



**Bennett Institute  
for Public Policy**  
Cambridge

See our latest updates below

[View this email in your browser](#)



## **Bennett Institute Newsletter - January 2020**

Quarterly news, publications, events, blogs and staff activity.  
For up to the minute news [follow us on Twitter.](#)

---

**From the Director**



2019 has been an extremely busy and productive year at the Bennett Institute.

We have continued to make great strides in terms of fundraising – winning awards from different research councils, trusts and foundations.

This supports our expanding portfolio of work in the fields of public policy and well-being, the value of data, inequalities of place, and enhancing the capacity of academics to engage with policy-makers. And, working with our talented pool of researchers, we have had some very tangible impacts upon governmental thinking and decision-making.

Our new metric for measuring social capital has been adopted by the UK's [Industrial Strategy Council](#). We are working with the United Nations' Statistical Division on furthering the adoption of natural capital measures, the subject of a major international conference in March 2020. Our high-level workshop showcasing our wealth economy work drew attendees from the OECD, ONS and Treasury. And our [analyses of regional and national variations](#) in the economies and public services of Britain's towns have been warmly received in different parts of government, and extensively covered in both the regional and national press.

Beyond these specific examples of impact, our work is gathering significant international profile and recognition.

We begin a major two-year interdisciplinary project on the [measurement of wellbeing](#) in the New Year. My co-director Diane Coyle's work on regulation and technology, including through the influential [Furman Review](#), is generating significant interest from policymakers in the EU and US. And we have provided [in-depth analyses](#) of the growing risks which Brexit poses to the maintenance of the UK's domestic union.

In the Michaelmas term of 2019, we held well-attended events with some of Britain's leading policy thinkers, including: Philip Rycroft on the prospects for the break-up of the UK; Charles Seaford on the future of capitalism; Professor Vernon Bogdanor on the constitutional implications of Brexit; and Polly Mackenzie on the growing need for deliberative democracy. And we launched our brand-new analysis of [digital government in Argentina](#) at a high-profile event hosted at the Argentinian

embassy in London.

We are also laying plans for our work and events for the coming year. Among the highlights of our events programme for 2020 are the launch event for the brand-new 'Centre for the Future of Democracy', led by Professor David Runciman, which is taking place on 29 January 2020 in Cambridge. You can reserve a place at this special event [here](#).

And we will be holding our annual [Bennett Institute conference](#) on 16th April 2020, at Churchill College, with high-profile speakers including Geoff Mulgan (formerly CEO of Nesta), Professor Stephen Toope (Vice Chancellor of the University of Cambridge), Emily Shuckburgh (Cambridge Zero), Gareth Davies (Department for Transport, UK Government), Polly Mackenzie (CEO of Demos), Baroness Sally Morgan (Master of Fitzwilliam College) and Professor Nick Pidgeon (Cardiff University).

In terms of our own personnel, this has also been a dynamic period. Philip Rycroft, whom we appointed to the Institute as Distinguished Visiting Fellow, in September 2019, has become one of the most influential voices commenting on the constitutional implications of Brexit.

We have very recently appointed **Owen Garling**, on secondment from Cambridgeshire County Council, to the role of Knowledge Transfer Facilitator at the Institute. He will provide an important conduit between our own researchers and policy-makers in the UK and internationally, and help us ensure that our research reaches the right policy and public audiences. And in September we welcomed a new administrative co-ordinator to the Institute, **Sarah Rosella**.

Finally, despite the many successes and achievements which have happened in the last year, we have also been touched by great sadness in 2019. Dr Finbarr Livesey, who carried the torch for public policy at Cambridge for several years, died last year after a long battle with cancer. We will be holding a special event, with POLIS, to mark his unique contribution to teaching and research in this area on [30th January 2020](#).

And we carry in our thoughts those members of the [Learning Together](#) network at Cambridge who were killed or hurt in the recent London Bridge attack. Learning Together does vital, evidence-based and challenging work in the field of prisoner rehabilitation, and has been a great friend of the Institute since our inception. We honour - and share - its commitment to drawing upon rigorous academic

endeavour to make effective and powerful arguments for better public policy.

