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Facilitator: This afternoon we have Danny Dorling, Halford Mackinder Professor of Geography, University of Oxford who, really, hardly needs any introduction. Danny is, as most of you know a prolific writer, I didn’t know how prolific until I checked his CV before this Plenary. And all I can say is – I won’t go through the numbers – but it is the volume of production that would give most academics sleepless nights.

His most recent works are ‘People and Places’, ‘A 21st Century Atlas of the UK with Bethany Thomas’ – which I am reliably informed is available for £15 at Policy Press, you know, I am on commission for this so. And a revised and updated version of ‘Injustice’ which is a fiver.

Now, what I would say is as far as I am concerned, one of the most important things about Danny’s work as well as its volume and its academic quality, is the fact that it has a wider purpose. And it reaches out beyond a purely academic audience and also the subject matter. Because the core theme that runs through his work is identifying, exploring and making explicit a lot of the iniquities and injustices and social problems that afflict us in these – what we might say are – very troubled times.

And these works together with Danny’s regular presentations and media engagement, have established him, I think it is fair to say, as a rare commodity in the UK. As a genuine in every sense of the word – public intellectual. So it is my great privilege to present Danny Dorling.

Danny Dorling: Thank you.

(Applause 0:02:07 – 0:02:14]

Danny Dorling: Thank you very much for coming. I am going to show you some maps because I am a Geographer but before then I will make a few claims. Some of these claims may appear to be extreme but I don’t think they are.

The main claim is that demographically more has happened in the last 15 years in this country or these four countries than in the previous 50. If you worry about demography, old-fashioned demography the kind of things you look at are fertility, mortality, migration and marriage. I will show you quite a lot about migration soon. Fertility, we now have an average age of first births which is over 30; people are delaying becoming parents, as they have never done before. But most dramatically, mortality – you may have read in the Press the last couple of days and it was released first of all towards the end of January; last year saw the biggest increase in deaths in England and Wales that has occurred at any point since the Second World War. Albeit one year in the 1960s – which maybe a year in which people were coming in to avoid migration controls.

Mortality rose by about 5% last year. Mortality doesn’t rise normally. In Scotland, the number of deaths rose by 8.5%. The minute I saw that, I thought it was huge. But the bigger shock, the thing I really cannot understand, is how the Chief Medical Officer of Scotland can produce a report on Scottish Health which came out, I think on January the 20th and make no reference to the biggest increase in people dying in one year that there ever has been in Scotland.

These are the reasons why I say more is happening in the last 15 years than in the last 50. I can moan, I think there are good reasons why we should moan. But I am also going to try and be positive about things. I think most people think they know what a better politics would be for most of us it is my politics. If we only did what I say, everything would be fine. If we all did what you wanted, the world would be great. And of course, none of us actually knows what a good politics would be.

But one thing that drives me is as I look at these numbers and I have been obsessed by numbers for a very long time. You can’t simply report the numbers. You do have to say, “What can you do about them? What should you do?” The Office for National Statistics yesterday produced a release to say that the rise in deaths in England was due to more dementia and the flu. But no reason why dementia could have suddenly risen, it is simply what is put on the death certificate.

I am also going to make claims about our politics having become extreme. And I use measures to show that because it is very easy to say, “Things are big.” But if you measure it, it is more convincing. And the last thing I should say, I am going to show you a few cartoons. The cartoons were produced by Ella, very kindly, for a book called ‘A Better Politics’ which is available for free. You just type it into Google and you can get a copy because Ella did the cartoons for free.

It costs somewhat more to produce the kind of maps I am going to show you and graphs like this. This is the work of Bethan Thomas; it took her a very long time. And another question, similar to that question about why do we have Chief Medical Officers of our four countries if none of them are willing to say something that has happened to Public Health.

Why do we collect information at every census since 1841 and nobody produces a graph like this - as far as I can see – until Bethan did? This is a kind of graph you see all over the United States of America where in the US they celebrate the fact that it is a melting pot nation and where people have come from. We don’t do that in the UK. We are a very strange country. It is an absolute scale so, of course, if you took into the account the fact that the population has risen, it would alter somewhat. But it is showing you just how big the rise is and from how many places.

People are travelling much, much further than they used to travel before. What you are not seeing in this graph is the out-migration of people from the UK. We have enormous numbers of people still alive who have left this country and are living elsewhere. Depending on how the vote goes on June 23rd, we may get to meet quite a lot of them coming back in in a rush. And they may be a bit surprised at what they find and whether the Health Service that they are coming back in for can actually do what they think it will do.

That is our incredible history. People involved in studying the census have been quite quiet about this as it rose. We were particularly quiet in 1991 when we got the first big rise in people mixing because of the hostility to it. But it gets to a point when you have to say, “Look, something quite incredible is happening.” And you can make guesses as to why it continues to happen. The last time we had nett high immigration during a recession was 1931 after the 1929 crash. When there is a Global crash, the World is full of people looking for somewhere to go and they are much more likely to come to a place which speaks their second language.

These are the maps you are going to have to get used to if you are going to understand the other pictures I have got to show you. They stretched the country so that each part of the country gets the same amount of space as the number of people it has.

