



GEARY ASSOCIATES NETWORK

MEMBERS BENEFIT MORE...



UCD Geary Institute
Research. Analysis. Evidence

UCD GEARY INSTITUTE

Welcome to the Geary Institute, home to a number of research projects in areas of human development, behavioural and applied micro economics, political science, public health and sociology.

The aim of the Institute is to support cutting edge methods of investigation, leading to the very best in research publication and to provide objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing policy makers.

Key research achievements

- The Institute is ranked 1st in Ireland in quantitative and social sciences and ranked in the top 5% globally amongst University economic research centres with particular strengths in core fields of labour, health, education and microeconomics.
- The publication by Geary researchers in leading international peer-reviewed journals including the top 4 ranked journals in economics, the top ranked journal in statistics, the top ranked journal in public health and the top field journals in major areas of economic and social sciences.
- The attraction of a U.S. Nobel Laureate in Economics, Professor James Heckman, to the post of Professor of Science and Society at the Geary Institute, part of a major investment in 'Human Development and Public Policy' by PRTL and Atlantic Philanthropies



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UCD Geary Institute Building

BE PART OF THE GEARY ASSOCIATES NETWORK

The Associates network aims to build long term partnerships with a range of organisations, built on research collaboration, internships, advanced training and more.

Become a Geary Associate

The Geary Associates Network is a membership programme available to public sector organisations, industry and NGOs. For a modest fee, organisations have access to research expertise, researchers and graduate students at Geary, as well as a chance to avail of advanced training in policy evaluation methods.

Benefits of membership

- Geary researchers will be available for one event a year in your organisation, such as in-house discussions on the latest thinking in economics and policy or in depth presentations on research or modelling.
- Geary researchers will provide tailored consulting or training specifically to your organisation's requirements (2 days per year).
- Discounted rates for Masterclass Programme or other events.
- Participation in twice-annual forums held in Dublin and Cork
- Access to office and seminar room space at the UCD Geary Institute

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the benefits of membership with you and indeed to tailor a membership programme to your specific needs. Please contact Susan Butler, Institute Manager, at + 353 1 716 4610 or geary@ucd.ie for further details.



ADVANCED TRAINING: MASTERCLASS IN PUBLIC POLICY

It is clear that the process of policy formulation in Ireland is changing rapidly and becoming increasingly complex. This is in turn generating new skill requirements for the modern Irish public service. Policy makers require an understanding of the economic perspectives and analytical tools used in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policy including health, education, welfare and environmental planning.

Course Structure

UCD Geary Institute and the Harris School have developed a masterclass series - providing access to cutting edge thinking in policy design and evaluation for policy professionals in decision-making roles across the public sector, NGO's, academia and private sector consultancy. Delivered over two days, the master class is structured to cover all sectors of public investment: health, education, employment, social welfare, revenue and taxation etc. Classes consider the topics of interest to the participants, drawing on their own professional experiences.

TYPICAL COURSE CONTENT INCLUDES:

Managing Programme Evaluation

- Consumers of evaluations
- Interpreting the results of evaluations for Building an evaluation infrastructure.
- Is the policy or programme worth evaluating?

Asking the Right Questions

- Outcomes, impacts, and counterfactuals

Data & Methods

- Linkage to administrative data.
- Primary collection
- Experimental data in policy evaluation

Course Leaders

The leaders of the masterclass are Professor Dan Black (Professor of Economics and Deputy Dean) and Professor LaLonde (Professor of Economics), both of the Harris School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago. Experts in the field of policy evaluation, programme design, and labour economics, Professors Black and LaLonde bring a wealth of experience in this field of study, and decades of experiences in teaching and policy advising.

Professor Colm Harmon, UCD School of Economics, provides additional material localized to the Irish situation. The programme builds on the success of existing research collaboration between the partners.



Prof. Dan Black



Prof. Robert Lalonde



Prof. Colm Harmon

Participant Profile

The programme is aimed at middle/senior managers and specialists in the Irish civil or public service, including state regulatory agencies and commercial and non-commercial state bodies, voluntary and not for profit organisations, including trade unions and trade organisations. Participants must be actively involved in the process of policy making, policy design and policy advocacy, where economic criteria are employed.