Michael Kenny

Director of the Bennett Institute for Public Policy

---

---

## News

---



### **Launch of the Centre for the Future of Democracy**

The University of Cambridge's Centre for the Future of Democracy will be launched on 29 January, followed by a further event on 12 February, both to be held in Cambridge.

Posing the question: "Is democracy in a global "crisis"? And if so, how does the situation today compare to similar moments of doubt – Western Europe in the 1970s, or the emerging market financial crises of the late 1990s?

Dr Roberto Foa will answer these questions, presenting key findings from his report on public satisfaction with democracy – across countries and regions from 1962 to 2020. Professors David Runciman and Helen Thompson, from POLIS, will speak in response.

[READ MORE](#)

---



## **New: Policy Resources now live!**

Our pilot Policy Resources has gone live on the [Bennett Institute website](#).

The resources provide practical suggestions to show how academics can engage with and inform policy makers both within the UK and beyond.

Aimed at mid-career academics with expertise in engineering and science, the advice is equally applicable to any researcher who may want to become more engaged with policy-makers. This is a joint project with the Centre for Science and Policy and Churchill College. Further resources will be added over time.

As this is a pilot initiative we would welcome any feedback you may have on the initial resources. Email: [office@bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk](mailto:office@bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk) titling your message 'Policy Resources' if you wish to contact us about this work.

---



## **Wealth Economy: a world beyond GDP?**

Forward-looking economic policy manages a portfolio of assets that a country possesses, or can access, to ensure that citizens enjoy a sustainable flow of benefits into the indefinite future. This project asks how we can move to a world beyond GDP.

Our measurement of economic success has evolved to include diverse critical assets: physical, financial, intangible, human, natural and social capitals.

This spring we will be releasing our year-end report with new findings from our Wealth Economy project.

[READ OUR INTERIM REPORT HERE](#)

---



## Entries for the Bennett Prospect prize 2019

Entries have now closed for this year's £10,000 Bennett Prospect prize asking: 'Which single public health intervention would be most effective in the UK?'

We received 18 policy essays and the winner will be announced at the annual Conference in April 2020.

[READ MORE](#)

---

---

## Publications

---

### Reports

[Townscapes: North East](#) by Benjamin Goodair & Professor Michael Kenny  
[Townscapes: Scotland](#) by Benjamin Goodair & Professor Michael Kenny

### Policy Briefs

[Brexit and the \[rule of\] law](#) by Catherine Barnard

## Working Papers

[To them that hath: economic complexity and local industrial strategy in the UK](#) by Dr Penny Mealy & Professor Diane Coyle

['Where's the money coming from?' Tracing the history of manifesto costing in UK elections, 1955 - 2019](#) by Dr Peter Sloman

## Lectures

[The makings of Brexit and the road ahead](#) by Philip Rycroft  
[Place policy after Brexit](#) by Philip Rycroft

---

---

## Events

---



At the launch, Roberto Foa will officially open the centre and present a report on his attitudinal data research into democracy. David Runciman and Helen Thompson will respond, followed by questions from the floor. There will be a drinks reception afterwards in the Garden Room.

[BOOK NOW](#)



## Michael Ignatieff

12 February 2020 | 5.15 - 8.30pm  
Babbage Theatre, Cambridge

The CFD launch is followed by a second event with Michael Ignatieff, former leader of the Canadian Liberal Party, who will be in conversation with Professor David Runciman from POLIS. A drinks reception will follow. This event forms part of the Cambridge Literary Festival.

[BOOK NOW](#)

---



## Bennett Conference 2020

16 April 2020 | 9.15am – 6.30pm  
Churchill College, Cambridge  
*(Followed by a drinks reception)*

Our annual conference will feature speakers and panels exploring some of the major themes of our research.

Confirmed speakers include: Geoff Mulgan (NESTA, 2011-2019), Professor Stephen Toope (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge), Emily Shuckburgh (Cambridge Zero), Gareth Davies (Department for Transport, UK Government), Polly Mackenzie (CEO of Demos), Baroness Sally Morgan (Master of Fitzwilliam College) and Professor Nick Pidgeon (Cardiff University).