Just a couple of graphs from The Guardian. Let’s do a poll – who doesn’t read The Guardian? Put your hands up. No, I just wondered whether this could be the maximum Guardian reading conference. Anyway, so – I am doing well, I got a laugh because this is an absolutely miserable graph isn’t it? There isn’t no subtlety anymore. There is nothing subtle, nothing subtle about the large budget. That is the handout and the people producing the budget knew that this was what they were doing. This is the more complicated redistribution of money I think produced by the IFS the day after.

The day before the budget, I was in the Treasury doing a talk to civil servants and the Cabinet Office and the Treasury, a similar number to you. And halfway through my talk which was somewhat different from the talk I am doing for you, I was talking about the housing crisis. I asked the audience to put up their hands – let’s try it with you. Put up your hands if you are rent – privately or social housing, okay. Now put up your hands if you haven’t put your hand up – so you have owner. Okay the majority of you have got a mortgage or own outright and the minority are renters.

In the Treasury the Civil Servants in the Treasury in the Cabinet Office, two-thirds of them put their hands up saying they were renting. And it suddenly crossed my mind but I didn’t say it because this was four o’clock on the day before the budget. And this was a young two-thirds of the audience, to say to them, to ask the people who had a mortgage or who owned a house to put their hands over the ears and then to say to the two-thirds of the audience who were renting in London, “Now’s your chance. Grab the person next to you who’s got their hands over their ears, tie them up, put them in a broom cupboard. You’ve got 24 hours to rewrite the budget in your own interests.” And again, I am giving you too many questions rather than answers but how can it be that we have a Government that does things directly against the interests of the very people who are actually making the policies themselves let alone everybody else?

And how can it be that we have a Government which produces lies that are such blatant lies that the Economist magazine feels obliged to point them out. The Prime Minister has repeatedly said that inequalities are falling. Using the measure shown by the blue here which excludes the best of 9.99% of people, almost the whole of the best off 10th. Oh yes, if you exclude the best off 10th of the population we are all in it together.

The red line shows you a somewhat different pattern. I worry whether we have collectively become so innumerate that it is possible to do things which may have been harder to do in the past because the population had a better idea of numbers. But that may just be a cheap justification for why you should look at numbers.

My last graph I think before I show you some maps and again this is part of the claim for the extraordinariness of our times. This is a segregation index of the Conservative voters in Britain shown since 1918. We have actually got the data back until the 1830s. Now what this is showing you or the way I describe how you work out a segregation index, if you imagine – I won’t do it, I was going to say, “Put up your hands if you did vote Conservative.” But I won’t not here.

Right, imagine that 30% of you, whatever, 25% of you which is how many did vote Conservative in May 2015, 25% of you voted Conservative and you were all over there – we will call it Surrey. And now you have to imagine that I have a magic butter knife and this magic butter knife it is very large, is going to spread you lot evenly across the audience. What this statistic says is what proportion of you, the minimal proportion that I would have to move to get an even spread of Conservative voters across the audience.

So, it is not about how well the party does in terms of winning. It is about how geographically concentrated their voters are. Now from 1918 which was the Khaki Election and a very strange Election it was the last election in which the third party did best; the third party was Sinn Fein and the third party got over 70 MPs in 1918. The election since then when the third party did best was 2015 when the SNP got 56 MPs.

From that Election onwards, Conservative voters became more evenly spread out across the country. The propensity to vote Conservative in very Tory areas which were often very protestant areas in Glasgow and the North West fell and the propensity to vote Conservatives which didn’t, which were often Liberal areas rose. And so by the 1950s and ‘60s you had a pretty even spread of Tory voters everywhere which wasn’t great for the Tories. Which is partly why they lost to Wilson in ’64 and ’66.

Everything changed in 1974 between the February and October 1974 the South East of England, the voters switched to the Tory Party. And we saw it in the election results in October 1974; it is a little jump in the graph. The year after the Conservatives anointed Margaret Thatcher in ’75. Little drop down to ’79 and then every election after ’79 the segregation of the Conservative voters increased. So the areas where they are most popular saw more and more Conservatives. And the areas like Scotland where they were less popular saw fewer and fewer.

The remarkable thing – I will stop staying remarkable at this point but is the last election which saw the biggest jump ever in the segregation of the Conservatives. That jump up to surpass the 1918 maximum. It has nothing to do with Scotland because there were practically no Conservative voters left in Scotland by 2010. So that rise has nothing to do with Scotland.

That rise is increased popularity of the Conservatives in places like most of Oxfordshire, apart from Oxford East and in the Home Counties. You think, “How the hell did they win an election in May 2015?” They won it by taking the seats from the Liberals who were \_\_\_[0:16:42]. It was incredibly lucky but we have ended up with a country where you have never been less likely to meet somebody who doesn’t vote like you vote depending on where you live.

So the country is becoming like this conference hall in that if you live in a Labour area or an area in which people don’t vote, you will meet other people who vote Labour or don’t vote. If you live in an area where people vote Conservative, you are much, much more likely to meet other voters who vote Conservative - and that reinforces your views on both sides. And it also reinforces on the left to think, “How can this be happening?” It is happening because you don’t talk to people who are in favour of it happening and you don’t know why there is such favour for quite a lot of what is going on amongst a minority of people.

