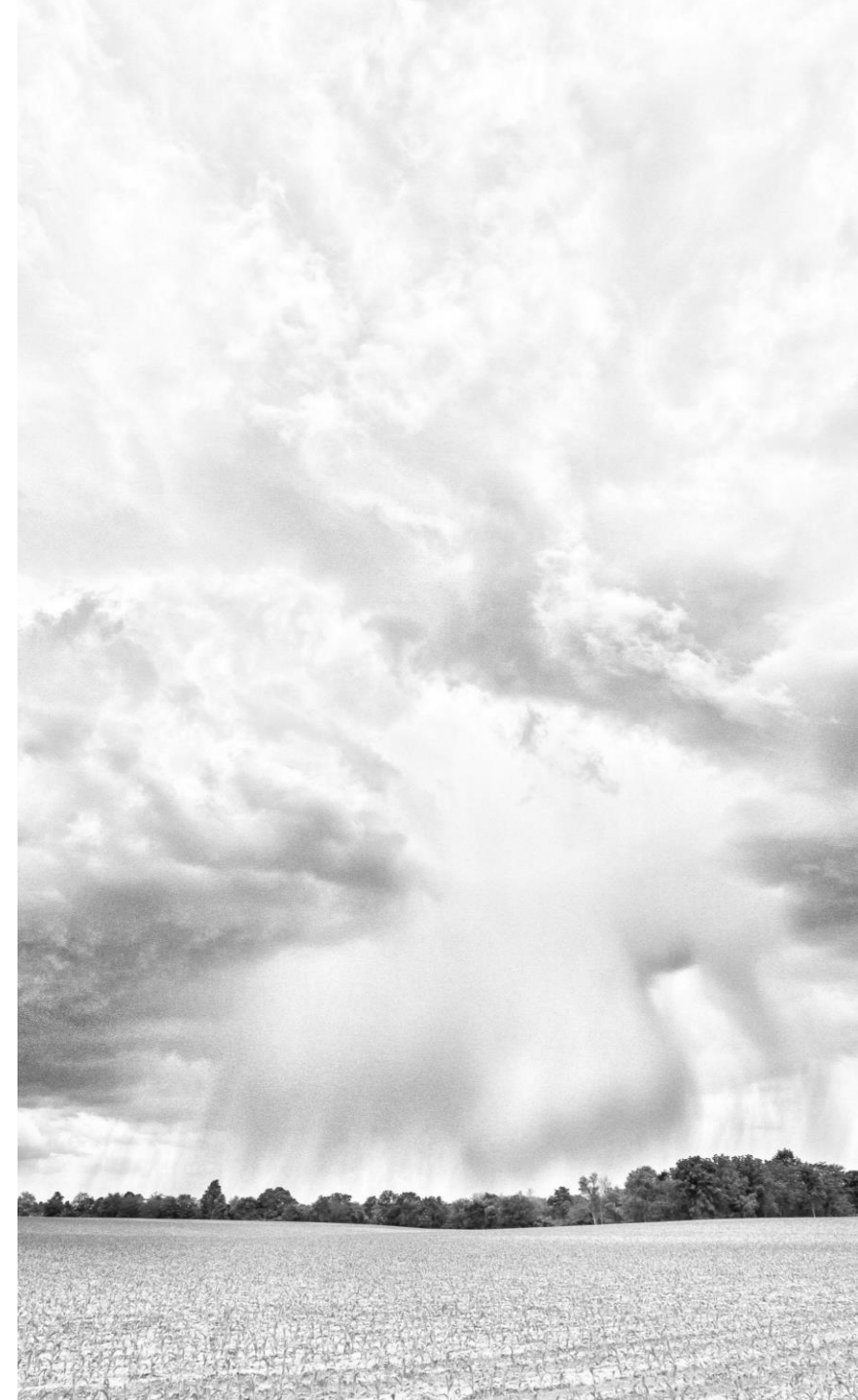# UKDS Data about environmental attitudes and behaviour

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DRTN webinar - 5 October 2023

Plan of the presentation

1. About the UK Data Service
2. Data about the environment
3. Examples

1. The UK Data Service

What is the UK Data Service?