For more speakers as they are announced and full conference details click [here](#).

---

---

## From the blog

---

**Gill Kernick:** [Heroes & Villains: The narratives displacing our ability to learn from Grenfell](#)

*As safety culture expert Gill Kernick watched Grenfell burn, she vowed to do what it takes to ensure we learned from the disaster. This blog explores her concern that recent narratives about the role of the London Fire Brigade's response will inhibit learning key lessons.*

**Matthew Agarwala:** [Water and Natural Capital](#)

*Wealth Economy Research Leader Matthew Agarwala writes on the challenges of water and natural capital accounting. This post accompanies the launch of the Oxford University Press Food, Water and Society Handbook.*

**Professor Michael Kenny and Ben Goodair:** [#GE2019: The Townscape Election](#)

*A reflection of the 2019 election, what it means for the current policy debate about towns, and what choices the new government faces in this area. They suggest the need for a more comprehensive policy approach to towns in England, rather than over-reliance upon direct funding from the centre, and propose the development of more locally rooted policies in education, transport and well-being.*

**Sam Gilbert:** [Using Google data for policy research](#)

*Sam explores the revealing data on our collective thoughts and needs easily available from Google – how it has been used, and how you can access it too.*

**Professor Albert Sanchez-Graells:** [A Governance Revolution or Costly Distraction? Reassessing the promises of blockchain for public procurement governance](#)

*What could blockchain technologies mean for changes to the public procurement process? Professor Albert Sanchez-Graells (School of Law, Bristol) discusses whether the expectations surrounding blockchain match the technology's capacity*

---

*and if the potential benefits are worth the prioritisation of public resources.*

**Catherine Barnard:** [Brexit and the \[rule of\] law](#)

*How has Brexit affected the relationship between Law and Politics? Catherine Barnard, Professor of European Union and Employment Law at the University of Cambridge, highlights how law has been used to shape, constrain and respond to pivotal political events in recent years.*

**Martin Stanley:** [Internet Harms: We need a Regulator, not a Censor](#)

*How can we ensure that social media platforms' services and processes are, so far as reasonably practical, structured and designed so as to reduce the risk of harm to users?*

**Dr Peter Sloman:** ['Where's the money coming from?' Tracing the history of manifesto costings](#)

*What lessons are there from the history of election campaigns for the debates over manifesto costings in this year's election? Dr. Peter Sloman, Senior Lecturer in British Politics at POLIS, outlines some of the key findings from his new working paper.*

**Jack Sheldon:** [The next parliament will face big dilemmas on Scottish independence](#)

*With the Scottish government focused on securing an independence referendum in 2020, the question of whether this should be granted will become a major issue for the new Parliament. Jack Sheldon, research assistant at the Bennett Institute, explains why the current positions of the parties involved, and the trajectory of party support in different parts of the UK, mean that there is a real risk of stumbling towards another major crisis in the UK's territorial constitution.*

**Dr Steve Unger:** [Free, full-fibre broadband for all?](#)

*Is the radical approach to broadband policy proposed in Labour's recent election manifesto desirable and feasible? Dr Steve Unger, affiliated researcher at the Bennett Institute, offers his reflections.*

**Professor Michael Kenny and Ben Goodair:** [Town Economies and the Election: What to make of the Conservative Party's Promises](#)

*As part of the Bennett Institute's Townscapes project, Professor Michael Kenny and Ben Goodair analyse the latest set of promises for neglected towns coming out of the recent election campaign.*

**Professor Dame Theresa Marteau:** [Prevention is better than cure—but what next?](#)

*Which public health intervention do you think should be introduced to address the health inequalities that currently blight Britain? Theresa Marteau explores ideas on health inequality for the 2019 Bennett Prospect prize.*

**Dr Flavio Toxvaerd:** [The economics of infection - an economist's journey into the natural world](#)

*In the first of our blogs exploring ideas on economics and infection, Dr Flavio Toxvaerd discusses how economic models can apply to disease control and asks what can epidemiologists learn from the dismal science?*