This is a map which was made up. Bethan and I made this up in the Edition we did after the 2001 Census to try to describe, to summarise what we thought the 2001 Census showed was happening as compared to ’91 and earlier Censuses. And it said the country is dividing into two halves, they look very much like the North-South divide - except you might as well call the bottom-half London.

Oxford where I live is an educational enclave of London. We have a bus to London; it cost £7 to get to London. We have London house prices. And the North and Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland is a series of archipelagos with the cities as islands in the middle of the archipelagos surrounded by areas that are getting further and further away. That are becoming more peripheral.

And I am showing you that map because we then used that map, this time, having defined it in 2003 to look at how things have changed in the last 10 years. Being positive, there are lots and lots of things that have got better that we tend not to notice have got better. Huge increases in young people getting to university. It is now fairly pointless paying for your child to go to a private school if you think that is going to help him get into a Russell Group University. Because unless you are in the catchment of the worst comprehensive in your city, you might as well go State.

Things like that that have occurred, that the population hasn’t yet caught up on; hence, private schools are still at 7% of the population. These two maps are showing you the geography of civil partnerships which as you might get is London and Brighton and so on. I see this kind of thing as positive because I can remember the 1991 Census where the Census form was corrected. If you were a man and you clicked that you were living with another man and you were co-habiting, they actually altered your answer to say that you were two single men.

They didn’t do it out of being malicious. I met – I think he is now dead – I met the man who made the decision to do it. He was gay and Jewish. They did it because they knew how the 1933 Census had been used in Germany and they thought it was dangerous to allow people to record that on their census form. Things have moved on so far that – if you can remember the census, we had eight boxes to describe your relationship with your best beloved in the household.

And this one is showing you areas which have an increase in people who are married which is only London. Marriage has been dropping in popularity for 40 years. In 1991 London was the only place in the country where the majority of working age people were not married, then all over the place you have got areas where the majority of people are not married. Then suddenly we get a turnaround. And there has been lots of turnarounds in London.

The other big turnaround has been for years and years London has sucked in a greater proportion of graduates, so our graduates increase up to, you know, I think two million over three years. And every decade a higher percentage of those graduates end up in London. So London is jam packed full of graduates. In 2011, for the first time, the number of graduates in the middle of London fell. So there are changes.

The big change though is who is coming in from where. I will go through these fairly quickly so I don’t overrun and these are graphs just showing you all we know since the census. We know remarkably little since 2011. Lots and lots of things have been cut. There was a proposal to cut the weekly death counts and luckily they weren’t. If they had cut them, we wouldn’t know that we had had the biggest rise in mortality. But this is what we know about the numbers of people estimated to be in the country, born in other countries. And I am only showing you… This showed a huge variety, increases from many, many places.

The biggest increase in immigration in the UK though to 2011 is the increased number of English who are now living in Wales and Scotland. That is the biggest immigrant group still in the country because everybody is moving further.

No increase in people born in Africa since 2011 and the map is showing you in the green areas in London actual decreases. Because people are being pushed out of inner London. This is the increased in people of mixed ethnicity 2012/’13, ’14 really rapid increase going on. You would be unusual now if in your wider family – your siblings, your nieces and nephews, your uncles and aunts to be all white is now quite unusual as a family. But the biggest change in mixed ethnicity is again London. You see it becomes a repetitive story about London and where we are at the moment in Birmingham and then less change around but it is changing.

Sorry for the complication of the graph. This story was reported by others recently. Every single ethnic minority group and eerie group associated with immigration have all done incredibly well in British Society to stereotype. You can, of course, say, “Things are much more complicated than that.” But when I was first studying these kind of things there was a myth about two kinds of migrants. The myth was that you had the Jewish migrants and the Hindu migrants and they did well at education and you had the Irish migrants and the Black Caribbean migrants and they did badly. It turns out all the children of migrants do well because children of migrants are children of people with get up and go. And because we are not as bad as the United States, despite all our problems.

Okay the last few graphs are going to just look at the South East because it gets too hard I think to see the whole country. So if you have got incredibly good eyesight, you can read the names. This is just a way to get you to buy the book because it is so frustrating. That is where I now live and so describing it, Oxford East is… And you can see how much I drank last night. Oxford East of course is the East side of there and it is very different from the rest. Everywhere is touching where it should do and everywhere is the size of the people who live there.

The green areas are the areas with the highest of increases in students to 2011. And so you are looking at Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and a bit in London but that was to 2011. Since 2011 and in particular since last years and the free market, you know, anybody can go anywhere; we have drops in Northern Universities and huge rises in Reading, Exeter, Bristol, Southampton. Reading booked out every hotel in the town for the numbers of extra students they got and only charged the students £20 a night to stay in there. What you never hear is who is losing? But people are losing.

But overall, look at that the number of students keeps on rising partly because what on earth, else do you do when you are 18? It is a captive market and it is good to go to university. And if you are a very imaginative 18-year-old, you may realise that there is no way the student debt is ever going to be repaid.