THE DYNAMICS LAB AT GEARY

The Dynamics Lab at the Geary Institute focuses on dynamic and complex behaviour in social networks and group processes. It fosters an interdisciplinary approach and brings together researchers from across the university interested in computational social science, including dynamic social network analysis, agent based social simulation, group social processes, group decision modeling and dynamic game approaches.

Empirical research and policy applications in this area have proved extensive and very successful. They include the study of organizational behaviour, formation of strategic alliances between firms, diffusion of information and innovation, personal friendship formation, use of political influence and predicting group decision outcomes, patterns of migration and job search, as well as various areas of interest in the health sciences such as the study of mental health, suicide, drug abuse, spread of contagious diseases, obesity and so on.

The Dynamics Lab is primarily linked to the UCD Geary Institute, but also has research facilities at UCD Complex and Adaptive Systems Laboratory (CASL). (www.ucd.ie/casl).



GEARY FLAGSHIP PROJECT: EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL ADVANCED INVESTIGATOR PROGRAMME

Nobel prize-winning economist James Heckman of the University of Chicago and UCD Professor of Science and Society is leading ground breaking research at the Geary Institute.

This five year programme, awarded by the European Research Council (ERC) will study the origins and the evolution of health inequalities over the life course and across generations, and the role played by cognition, personality, genes, and environments.

Background

Professor Heckman is an economist of human development. As such, his work brings in the expertise of anthropologists, biologists, neuroscientists, psychologists, sociologists and any other 'ists' you can think of.

His theory, the Heckman Equation (www.heckmanequation.org), stresses the critical importance of early childhood development in the overall healthy development of any modern society. According to the Heckman Equation, many of society's major economic and social ills – crime, teenage pregnancy, poor health etc – are linked to low levels of skill and poor attentiveness, persistence and impulse control. We would refer to these as 'soft skills' but Heckman begs to differ. "They are neither soft nor unimportant," he says. Heckman has found hard evidence that such skills are essential to success in life. Early development of these skills greatly affects the successful development of IQ and intelligence.



Outcomes

"My work here in Ireland will be somewhat different to the Heckman Equation in the US," he says. "I've been working on this kind of research for a while, but what was missing is understanding what early years do for lifetime health - what the origins of a healthy life are. So even though I'm an economist there's a very strong medical and biological component to my work. The funding we've received in the UCD Geary Institute from the European Research Council allows us to look at early stages and understand biological foundations of economic and social disadvantage."

"A government-led anti poverty policy can literally change the way the body expresses itself," he adds. "You can actually see changes in the way genes express themselves in the brain development of a child growing up in a harsh environment where domestic strife, poverty and nutritional deficiency are the norm," he says.

In extreme poverty you see a severe absence of nutrients, which will result in their own changes in brain structure, which can lead to impairment of IQ and so forth. This consequently leads to substantial permanent conditions moving from one generation to the next. "Essentially the real goal of my work is to try and avoid problems from the outset, rather than trying to treat them after it's too late."

European Research Council



GEARY FLAGSHIP PROJECT: GINI – GROWING INEQUALITIES IMPACTS

Researchers affiliated with the Geary Institute are involved in an EU 7th Framework project “GINI” which studies the economic and educational drivers and the social, cultural and political impacts of increasing inequality with novel contributions on the measurement of income, wealth and education inequality.

Background

The project focus is inequalities in income/wealth and education and their social, political and cultural impacts. The research will exploit differences between and within countries in inequality levels and inequality trends to understand their impacts and tease out the implications for policy and institutions. It highlights potential effects of individual distributional positions and increasing inequality for a host of ‘bad outcomes’ (both societal and individual) and allows feedback from these impacts to inequality itself in a frame of policy-oriented debate and comparison across 25 EU countries, the USA, Japan, Canada and Australia.

Policy Interest

GINI very much welcomes feedback (at gini@uva.nl) from interested policy makers in government, social partner organisations or NGOs active in the field of inequality. The GINI website www.gini-research.org features a Policy Portal.



