

Institution: University of Cambridge
Unit of Assessment: UoA30
Title of case study: Early Modern Social Institutions and Development Policy
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Szreter's research on the demographic, economic, public health and governance history of Britain since c.1500 has demonstrated the importance for economic development of the linked early modern institutions of a universal social security system and an identity registration system. This has received high-profile development policy citation in the World Bank's annual Development Report, the WHO's Social Determinants of Health Report and by the architect of India's recent biometric registration programme. Many of Szreter's interventions since 1993 were published in <i>Health and Wealth</i> (2005) and in 2009 he became the first non-American recipient of the American Public Health Association's Arthur P. Viseltear Award for distinguished contribution to the history of Public Health.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Simon Szreter was appointed to a new blood lectureship in 1984, was promoted to Reader in 2002 and in 2010 was appointed Professor of History and Public Policy. His research draws on a career-long interest in British demographic, economic and social history, producing a series of peer reviewed articles and major co-edited publications. One aspect of this published research has offered a revisionist exposition of the importance of two major, closely inter-related institutions for promoting British economic growth, the parish registers of baptisms, burials and marriages established by Henry VIII in 1538 and the Elizabethan parish Poor Law of 1598, a precocious, universal yet highly devolved parish social security system. His 2005 book <i>Health and Wealth</i> first articulated this argument (ref 1). In 2007 this was followed with an original article in the premier development policy journal, <i>World Development</i>, relating his research on early modern Britain to the seminal work of the Economics Nobel prize-winner Douglass North, who focused economic development policy on the importance of institutions for facilitating economic growth (ref 2). Szreter applied this perspective to his own revisionist interpretation, arguing that the uniquely effective nature of the early modern English parish Poor Law and associated governance and local justice system promoted widely-diffused market development – and that its success was due to its close and symbiotic linkage with the equally unique national system of identity registration through parish registers. The latter were instituted to guarantee inheritance and property rights of the middling sorts but also subsequently under the 'settlement' rules of the Poor Law (which defined the unique location of each individual's right to relief) became an accessible legal guarantor for the populace of their entitlements to parish support for the poor. That these two linked institutions facilitated economic development is demonstrated by the protection they offered the population from famine mortality 150 years earlier than the rest of western Europe. In association with the Elizabethan Statue of Charity law, they also stimulated civil society in every parish; and facilitated high levels of secure intergenerational capital accumulation and labour mobility among the young. The most recent product of Szreter's ongoing research has been to place these developments in England in a comparative perspective in relation to English settlers in early modern North America and the Caribbean in his chapter in a volume he co-edited with Prof Keith Breckenridge. This volume, <i>Registration and Recognition</i>, also places these English institutional developments in a wider comparative framework by examining for the first time the comparative world history of identity registration systems since the Ancient world, and embracing also the history of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Based on research presented at a British Academy-funded conference in September 2010 by over 20 leading international scholars, this volume was published by the British Academy in its Oxford University Press Proceedings series in October 2012 (ref 5).</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>1. <i>Health and wealth. Studies in History and Policy</i> (New York: University of Rochester Press</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

- 2005; paperback 2007), 416-47.
2. 'The right of registration: development, identity registration and social security - an historical perspective', *World Development*, Volume 35, Issue 1 (January 2007), pp.67-86. Reprinted as ch.13 in H.J. Cook, S. Bhattacharya and A. Hardy, eds, *History of the Social Determinants of Health* (Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan 2009), 248-78
 3. 'Children with a (Local) State: Identity Registration at Birth in English History since 1538', in J. Bhabha, ed, with Foreword by Mary Robinson, *Children Without a State. A Global Human Rights Challenge* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press 2011), 331-51.
 4. C.A. Bayly, Vijayendra Rao, Simon Szreter and Michael Woolcock, eds, *History, Historians and Development Policy: A Necessary Dialogue* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2011). Reviewed in the Indian journal *Economic and Political Weekly XLVII*, May 2012, and published in paperback in India by Orient Black Swan 2012.
 5. *Registration and Recognition. Documenting the Person in World History* (co-edited with and Introduction by Keith Breckenridge) Proceedings of the British Academy 182 (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012).
 6. 'How and Why Does History Matter for Development Policy' in the *Journal of Development Studies* 47:1 (2010), 70-96, which gained an honourable mention from the judges for the Dudley Seers prize for the best article published in that journal during 2010.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

In the field of contemporary development policy the importance of two institutions, a universal social security system and a universal identity registration system, has been viewed principally as a human rights issue and as non-essential so far as economic growth is concerned. Szreter's historical research has critically raised awareness among development policy practitioners that these two institutions, preferably in harness together, can each make powerful pro-growth contributions and that they also signal the importance of crucially linked governance issues of trust, civic status and access to justice in order to promote well-diffused economic development. In November 2009 Szreter became the first non-American awarded the Arthur P. Viseltear Award by the American Public Health Association in recognition of the distinguished body of historical scholarship published in *Health and Wealth*, *World Development*, *American Journal of Public Health* and *The Lancet*.