Between us – try and keep this quiet before June the 23rd, the biggest increase that there has been in students in our universities in England has been students from mainland Europe, in the last two years. A huge increase. If it wasn’t for the increase of students from mainland Europe who have a right to study here and a right to access the student loan, we would of actually had a fall. And if we have a fall in students that means we have to sack people or reduce the salaries at the top of the universities which is never seen as possible.

So why have we had this huge increase in students coming from mainland Europe? Are they really attracted by our incredible marketing? Do they want to pay £9,000 a year? Or have they worked out that when they go back to France - which is the country sending the most - or Romania which is sending relatively high numbers but not absolutely high numbers. And they receive a letter, if it ever gets to them asking to identify where they were living to pay the debt back, they don’t reply to the letter.

If you want to know why the student loan system isn’t going to work the European students is one of the reasons but keep it quiet until after 23rd of June. The other question you have got to ask is why are our children not going to Europe? And I think we have made them more timid. It is not cheap even though their courses are often free but I think we have made them more timid.

Just a few other things to show you things are changing. In general, there has been a big decrease in overworking. That is all the pink areas on the map apart from Central London where it has increased again. The graph is showing you, nationally, the proportion of people who are working more than 45 hours a week. It is concentrated in the financial industries, it is concentrated in London. Finance sacked people in the suburbs after the crash and brought them in to the middle or kept the people who were in the middle and has them working longer hours. It is all these kind of things changing.

This is a change in people’s degrees; it is green because everywhere is going up; particularly now in East London – that is Barking and Dagenham and so on. The light area in the centre and West of London is that lack of an increase in people with people with degrees. And of course, the number of degrees keeps on rising up to 2014 which is the latest data we have.

This is people with no qualifications and there is a big rise in the wealthiest part of London with people with no qualifications. This can include people with qualifications that can’t be matched from countries overseas but I suspect it also includes servants who have no qualifications. And we have seen a big increase in servants in the middle of London.

The blue map is showing you the rise in education. There was a rise in education up to 2011. New Labour did spend money on some things. The dark areas show you Cambridge and Oxford and part of Central London taking more than their fair share – which is why the house prices are so high now. And that is a fall in jobs since 2012 in education.

The Education budget is supposed to be ring-fenced, it is only ring-fenced up to age 16. So if any of you have got a child in the Sixth Form you will know how fast it is being cut. And here is the financiers and bankers and that increase in Central London and decrease around here – decrease in the people who used to go in on the train reading The Telegraph and working out how to do those strange shares that mean you don’t have to pay tax. Those kind of people have now died and there is a new kind of person.

Other things – and a lot of this is predictable the minute you see it. But if I were to take more time and to ask you to predict it, it might be harder. This is the increase in people, families sharing houses again and it is in the suburbs of London that you are getting two families now sharing a house. And the increase from that. And that is the increase since 2011 and the proportion. It is still only less than 3% of families – there is two families to a house but it is something we thought we had got away from and we are seeing it coming back again.

This is my hobbyhorse which is rooms and housing. All the blue areas which is most of England have seen an increase in the number of rooms per person. Nationally we have had an increase in the number of rooms per person. We have more housing than we have ever had. We have built more housing not as separate houses or flats but as rooms in the attic, rooms underneath, extensions. We actually have been building. But we have also been sharing out what we have been building worse and worse and worse each year.

This, I am sorry for the title going. This is the mean age of – it shouldn’t say percent – it is the mean age of mothers giving birth which is now over 30. People are delaying having families, may never have a family partly because of what is happening with housing. There is also evidence – this map is of the increase in illness. There was an increase in illness between the censuses of 2011 and this graph is showing you the fall in people who are satisfied with their health.

There is a big reduction in people being satisfied with their health after May 2010. And it includes people who were disabled and people who are going to be sanctioned and who were sanctioned. It is slightly like that 1974 thing – the population is often ahead of policy and it is affected by it.

And here is the biggest change of all. There has been a doubling of the number of people in private rented accommodation 2001 to 2011, 5.1m to 10.1m with the biggest increase being in East London. London is currently going up 1% a year, private renting. It is landlords who are buying the property. That is the national increase and the speed at which it is happening. It is quite staggering the speed of the takeover of property by people who are going to make a lot of money simply by charging for it and not doing much to the property.

I promised you some graphs using that particular map that divides Britain into those 12 areas. So the point of this was that we define the areas, now 13 years ago, so its objective – we didn’t fix it. And you see population change of course has been concentrated in London, particularly Central London, huge increase in population change then. The archipelago centre, that rise, that is universities – that is Sheffield, that is Manchester, that is Liverpool. That is why there is little increase but it is dwarfed by what happened in London.

And some little bit of politics over what I think is happening. I think we are seeing a change in Britain which is deliberate. It is a change to a particular 1980 fantasy. And the 1980s fantasy is that a few people are very able, most people are not able. If you strive and work hard, you should be allowed to own your house but if you don’t you should have to pay a rent. And if you can’t afford to live in somewhere like London you should get out and those who work very hard should be well rewarded.

It was a fantasy I was familiar with as a teenager in the 1980s. I didn’t come to hold this fantasy but I knew people who did and these were teenagers who loved the Thatcher Government in the 1980s. And it is as if that group of teenagers have been waiting a very long time and have finally got to enact policies that they think are good. One thing – this isn’t what you now see in Oxford that Estate Agents put up after they sell a house, in most cases to a landlord. The majority of buyers are now landlords.