- Who are we?
  - Main repository of UK secondary social science data
  - A provider of support, training and guidance
  - Freely accessible, funded by the ESRC

- Who are we for?
  - Academic researchers and students
  - Government analysts
  - Charities and the voluntary sector
  - Business consultants
  - Independent research centres & think tanks

Data curated by the UKDS

- Main UK repository of secondary social science data
- UK surveys:
  - Large-scale cross-sectional government surveys
  - Major longitudinal surveys (ie following individuals over time)
- Multinational survey data and aggregate databanks
- Census data – modern and historical
- Business and administrative microdata
- Range of multimedia qualitative data sources

User support and training

- Provision of support and training
- Helpdesk for data-related queries
- Webinars and online workshops: datasets, methods and software focused
- Online learning materials: data skills modules, guides
- 'Traditional' survey-related and new forms of data ie computational social science.
- Supporting data literacy among undergraduate students

2. Social science data about the environment

Multiple approaches to environmental issues

- Substantive aspects of the environmental crisis:
  - Carbon emissions/energy use
  - Biodiversity loss
  - Pollution / resources depletion
  - Resilience and adaptation
- Levels of analysis
  - Individuals / households
  - Geographical aggregate: region, country, continent
- Kind of data
  - Attitudes and social representations, narratives
  - Behavioural
  - Organisational behaviour

Social representations and attitudinal data

- People's views, attitudes and representations about aspects of the crisis and levels of support for policies
- Common in quantitative surveys, either:
  - Fully dedicated surveys about environmental issues (rare)
  - Modules or single questions in non-dedicated surveys
- Where to find them:
  - British Social Attitudes Survey
  - Understanding Society
  - People and Nature Survey for England (PaNS)
  - Also: European Social Survey, World Value Survey

Behavioural data

- Reported > direct observation of people's behaviour
- Behaviour is a broad term, applies to many areas of research:
  - Political participation and voting
    - BSA and the British Election Study
  - Consumption: Living Costs and Food Survey (LCFS)
  - Commuting and travel
    - National Travel Survey, the Census
  - Interaction with the natural environment
    - People and Nature Survey for England
  - Energy use, CO2 emissions: OECD and IEA datasets

Qualitative and deposited research data

- No qualitative data equivalent to the major quantitative studies but…

- ESRC requirement that grant holders have todeposit their data with UKDS

- A growing treasure trove of qualitative (and quantitative) research data on sustainability and the environment

- Accessible via ReShare on the UKDS website, most freely accessible, sometimes authorisation of the PI is required

How to find and access data from the UKDS

- Data catalogue, either via
  - The search tool
  - Browse data pages (themes, data type, Teaching data)
- Variable and Question Bank (updated version available soon)
- Qualibank
- HASSET Thesaurus

Searching the catalogue

Searching the catalogue

Data quality: essential questions to ask yourself

- What was the phrasing of the question (quantitative data)
- What was the research question/who funded the research?
- Is it representative, is the sample size large enough, what is the population of reference?
- How recent is it?
- Is a special application required in order to access the variable you are interested in?

Data Access Policy

Controlled data
- Accessed via a Safe Room, SecureLab within the UK or the [SafePod Network](#)

Safeguarded data
- End user licence (requires registration) and special licence (requires a form)

ReShare data
- Access controls set by the data owner and can vary

Open data
- Can be used by all without registering

How to register

- Logging in via OpenAthens or Shibboleth
  - UK Universities
  - Some further education colleges
  - Some UK Government departments
  - Local authorities
- UK Data Archive username
  - International researchers
  - Charities
  - Think tanks
  - Schools
  - Personal researchers
  - Commercial organisations