Core partner institutes

- Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS), University of Amsterdam
- Amsterdam Centre for Inequality Studies (AMCIS), University of Amsterdam
- London School of Economics / CASE
- University College Dublin
- University of Milan
- TÁRKI, Budapest
- Antwerp University, CBS

Output

- Review of the literature
- 100 to 125 Discussion Papers
- 26 Country Reports covering 29 countries
- 4 Analysis Reports and Final Report
- Dissemination booklet
- Database
- Host of academic publications



GEARY FLAGSHIP PROJECT: PREPARING FOR LIFE (PFL)

The Preparing for Life (PFL) programme is an early childhood intervention which aims to improve levels of school readiness in three designated disadvantaged areas of North Dublin. It is a community led initiative jointly funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, and managed by Northside Partnership. The programme is being evaluated over a six year period by the UCD Geary Institute. The intervention begins during pregnancy and lasts until children start school. improve levels of school readiness in several designated disadvantaged areas of North Dublin, beginning during pregnancy and lasting until the children start school. The purpose of the programme is to help parents develop skills to help their children in five domains of school readiness:

- i) cognitive development;
- ii) physical health and motor skills;
- iii) social, emotional & behavioural development;
- iv) approaches to learning; and
- v) language development and literacy.

The programme is being evaluated using a mixed methods approach incorporating both a longitudinal experimental design and a process evaluation.

Background

Inequalities in health and cognitive, social, and emotional development appear early in life and subsequent socioeconomic problems, such as school dropout, crime, drug use, and teenage pregnancy can often be traced to adverse early years environments. Both biological and environmental factors play a role in determining these inequalities. Targeted, early childhood intervention (ECI) programmes are seen as the most effective way of reducing socio economic inequalities. The majority of this evidence is based on small-scale US experimental studies, and we cannot assume that their effectiveness will be replicated in a

European setting given the vast differences in social welfare systems and cultural contexts. The Preparing for Life (PFL) programme allows us to provide the first rigorous evaluation of an early childhood programme in Ireland.

Collaborations

The UCD Geary Institute evaluation team is one of the founding members of the European Network on Early Childhood Interventions (ENECI). ENECI brings together scholars and institutions working on Early Childhood Interventions (ECI) in Europe. A series of new early childhood initiatives currently underway in Europe provides us with an unprecedented opportunity to conduct high impact, innovative scientific research which brings experimental, longitudinal, and comparative design into a unified framework.

Current members of the ENECI include CAPEDP (France), Preparing for Life programme (Ireland), and Scomettiamo sui Giovani (Italy).



GEARY FLAGSHIP PROJECT: SHARE- THE SURVEY OF HEALTH, AGEING AND RETIREMENT IN EUROPE

From the societal perspective, ageing is one of the megatrends in our century. This holds in particular for Europe, which is the continent already with the highest proportion of older citizens.

Understanding how the ageing process will affect us and the unique effect of aging on European countries is an important task for researchers in economics, social sciences, and public health in order to turn the challenges of population ageing in Europe into opportunities.

This is what SHARE – the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe – is all about.



Output

SHARE is a longitudinal, multidisciplinary and cross-national panel database of micro data on health, socio-economic status and social and family networks of more than 30,000 individuals aged 50 or over. SHARE's scientific power is based on its panel design that grasps the dynamic character of the ageing process. Its multidisciplinary approach delivers the full picture of the ageing process and rigorous procedural guidelines and programs ensure an ex-ante harmonized cross-national design.

SHARE measures the ageing process with a life sciences approach. It collects social, financial and demographic data alongside medical data, including bio-markers.

Collaboration

SHARE is coordinated centrally at the Mannheim Research Institute for the Economics of Aging (MEA), with substantial central tasks in Italy and the Netherlands. It is a collaborative effort of more than 150 researchers worldwide organized in multidisciplinary national teams and cross-national working groups. A Scientific Monitoring Board, composed of eminent international researchers, and a network of advisors (including three Nobel Laureates) help to maintain and improve the project's high scientific standards

For further information see <http://share-dev.mpisoc.mpg.de/>

The importance for Ireland

(i) The data is fully comparable to 11 other Western European countries. South Korea, Australia, Poland, Czech Republic and Israel have also joined the survey. The core modules are also comparable to the main ageing survey in Britain (ELSA) and the US (HRS).

(ii) Participating in this project feeds Ireland in to an international research network involving the major experts in the world in a number of diverse ageing fields including medicine, economics, epidemiology and several others. Combined with the comparable data-set, there is an enormous opportunity for Ireland to learn in advance from the experiences of countries farther along the ageing process.

(iii) Participating in this project affords researchers the opportunity to move to the frontier of social survey methods. This will allow technology transfer to other major Irish survey work and contribute to graduate training and development in the social sciences and gerontology. There are strong opportunities for cross-institution collaboration.

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