One thing I learnt recently, this was actually in the Treasury at that meeting. And I kicked myself for not realising it. Somebody said to me, “Don’t you realise that it is good if house prices are high because it’s a sign of success.” And this is part of the problem about us living in separate siloes. The thinking goes like this, the successful part of the city, the part you may have grown up in or the little dormitory village you grew up in was very expensive. It was very expensive because it is where the good people lived who strived and worked hard and deserved their money. And the fact that you grew up in an expensive area is a sign that you and your parents are good people. And the higher the house prices in that area go the better.

And internationally, the city that is winning internationally is the most expensive city. It shows that economically it is doing well. So house prices rising in London are a good thing and the market will sort everything out. But we might need some intervention so the kind of intervention we will have, it is the biggest spending of every budget since 2010 which is Help to Buy, massive underwriting of property just to make sure the market does the right thing and the prices keep on rising in London because that is a good thing.

And the latest increase, if you are London-based, and somehow you can scrape together 5% of a mortgage and you can find a flat in Hoxteth for less than 600,000, it might even have 2 bedrooms if you are lucky. We, that is the people in the UK, will lend you 40% of its value as a Government mortgage. I told this to an audience in Scotland, fairly left-wing audience in Scotland - fairly old, fairly middle-class. None of them knew that they were lending money to people in London to buy houses. But it makes sense to have this policy if you think it is good to have very expensive house prices in places like Oxford and London.

And I think I have certainly failed to realise, it is not a conspiracy, I just find it hard to get my head into that way of thinking that says, “This is okay.” And I think we need to do more of that. I have shown you a whole load of pictures of different things, many of which appear not to be connected but they all are connected. When you see the same patterns happening again and again – who can work in what job? What qualifications people have? Whether there is increases or decreases in segregation, the whole lot is connected.

My favourite comment isn’t the Lennon quote it is George Mombier’s wonderful article about the importance of Whale poo in the oceans. And why if we kill all the whales, we are in trouble.

So what to do? I don’t think it helps to get that bitter but it is quite hard not to be bitter at some of the things that you see. I think it is good to try to understand what has gone on and to understand where those people are coming from who think it is okay if you have a falling life expectancy because that is simply accelerating the deaths of people who might otherwise cost you quite a lot in your Healthcare system. I think you have to not condemn them but help them understand that most of them will grow old and when they are old, the last 10 years of their life, no matter how wealthy they are will not be particularly enjoyable if the country carries on moving in the way it is.

So that is talking about being kind to the rich and the affluent in their own self-interest. Please quiz me about things you don’t agree with or things you agree with and thank you very much for your attention.

(Applause 0:39:28 – 0:39:42)

Facilitator: Okay thanks. Thanks Danny for an inspiring if troubling presentation. We will take questions now. If people could wait until they are handed a microphone and I will take questions. Up here.

Female: Hi, I am Heather Kennedy from Sheffield. I thought that was great, especially great with the numbers and graphs. I was interested in your comment about people becoming more \_\_\_[0:40:26]. I don’t know if that was speculation, if there is any research about that, any evidence, any numbers about that?

Danny Dorling: Okay. I will do that one quickly. Yes, there is some, I am obsessed by numbers. The OECD do a survey of people’s ability at numeracy, problem solving and literacy at age 15 and age 16 to 24 across countries. If you look at the richest 25 countries, we and the United States are pretty bad at age 15/16 but what is fascinating – I wish I had brought the graph – if you look at up to age 24 and our ability on a basic maths test, we are right at the bottom of the US. So we are teaching maths in a way that gets a child to get an A rather than B at GCSE or a C rather than a D but not to learn maths.

However, having said that, there is other evidence from Flynn that shows that each generation of people over a whole generation is becoming remarkably more numerate and logical. So in the long-term, we are becoming better and better at visual thinking and worse at doing things like knowing how to plant a potato, they see it as some game. So the long-term it is a good message about our ability. In the short term, we have become very, very bad and we are the worst at maths in the whole of Europe particularly by age 24. Because of an obsession about passing a test on a particular day. And a lack of understanding by Michael Gove about what education is. It is not about getting a high test result on a particular day which is what Michael Gove was good at.

Male: Thank you, \_\_\_[0:42:29] just to follow on from that I wonder if you could extend the point about being good at maths to being able to analyse an argument. On the radio recently there was someone interviewed about the changes to Buy-to-let arrangements and this \_\_\_[0:42:50] Buy-to-let person but also quite a few journalists said that… It wasn’t Buy-to-let but inner city areas have been rejuvenated. That that was the causal effect account which she was presenting. And I have spoken to radio \_\_\_[0:43:11] but I don’t \_\_\_ that. But I was surprised that the interviewer didn’t pick her up on that.

But it is not just about the amounts it is also about interpretation and relevant arguments and so on. And so I suppose I am interested in your thoughts about how we might improve not just the numeracy but also that broader literacy around understanding the sorts of things that \_\_\_[0:43:39] try to do when they are addressing issues around the thing.