The initial publication of this thesis in *Health and Wealth* (2005) elicited immediate interest from development policy practitioners, with a text box summarizing Szreter's argument in ch.6 of the World Bank's 2006 *World Development Report*. This was published at a time when leading world development organisations were turning their attention to the potential of fledgling programmes such as Brazil's Bolsa Familia for supporting development, with Szreter's work providing important historical evidence for the effectiveness of such approaches to sit alongside contemporary evaluations, which established a policy context for the reception and impact of Szreter's work in the survey period.

The publication of Szreter's 2007 journal article in *World Development* resulted in a call by WHO in Geneva for him to join an international writing team of public health epidemiologists, where he was the only historian on the team, which resulted in a special issue on 'The Right of Registration' published by *The Lancet* in November 2007, where he co-authored 3 of the 4 articles in the issue. In 2008 he was asked to give lectures at the key development policy institutes, ODI and IDS, and a plenary lecture at a major international UNICEF-funded conference in Entebbe, Uganda on 'Social Protection for the Poorest Poor' in Africa, where, again, he was the only historian present. For the first two days of the conference, researchers presented their work to administrators of social protection programmes, and on the third day leading policy makers were brought in. Szreter was therefore able to argue in front of policy makers from several African countries that social security systems were not just the preserve of developed countries but had begun in agrarian economies, actually supporting their subsequent development. Szreter's lecture was chaired by George Beekunda, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. On the day after the conference, the Ugandan government met with a delegation from the conference, and shortly afterwards announced a new pilot programme of social protection for the poor, focusing

on the poorest households with children and older people, to be funded by development partners including DfID **(5a)**. In 2009 Szreter was again invited to give presentations at the key development policy institutes, ODI and IDS, and at a seminar for DfID chaired by the Permanent Secretary, Dr Nemat Shafik, who stated in her personal summary to DfID staff present that 'This is a good opportunity to look back to our own history and see how a social safety net was created in England when the country had a low-income agrarian economy, not unlike the countries [DFID] works with today' and asked her civil servants to consider the implications for policy.

Szreter's research has also been prominently cited in two major and influential health and development policy documents published in 2008. Firstly, the report of the WHO's 2008 Commission on Social Determinants of Health cited Szreter's research extensively when arguing for the importance of universal vital registration in developing countries for both public health and social equity reasons **(5b)**. This led to action when 48 Asian-Pacific governments came together in Bangkok in December 2012 with the support of Unicef and Plan International to agree measures for strengthening their civil registration systems.

The most direct impact on policy of Szreter's work can be seen in its influence on India's adoption of a universal identification policy. In June 2009 India's President announced in parliament that a Unique Identity Card scheme was to be implemented within 3 years to 'serve the purpose of identification for development programmes and security' **(5d)**. Nandan Nilekani, who was appointed by the President to head up this newly-created Unique Identity Authority, specifically cited Szreter 2007 as the key authority for his original proposal in 2008 for this policy of universal identification: 'Unique identification for each citizen also ensures a basic right—the right to "an acknowledged existence" in the country, without which much of a nation's poor can be nameless and ignored, and governments can draw a veil over large-scale poverty and destitution' (Szreter 2007, Nilekani 2008, p.350) **(5c)**.

In summary the beneficiaries of this research have been the diversity of practitioners, officials and experts working in the international field of development policy, who have been able to develop policies better tailored to supporting widely shared economic development and the citizens of these countries benefiting as a result both economically, socially and in terms of recognition of their rights to registration, with these policies more accurately informed by Szreter's revisionist account of the institutional drivers behind England's pioneering path of economic development.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- a) Email from person 1 (Research Director, Brooks World Policy Institute); Brooks organized the Entebbe conference.
- b) *'The Marmot Report'*: Commission on Social Determinants of Health, *Closing the Gap in a Generation. Health Equity through Action on the Social Determinants of Health* (WHO: Geneva, 2008): http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241563703_eng.pdf; references to Szreter in Chapters 11 and 16, including in Recommendation 16.1, cross-referenced to Recommendations 5.2. and 14.1., e.g. p. 178: 'Vital registration has been shown to be of major importance for social and economic development in early industrializing countries (Szreter, 2007).'
- c) Nandan Nilekani, *Imagining India* (London: Allen Lane 2008; also 2nd and 3rd edns 2009 and 2010), p.350, citing Szreter (2007).
- d) President of India's address to the newly-elected 15th Lok Sabha (Indian Parliament) in New Delhi June 4th 2009, paragraph 13: 'The Unique Identity Card scheme for each citizen will be implemented in three years overseen by an Empowered Group. This would serve the purpose of identification for development programmes and security.'
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=49043>