Sociology 5
Specialist Information Resources:
The non-academic information environment

A PDF of this presentation is available at:
http://libguides.gre.ac.uk/HPSS/inductions

Purpose

- To broaden your awareness of non-academic literatures and non-textual resources
  - A diverse universe of materials from professional think-tank reports to commercial documentaries and official statistics
- Primary sources that complement the primary and secondary academic articles and books
  - Primary: original research
  - Secondary: reviews and commentaries
Programme

- Official (government) sources
  - United Kingdom
    - Policies and reports
    - Statistics
  - International
    - Statistics (for comparative purposes)

- Unofficial sources: ‘grey’ literature
  - Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
  - Charities
  - Think tanks

- Other research sources
  - Newspapers
  - Documentaries

Official Sources

- Policies
- Reports
Literatures: Official UK sources

- Official policies and reports
  - National (UK) and supra-national (EU?) governmental publications
  - UK Government department and other non-departmental agencies’ reports. For example:
    - Dept. for Communities and Local Government; Dept. for International Development; Ministry of Justice; National Crime Agency...

- Official statistics
  - Primarily, the Office for National Statistics’ web site:
    - Employment and Labour Market series
    - People, Population & Community series
      - Including: Cultural Identity (ethnicity, religion, language, sexual identity, etc.); Migration; Crime

The UK Government’s directory of Departments, Agencies & Public Bodies

Prime Minister’s Office
Ministerial Departments
Non-Ministerial Departments (including The National Archives (pre-2010), and the National Crime Agency)
Agencies and Other Public Bodies (including the Office of the Children’s Commissioner, and the Office for National Statistics (2010 onwards))
High Profile Groups (including the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative)
Public Corporations

Go to: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations
Locating specific UK official policies/directives

Use the Search box to identify resources across a range of departments and agencies. Where relevant, use quotation marks to denote a phrase:

- gender discrimination = 9636 documents
- “gender discrimination” = 50 documents

Review the sources that have produced (or are otherwise responsible for) the retrieved documents. You can also use this to limit the coverage of your search.

Critical considerations

- Currency?: How up-to-date is the current policy or strategy?
- What updates on the application of that policy might be available?
Official Sources
Statistics

UK official statistics

The Statistics subsection of the GOV.UK site

The search and filter options
(by theme and/or government department or agency)

Go to: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics
Official UK statistics: example

Additional to the actual data, note the methodology by which the data was gathered and structured.

Statistical Data: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Go to: https://www.ons.gov.uk/

- The ONS collects and publishes data on the UK economy, population profile, and society.
- Where relevant, data is national, regional and local.
- Administers the Census in England and Wales.

Use the drop-down menus and search box to identify data sets.
ONS: Example national data

UK labour market: August 2018
“Estimates of employment, unemployment, economic inactivity and other employment-related statistics for the UK...”
- All reports typically describe the methodology and offer an interpretive commentary on any trends or spikes in the data.

You can download complete documents (pdf) or subsets of data (most usefully to Excel (.xls))

ONS: Local data – the Nomis database

- “Nomis is a service provided by the [...] ONS, to give you free access to the most detailed and up-to-date UK labour market statistics from official sources.”
- Contains UK labour market longitudinal data:
  - employment; unemployment; earnings; population, etc.
- Coverage: regions (variously defined); local authorities; constituencies; counties; towns; parishes; wards, etc.
Nomis: Data

Use the Data Downloads option to configure and download required statistics. Example: male/female full/part-time employment in...

Official: International statistical data

- The UK Data Service database
  - Access: Portal / My Learning / Online databases and academic journals [link] / UK Data Service
  - A suite of time-series datasets with global coverage
  - Note: Contains data only
    - Neither identifies, describes nor analyses any trends or events
  - For UK data, you typically need to register to access each datasets (a free service)
    - Download data to SPSS or STATA
  - International data (including the UK) is more immediately accessible...
    - ...and often can be downloaded more simply to MS Excel
For UK data, use the Discover search function. For international data: click on the Get Data tab; select the Key Data option; and choose the International Macrodata option. This will allow you, for example, to perform comparative searches of UK and other jurisdiction’s data.