Danny Dorling: Yes, thanks for that. It is a tricky question. It depends where you are coming from. I have done some work with Medics and epidemiologists who have a particular view about causation which is you really do need to know, think you know what is going on. And you need a dose response relationship. You need to give the medicine in increasing doses with nobody knowing that is what you are doing, so fairly unethically and watch the result actually rise and be sure.

But working with them you can see the way you go through other possibilities. And so you could far better say that the increase in flats in inner cities has been due to immigration. And if it wasn’t for immigration we would have never built these flats because we would of never had the increased pressure on our housing stock. We would have been like Germany until Germany’s recent good fortunate to get a million highly skilled middle class people and their children in.

Germany was demolishing property after property and shrinking cities. If we hadn’t had an increase in population that is what would have been happening to the middle of Bradford, the middle of Leeds, the middle of Sheffield. And that is what was happening up until around about 1995. In the 1990 15% of the entire housing stock of Glasgow was demolished, a sixth of a city in just a decade.

Buy-to-let landlords just alter who finances the building and just how shoddy the Geri built flats are. And it is well worth looking at them, they are not well built these flats in the middle of our cities. They are built to maximise short-term profit.

Male: Sam Smith from \_\_\_[0:45:42] University \_\_\_. I was interested in your electoral geography graph and startled by the finding that you are less likely than ever to meet somebody in your \_\_\_. You said that a lot of people in Scotland in the last election \_\_\_. Now how much of that could be explained by tactical voting? And how different would those perhaps look if you look at lifetime \_\_\_[0:46:09] voting? Or elections with a different electoral system? For example, have you tried calculating the European elections, the proportion?

Danny Dorling: These are all good ideas. Norman Tebbitt complained that I hadn’t calculated it for the Labour Party. Tactical voting should certainly increase it a bit but it shouldn’t carry on and on increasing it. And tactical voting only really came in when the Liberals and the SNP started well after 1993.

The lifetime is interesting. Whether we are seeing Conservative voters migrate to economically successful areas or become Conservative when they arrive there. I think you get assimilation occurring. So, if you take Oxford East, Oxford East looks like a Durham pit village politically. It is 50% Labour Vote, it has risen in the last two elections while all around the Conservative vote rises.

So to fit in socially in Oxford East it helps if you vote Labour. And Oxford East is fairly posh. The tactical voting is that people don’t vote Green in general elections in Oxford East, despite the fact they vote Green in local elections. But I should look more.

We have a ridiculous voting system. Just 25% of the electorate secured a Conservative majority. Labour keep quiet because in 2005 they secured the majority with just 20% of the electorate. The only country I found in the world that is worse is Colombia where the President once got in on 18%. Even in the US, you need a higher proportion. So it is truly, truly odd. There is a hope that Labour will put PR into their manifesto, the Shadow Chancellor has promised it, it is possible. And that is what it takes is for one of the main parties to actually want it and put it in a manifesto.

Female: Thanks very much Danny. Louise Ryan from Middlesex University. It is when you were talking about the fact that they were destroying housing a few years back in 1990, it reminded me that in London in the 1990s they were closing down schools. And there were lots of schools that were closed down because they didn’t have enough children for the school. And now, of course, they don’t have enough schools for the children in London.

And I am wondering, it is something that has often puzzled me, to what extent politicians are just fundamentally shortsighted, that they get stuck in the moment that they can’t… To use that horrible hackneyed phrase, a lack of joined up thinking. And I was very struck by your story about the civil servants when they were actually shooting themselves in the foot actually as you described, whether they were renters themselves.

I am wondering to what extent is it a deliberate ideology? Are they actually doing this on purpose?

Danny Dorling: Yes.

Female: Or are they in some ways just so naïve and very shortsighted because of people like David Cameron. Their lives are so different from the rest of ours that they genuinely cannot see the long-term consequences. So, to what extent do you think it is deliberate or is it just their work view?

Danny Dorling: My view is that the majority of it is their, well, view. I think that there are a very small number of individuals at the top of politics who might be dangerous. And actually take pleasure in people suffering. But I think it is a tiny number.

I think, generally, most politicians including on the right want to be remember for having done good and there is an ethos, a very strong belief in the Conservative Party that planning is bad. So just before, a year before the 2011 Census, the Cabinet Office tried to cancel it and then found, luckily they couldn’t because the cost of cancelling it would have been greater than the cost of carrying on with it. But they don’t want numbers collected because it only encourages people like me to suggest that you can plan.

And the danger is as soon as you have that, you get Socialism. So Harold Wilson loved the Census, he funded the biggest one ever in 1971. They believe that planning stifles creativity, so one argument for the Census is we need a Census to tell us where to build new schools. The Census could easily be cancelled in 2019 if there is no Census Act. The current policy on schools is you should only get a new school if you can get together with your friends and neighbours and start one yourself.

When every school, as in Oxfordshire, becomes an Academy, every secondary is an Academy. The Local Authority no longer has the ability to plan schools. And in areas of population change this has the biggest effect; but they honestly and sincerely believe that we would get a better world with less planning. They really do. And also believe that – what I am calling schools, are charity. This is education for those who are not clever enough to work hard enough to get enough money to buy a decent education. This is charity education for the 93% and it is different. And you wouldn’t send your own child there unless you had to for the political purposes in which case you would find a State school that looked rather like a private school.