**Ben Goodair:** [Townscapes: Scotland's mixed fortunes](#)

*Compared to their counterparts across Britain, Scotland's towns have enjoyed mixed fortunes in recently years. Benjamin Goodair summarises the main findings of our latest Townscapes report.*

**Marco Felici:** [Measuring social capital for Industrial Strategy](#)

*Work by the Wealth Economy project based at the Bennett Institute has been adopted by the Industrial Strategy Council as an important part of their proposed 'Success Metrics'. Marco Felici discusses what makes social capital crucial for successful economies.*

**Dr Dennis Grube:** [The Public Sector Informant: Will bureaucrats begin using the megaphone?](#)

*The UK Supreme Court's intervention during the recent Brexit crisis is the latest dramatic development in the on-going stress-testing of the British constitution and the Westminster system. Dennis Grube reflects on what this episode tells us about the changing relationship between bureaucrats, law-makers and the public.*

**Ben Goodair:** [Townscapes: What's really happening in towns in the North East?](#)

*A new report series on towns across Britain provides analysis on North East England. Research Assistant Benjamin Goodair summarises the key findings of this report.*

**Professor Michael Kenny:** [The Makings of Brexit](#)

*Professor Michael Kenny, Director of the Bennett Institute, reflects on the Brexit crisis as the Institute publishes a new lecture from former DExEU chief Philip Rycroft.*

---

---

## Staff activity

---

### Professor Diane Coyle

#### Publications

- [FT column on Data](#)
- [Project Syndicate article about productivity](#)
- Bennett Institute working paper co-authored with Penny Mealy '[To them that hath: economic complexity and local industrial strategy in the UK](#)'

#### Events

- Took part in a round table with EU Commissioner Margarethe Vestager in November, about data and AI.
  - Programmed the annual Festival of Economics (19 – 22 November 2019) in Bristol.
  - Held a policy workshop in early December for the Wealth Economy Project.
-

---

## Professor Michael Kenny

### Publications

- (With J.Sheldon) '[Will a No Deal Brexit lead to the Break-Up of the UK?](#)' Bennett Institute/Centre on Constitutional Change, October 2019.
- (With B.Goodair) '[Townscapes: The North East](#)' (October 2019)
- (With B.Goodair) '[Townscapes: Scotland](#)' (November 2019)
- 'England's Vanishing Union', New Statesman, (November 2019).

### Events

- Behaviour Change by Design Scientific Advisory Board, Cambridge, 26 September.
- 'In Conversation' with Charles Seaford, Bennett Institute, Cambridge, 15 October.
- Chaired events on devolution and populism at the Bristol Festival of Ideas, 17 October.
- Presentation to 'Unionisms Britain and Northern Ireland after Brexit', Queen's University, Belfast, 25 October.
- Presentation to 'Irish and British Constitutional Futures', University College Dublin, 6 December.

---

## Dimitri Zenghelis

### Publications

- (with Stern, N., and Xie C.) in November 2019, they presented: 'Strong, sustainable and inclusive growth in a new era: valuing and investing in China's physical, human, natural and social capital in the 14th plan', at the Grantham Research Institute LSE, and at an Energy Foundation China/Tsinghua (SEM) symposium in Beijing.
- '[Can we be green and grow?](#)' November 2019 Lombard Odier
- 'Securing decarbonisation and growth' November 2019
- In Beyond Brexit, National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) Economic Review, 250th edition

- UK growth and competitiveness depends the net-zero-carbon economy’ October 2019
- In the ‘Putting people at the heart of the green transition’. IPPR, WWF

#### Other Activity

Throughout 2020 he plans to work with Nick Stern on a programme of papers on the ‘Coalition of Finance Ministers who signed the Helsinki Principles’.