Example of Time (years) Series (countries) data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>426.44</td>
<td>717.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>381.07</td>
<td>770.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>374.69</td>
<td>663.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>169.94</td>
<td>660.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>151.63</td>
<td>614.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>852.50</td>
<td>655.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>794.12</td>
<td>768.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unofficial Sources
‘grey’ literature
**Literatures: Grey**

- Variously defined, but typically refers to publications outside of the regular processes of academic (peer-reviewed journal and book) and official (governmental) publication
  - **Note**: the content might be written by academics; and the agencies that publish this material might be part-funded by Government
- Example sources: NGOs, councils, charities, think tanks. For example:
  - The Joseph Rowntree **Foundation** (on poverty, homelessness)
  - Runnymede **Trust**, London School of Economics (on race)
  - **Institute** of Economic Affairs (on free-market neoliberalism)

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**Some specific definitions**

- **Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)**
  - A not-for-profit organisation that typically pursues specific social and/or political objectives; and consequently are often engaged in petitioning government. May operate at a local, national or international level.
- **Charity**
  - An organisation concerned primarily with raising funds for a specific purpose or event. Those concerned with a perpetual agenda may be established in law as a charitable trust.
- **Think Tank**
  - A group of expert professionals and/or academics operating to respond to one or more specific social, political or economic issues. Will typically advocate a set of actions to reform or otherwise address those issues. May be funded by Government, business corporations, or other agenda-driven groups. May be referred to as policy or research institutes.
  - **Note** the potentially considerable overlap!
NGOs: World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO)

- “Concerned with universal values shared across the barriers of politics, culture, religion, race and ethnicity…”
- Includes a directory of global NGOs:
  - Searchable by location (country/city), and area of activity (using keywords)
  - Useful for identifying NGOs potentially relevant to your studies, and as possible future employers
  - Not comprehensive, and does not give detailed contact information, but a good place to start!

Go to: https://www.wango.org/

Charities: The Charity Library (directory)

- The Charity Library includes a selective directory of UK charities.
- Not comprehensive, and the search software is limited (no truncation, for example); but another good place to start.

Many charities, apart from their mission and strategic statements, are not concerned with producing research or policies. There are, of course, exceptions, especially amongst the better funded and (inter)nationally oriented charities.

Go to: http://www.charitylibrary.co.uk/
Think Tanks

There are several directories of UK and overseas think tanks:

**London School of Economics**
http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/CareersAndVacancies/careersService/EmployeeSectors/PublicSectorPoliticsPolicy/Think Tanks/Home.aspx
(see right... and note the career context!)

**The Guardian** [newspaper]
https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/sep/30/list-thinktanks-uk

**Wikipedia UK**
The most comprehensive list
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_think_tanks_in_the_United_Kingdom

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**Example Think Tank: Institute of Public Policy Research**

*The Invisible Land: The hidden force driving the UK’s unequal economy and broken housing market*

Indicative of the range of resources discoverable through such agencies.
The IPPR is a registered charity! Staffed by professional researchers.
Coverage: affordable housing; a sustainable economy; equitable wealth redistribution; developing the welfare state, etc.
Overtly left wing. (Other agencies may be less transparent about any political agenda.)
The Lexis Library ‘News’ database: UK national and regional newspapers

Access: Portal / My Learning / Online databases and academic journals / Lexis Library / News

“phrase” searching is enabled

Limit to National, Regional, or Broadsheets
Lexis Library (News) search results

US citizens are standing up against poverty - the UK should follow suit; As the Poor People’s Campaign begins six weeks of protest in the US, it’s time for a concerted fight against poverty in two of the richest nations in the world.

The Guardian (London), May 14, 2018 Monday 2:00 PM GMT, SOCIETY; What would Jesus do? Pay workers a living wage; The minimum wage is about to go up - but it’s still not enough for people to live with dignity - Paul Butler is the bishop of Durham

The Guardian (London), April 4, 2018 Wednesday 6:30 AM GMT, OPINION; How do you make poverty sound better? Rebrand it! kids to work used to be a sign of living precariously ‘hustle’ is

The Guardian (London), March 30, 2018 Friday 12:25 PM GMT, OPINION; Version:1, 754 words, Paul Butler

The option to download all or selected (full-text) articles

Useful (regional?) case studies to substantiate or confute academic theory. Consider the motivation for writing these articles: a Daily Mail or Guardian perspective?
Documentaries: BoB

The Box of Broadcasts database: UK national and regional channels

**Access:** Portal / My Learning / Online databases and academic journals / Box of Broadcasts

"Only programmes from the nine most popular channels [BBC 1; BBC 2; BBC 4; ITV; Channel 4; Channel 5; More 4; BBC Radio 4; and BBC Radio 4 Extra] are automatically recorded. For all other channels, users have 30 days to request a programme before it's gone forever."

Who produced this? For what purpose?

Full-text **Transcript** (of variable quality, but useful for quotation purposes)

Create and **Add to Playlist**; which is saved to your account

Information required for a citation (more on this later)
Referencing (Harvard)

- *Cite them right* contains specific sections detailing how to reference the following document types in accordance with the Harvard system:
  - Government (departmental) publications
    - Policies
  - Research reports
  - Scientific datasets
    - Statistics
  - Television (broadcasts) [for BoB, etc.]
  - Newspaper articles