The irony of this – I don’t want to be pessimistic – the incredible irony is schools from which only 2% of children went to university when I was child are now sending 50% to university. These are bog standard comprehensives. The majority of young women, the majority of girls in England are going to university. There is no longer a middle class thing. London, of course, has seen the biggest improvement in GCSEs and that is mostly down to immigration, a little bit of London Challenge money, a bit of the teachers but mainly there is nothing better than getting the children of immigrants into an area to improve the schools.

So there is just a lot, a lot of naivety. David Cameron’s letter to the Head of Oxfordshire County Council, the one his mother and his aunt criticised, shows just a simple lack of understanding. Which is why I think you have got to be kind. He doesn’t want to come over as stupid. He has divested himself of almost all of his shares and then finds… He can’t do anything right. But it is not his fault.

Facilitator: He doesn’t want to be pitied in school.

Danny Dorling: Well not pitied but understanding how. And we will be making… I will be saying things, some things, that will be stupid. Particularly, like, here because I am amongst friends so I am not being challenged. And what you really need is to be challenged on your core beliefs and for people to point out things you hadn’t thought of.

To get to your question on causation and how you test things. The best way is arguing with people who don’t believe you think the cause is and that really, really helps.

Female: Thanks you very much. I wanted to ask a question about young people. My impression is that there are statistics that show that the young are really doing worse at the moment. And just from my own children who have all been to university and had a middleclass background, the erosion of employment rights is really shocking. So I can’t imagine what it must be like for the people who haven’t had those advantages from being fired on the day and if you are teaching assistant you are expected to work two weeks without pay in a hotel. Or even if you work for a charity, you know, having to go without sick pay and holiday pay.

So I wondered what..? And I think you have published something so I am surprised it wasn’t mentioned.

Danny Dorling: I have published on the mental health of the young which is getting worse. But I have been surprised not to find other evidence of things getting worse. So, we haven’t had… Well we haven’t had a big rise in drug use, particularly heroin use amongst the young again. We have had a rise in heroin use amongst people in their 30s and 40s and deaths but not amongst the young. And that is what we got in the ‘80s.

We haven’t had a big rise in youth suicides. One thing that has happened is that parents are now protecting their young far more than they used to. They are keeping them in the house, letting them stay, not kicking them out which used to happen. Half a million young people are given £10 a day or the equivalent by their parents so they don’t have to sign on, so they are not on JSA. And they can put on their CV that they are doing their own internet start-up or something.

But we are becoming more European in how we treat our young. I think part of what the Government is doing is almost moving the age of childhood up to 25, the age of majority. Now until you are 25 you are not treated as an adult when it comes to minimum income and so on. And obviously, that is insulting. On the other hand, we are having another change. So, I am confused about the young. When I am confused I try and keep quiet – so I should do – about things.

I don’t know why there hasn’t been more trouble. I don’t know why there haven’t been more riots. I do wonder whether young people – remember we have got our first 3 years’ worth of people paying full fees now. By 2020 we will have 8 years’ worth of student with these massive debts – average is 56,000. I do wonder whether collectively this group have begun to work out that they actually are all in it together and eventually when they don’t buy our houses and when they don’t do what we want as we get frail and old, they are going to win. They have got time on their side.

A few of them may become rich but not very many. The bulk of young people who are going to be very lowly paid, are going to have massive debts, are going to be paying rent in theory for the rest of their lives, will not be able to start a family in their 30s. You can’t – I have never seen a case where you have managed to push that for that long. But I am – yes, I am confused but I am… And no riots, no riots is really interesting. Unless we have had really successful application of D Notices where people have tried to start riots and they are not reported – an incredible lack of riots since 2011 compared to the past.

Female: Just seems a rather depressing, if that is the only indicator. Thank you.

Female: With the segregation you talked about what are the opportunities for engaging with kindness, with \_\_\_[0:58:14] that are behind those gates and who get \_\_\_ etc. Where are the opportunities for the kindness?

Danny Dorling: Well people do meet; they often meet in strange circumstances. So somebody who cleans their house will come from a different background to them and so on. It is whether you condemn or whether you are kind and say, “This isn’t good.” But in a way that doesn’t condemn.

If you condemn the shutters go down. The, “I’m a hardworking person. My dad worked really hard for that, you’ll just squander it.” All of that comes up. If you are more calm about it then the instant hostility to in effect saying, “Really it would be a good idea if you didn’t have all the money.” It doesn’t rise so quickly. And the other reason for advocating kindness is that the far right find kindness almost impossible because they lack empathy. And they can’t do it. They believe a kind world would be a terrible world it would be economically bad. We need people to be selfish; we need them to be greedy. We need them to be tough. We need to chuck people out of houses that they can’t afford to live in. We need to make them go and live in Stoke and Liverpool. We need to have children drowning in the Mediterranean with our gunships there to teach a lesson. They can’t do kindness which is another good reason for doing kindess.