---

### Matthew Agarwala

#### Publications

- (With Dimitri Zenghelis) Submitted a Policy Brief paper: “Natural capital accounts for macroeconomic policy” (UNSD UNSEEA and GIZ)
  - An article comment about the cost of ‘Going Green’ which will be published in January 2020
  - Blog on “[Water and Natural Capital](#)”, accompanies his chapter in the Oxford University Press Handbook of Food, Water and Society, launched in London on Tuesday 17 December
- 

### Dr Lindsay Aqui

#### Publications

- Recently finished her book on the UK’s relationship with the European Community in the period 1973–75. It is entitled ‘The First Referendum: Reassessing Britain’s Entry to Europe, 1973–75’ and will be published in early 2020

#### Other Activity

- In October Lindsay Aqui started as an ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship leading two projects on History and Public Policy.”
-

---

## Dr Penny Mealy

### Publications

- (With Diane Coyle) Working paper: [‘To them that hath: economic complexity and local industrial strategy in the UK’](#)

---

## Dr Tanya Filer

### Publications

- 'Humbling the Numbers', Signals, International Development, Winter 2019. (English and Spanish versions)

### Events



- The Digital State project has held 2 events since late October. In November we launched the Digital State Case, 'From City to Nation: Digital Government in Argentina (2015-18)' with a panel discussion on digital government in Latin America at the Embassy of Argentina in London, attended by 80 people.



- In December, a Brown bag lunch introduced the work of our new affiliated researchers, Dr. Antonio Weiss and Richard Pope.

#### Other Activity

- Convenor and panel: Digital State Case Launch and 'The 3D Debate: Digital Government, Democracy and Development in Latin America' (Panel Chair), Embassy of Argentina, London, 25 November 2019
  - Lecture: 'How Governments Digitalise', National Collaborative Leadership Programme, Muscat, November 2019
  - Discussant: 'Governance, Media, and Ethics', Information Law and Policy Centre Annual Conference, London, November 2019
  - Panel: 'Policy and Leadership in Practice', British Council Young Policy Leaders, Moller Institute, Cambridge, October 2019
  - Panel: GovTech panel, University of Warwick, October 2019
- 
- Digital State Blog Posts:
    1. Dr. Antonio Weiss: "The Rise and Fall of UK Digital Government: Learning from the Past"
    2. Richard Pope: "Establishing the Principles of Digital Government: Transparency, Fairness and Accountability"
    3. Prof. Albert Sanchez Graells: "A Governance Revolution or Costly Distraction? Reassessing the promises of blockchain for public procurement governance"
    4. Tech States: (with Richard Pope and Antonio Weiss)"Digital Government: In Practice and on Reflection"

---

## Jack Sheldon

#### Publications

- Wrote a blog on [LSE Politics & Policy](#)
- Interparliamentary relations report: to be published around February 2020. A co-authored piece with Hedydd Phylip (Cardiff).

## Events

- On 8th November spoke about the work of the Interparliamentary Forum on Brexit, and options for reform of interparliamentary relations in the UK, at the Political Studies Association Parliaments Specialist Group conference.

---

## Ben Goodair

### Publications

- (With R Maria del Rio-Chanona, Mariano Beguerisse-Díaz, Francois Lafond and J Doyne Farmer) Cornell University General Economics working paper "Automation and occupational mobility: A data-driven network model"
- (With Prof. Michael Kenny) "Politicians would be wrong to ignore issues facing our towns" in The Herald
- (With B.Goodair) [‘Townscapes: The North East’](#)
- (With Prof. Michael Kenny) [‘Townscapes: Scotland’](#)
- (With Prof. Michael Kenny) Bennett Institute blog: "[Town Economies and the Election: What to make of the Conservative Party's Promises](#)"

### Events:

- On the panel at the Bristol Festival of Economics on 22 November "Why Are So Many Places Becoming ‘Left Behind’?"
- 12 October Co-delivered a presentation on early findings from the Townscapes project to policymakers from the Cities and Local Growth Unit - BEIS/MHCLG



---

## Davide Luca

### Publications

- Invited to present his paper on mafia and asylum seekers to the OECD's 9th annual Conference on "Immigration in OECD Countries" (12-13 December, Paris);
- In October he presented the same piece of work, selected for another big international conference named "RESPOND. Unpacking the challenges and possibilities for migration governance".

### Other Activity

- Awarded an Early Career Grant (of £10,000) in December by the Regional Studies Association to carry out a project exploring whether organised crime distorts the market for renewable energy production in Italy.



*Copyright © 2020 The Bennett Institute for Public Policy, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

