and drinking; family information including marriage, cohabitation and fertility; income; and demographic information about household members including migration. The information is used by government departments and other organisations for planning, policy and monitoring purposes.

The ONS is the government department that provides UK statistical and registration services, and is responsible for producing economic and social statistics.

GHS: [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ssd/surveys/general\\_household\\_survey.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ssd/surveys/general_household_survey.asp)  
 ONS: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

### Envy

The British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) is a representative sample of 6,000 households interviewed in every year since 1991. It now contains detailed data on incomes, work, housing, family structure, health, political engagement and much more. This core information, together with special questionnaires for young people, has given rise to a substantial body of research on children and young people. The BHPS is managed by the UK Longitudinal Studies Centre (ULSC) at the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), University of Essex, and funded by ESRC.

The study *Psychiatric Morbidity Among Adults Living in Private Households* is published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

BHPS: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/>  
 ULSC: <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/>  
 ONS study: [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_health/psychmorb.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_health/psychmorb.pdf)

### Sloth

A number of ESRC-funded surveys have explored turnout. Through ESRC's 'Devolution and Constitutional Change' research programme and other stand-alone projects, time series on public attitudes and voting behaviour have been established on Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland since 1997. These have been generated largely through the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, the Welsh Election Study/Life and Times Survey and the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (see Pride). The ESRC-funded British Election Study provides UK-level data. Some of the research on which the Electoral Commission bases its reports has also been informed by ESRC surveys.

Devolution and Constitutional Change:  
<http://www.devolution.ac.uk>  
 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey:  
<http://www.natcen.ac.uk/scotland/>  
 British Election Study: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/bes/>  
 Electoral Commission:  
<http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk/elections/officialreports.cfm>

Many of these datasets are available from the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex: <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk>

# About the authors

## Pride

Ed Cairns is Professor of Psychology at the University of Ulster. He has spent the last 30 years investigating the psychological aspects of political violence in Northern Ireland. He is a Fellow of the British Psychological Society and a Past President of the Division of Peace Psychology of the American Psychological Association.

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## Anger

Dr Eirini Flouri is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology and Human Development at the Institute of Education, University of London. Her research interests include parenting and children's mental health; parenting and children's educational and social outcomes; the role of the early environment in later attainments; and resilience.

Heather Joshi is Professor of Economic Demography and Director of the Centre for Longitudinal Studies at the Institute of Education, University of London. Her research interests include gender; paid and unpaid work over the lifecourse; child development; health inequalities; neighbourhood influences on human development; and exploitation of administrative longitudinal data.

## Lust

Kaye Wellings is Professor of Sexual Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She was one of the founders of the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles and a Principal Investigator on both surveys. Much of her working life has been spent researching sensitive topics, including not only sexual behaviour but also risk practices relating to drug use and in prison populations.

## Avarice

Martin Conyon is an Assistant Professor in the Management Department of the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. Prior to joining Wharton, he was a Professor at Warwick Business School. His research interests are in corporate governance, specialising in the design of executive compensation plans and the effectiveness of boards of directors.

## Gluttony

Dick Hobbs is Professor of Criminology at Durham University. His current research includes a project on organised crime in Europe funded by the European Commission, and an ESRC-funded project looking at the role of female doorstaff in the night-time economy.

## Envy

Stephen McKay is Deputy Director of the Personal Finance Research Centre at the University of Bristol. He studied economics at Oxford and has worked at various universities and thinktanks, including the Institute for Fiscal Studies. His current research mostly concerns the living standards of families with children.

## Sloth

Charlie Jeffery is Professor of Politics in the School of Social and Political Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He directs ESRC's research programme on 'Devolution and Constitutional Change'. He will shortly publish *Devolution and Electoral Politics* (with Daniel Hough), the latest in a series of books on devolution from Manchester University Press.

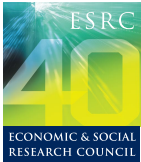
## Editors

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Romesh Vaitilingam is the author of numerous articles and several successful books on economics and public policy. His work also involves media consultancy for the social science research community, notably advising the Royal Economic Society and several ESRC-funded research centres on the management and development of their public profile.







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