Female: Hi Danny, Daniela Sand from the University of \_\_\_[1:00:06]. I am a big fan who always officiated at \_\_\_ Scotland. You mentioned Scotland a couple of times in your presentation and the issue of unemployment was a big part of the \_\_\_[1:00:18] we had in Scotland, the ramifications of independence.

Just now \_\_\_ election and despite the fact that it was an issue that has been an issue for the last decade and so on since the SMPS more or less \_\_\_ they haven’t managed to address it tactfully \_\_\_[1:00:37].

Just a general comment, what do you think it would take to [Crosstalk]..?

Danny Dorling: In Scotland?

Female: Not just in Scotland, really overall, I just mentioned Scotland because it has been obvious issue as it is just at the forefront of the agenda, political agenda [Crosstalk 1:00:54]. If that could be put in a different way \_\_\_. So, what would it take \_\_\_..? When will people have enough [Crosstalk] UK in their politics?

Danny Dorling: In a little way, Scotland is getting some hits. So educational inequalities is falling. Access to university is actually widening in Scotland quietly and not in England and Wales. What it has taken in the past has tended to be an economic shock so countries losing wars – Japan and Germany became very equal. The most likely way to become more equal is an economic shock. But we are at a peak. We are the most unequal rich country – well no we are the most unequal country in Europe including the poor countries in Europe. And we are set in 10 years to become the most unequal country in the OECD.

And when you are the most unequal there is only one way to go. So small things might change. But I happen to think the most likely thing is an economic shock and in the aftermath of a shock you can’t take another £80bn off the poorest because there just isn’t there, you will have to do a Land Tax, a Wealth Tax; things will become necessary no matter who is in power. But you can’t predict what the shock will be.

I can give you lots. In Scotland – if 5.5% of people had said yes rather than no, that would have been enough of a shock. The pound would have crashed the next day. That came very close. The Referendum on the 23rd, I would love people to vote to stay in but if people vote to stay out that is the economic shock. Or, somebody leaking the tax affairs of rich people and suddenly buying property in London as a way to hide your assets doesn’t work anymore. So just watch house prices in 4 weeks and 8 weeks’ time. And they might say it is end of some of the tax benefits to buy-to-let landlords but I suspect no longer being able to hide your money in London with anonymity could be it.

Facilitator: We have got time for just maybe two very, very quick questions. One up here and one down there.

Female: Thank you. Mandy Grease, Kilmarnock University. I have also got a question about kindness because it seems like the problems and patterns you were describing almost \_\_\_[1:03:33].

Danny Dorling: Could you repeat that sorry.

Female: It seems like the problems and patterns that you were describing are mostly articulated in \_\_\_ and economic terms. But you are conclusion \_\_\_ interpersonal even emotional responses. So I kind of wanted to ask about what you think about the relationship between those two realms relating to social change? Because I think the imperative to be calm and be kind sometimes falls on the relatively powerless. And can you contribute to \_\_\_[1:04:09] in this way?

Danny Dorling: I don’t think when I write and talk, I am hardly ever talking to the relatively powerless. So that is partly why I… If it was in the relatively powerless I would burgle, which is what people did in the 1980s and I can’t understand why people are not burgling.

So I always think I am talking to people who are fairly powerful and saying it might be better rather than to condemn outright to say, “You too will have quite a bad life even though you’ve got enough money. Your children will be segregated in the way they are not segregated in any other European country. You will be forced to live in an area of town that you think is safe.”

Just explaining what is bad about this for the pretty affluent I think would be helpful rather than saying, “You’re a bunch of immoral people who are just killing people.” Which you could make that case for but they are not generally choosing to do this.

But in Scotland, you know, you have got to ask, how can deaths rise 8.5% in one year in Scotland and nobody say anything about it? And it really, really wasn’t the flu. We have got numerous Lab reports now about the flu.

Facilitator: Okay, one final very quick question.

Female: Okay. So you had multi culturalism in your title and one of your first graphs was about the increasingly diverse population \_\_\_[1:05:43] about offshore wealth, the messages of Empire but your story was very bounded in terms of geography within this island mentality.

Are there ways in which we need to think about these stories in a broader framed – the legacies of Empire, connections to other places, the trends national and global which is the demon of discomforts?

Danny Dorling: Thank you. And you helped me a lot because this is what I forgot to say in the talk. One thing I think is going on and that is why I put multicultural in the title is I think we are in the last stages of coping with the fact that we no longer have an Empire. And we are in the final stage of adjusting to that.

And there is a group of people who hate the fact we no longer have an Empire and what Britain to be great again. And think if we just leave the European Union, that is what has been holding us back and also these horrible planners have been holding us back. And if we let our top cornflakes rise to the top with nothing to control them, to stop them we will become the richest place on the planet again. It is the last dying kick of Empire that we are seeing.

And if you see things like that it is possible to be far more optimistic than you might otherwise be. I will give you one last stat just to end with, which makes me optimistic. The riches place on the planet before us, the place with the largest mini Empire was the United Provinces, in what is now The Netherlands. Amsterdam was the richest city before London. House prices in real terms on that posh street with the canal in Amsterdam peaked in 1675 and then they fell for 300 years.

And that makes me glad.

(Applause 1:07:39 – 1:07:44)

[Silence 1:07:44 – 1:07:58]

END AUDIO

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