3. Examples

Attitudinal data (1) : the British Social Attitudes Survey
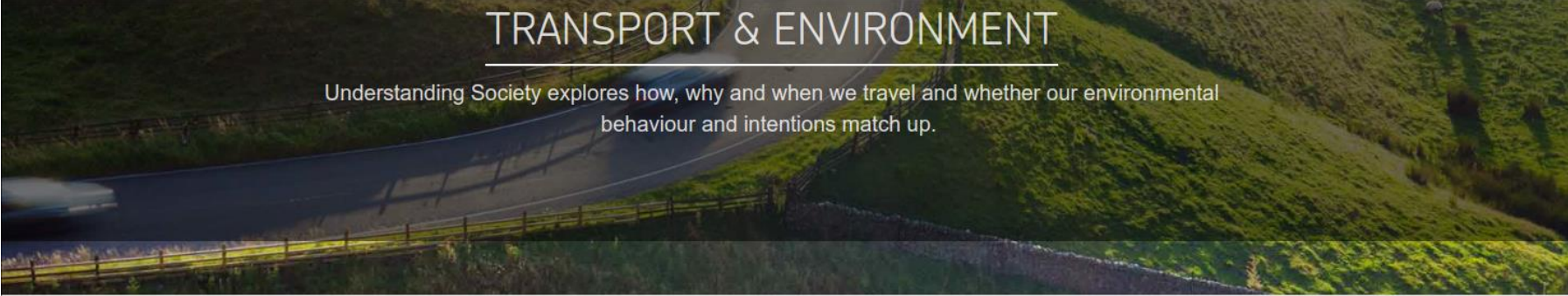
- Well established: since 1983, measures continuity and change in attitudes to social issues through repeated cross-sectional surveys
- First point of call for research on attitudes in the UK
- Representative of the UK population of adults 18 and over,
- Increasingly, also questions about the environment
- Allows for cross-sectional and repeateed cross-sectional analysis
- 2017 Environment and politics teaching dataset:
  - created from the original dataset
  - Reduced number of variables focusing on attitudes towards the environment
  - Simplified documentation
  - Open data
  - n=3,988
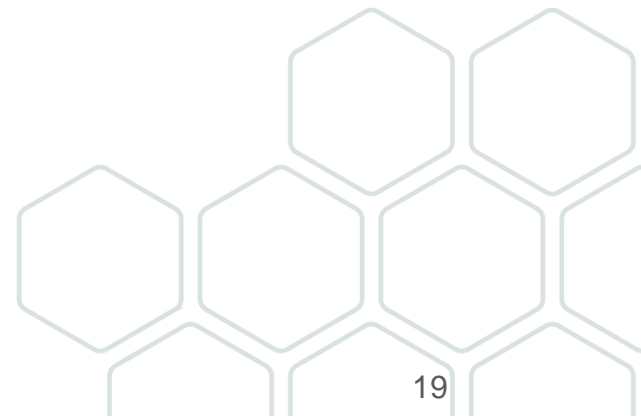
Attitudinal data (2): Understanding Society

- Understanding Society also known as UKLHS

- Allows for cross sectional and longitudinal (ie within person) analysis of change

- Major longitudinal study, data about a multitude of topics, in existence for 30+ years

- [Dedicated website with data exploration facility](): includes a section on environmental issues

- Documentation and datasets available from the UK Data Service website.

Data about the environment in USoc

Data about the environment in USoc

Data about the environment in USoc

People and Nature Survey for England (PaNS)

- One of the few surveys specifically dedicated to the environment
- Commissioned by Natural England - no data for Scotland, Wales or NI
- Cross-sectional, quota sampling from an online panel (not random sampling)
- 34 monthly collections: April 2020 - December 2022
- Themes
  - Attitudes about the natural environment
  - Interaction with the natural environment
  - Attitudes and behaviour towards protecting the environment

Environmental behaviour-related data in PaNS

- Module 4
- Comprehensive set of questions:
  - Attitude to nature
  - … To the climate crisis
- Individual and collective behaviour
- Consumption
- Political engagement

Q55 (M4_Q14) Thinking about how you live your life, with the following?

I try to reduce…

DYNAMIC GRID STATEMENTS. SINGLE CODE.

- a) how often I consume meat and/or dairy
- b) energy use
- c) water waste
- d) the amount of things I buy in general

RESPONSE CODES
Please select one answer only

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. Not applicable

Example: contact with green spaces by income
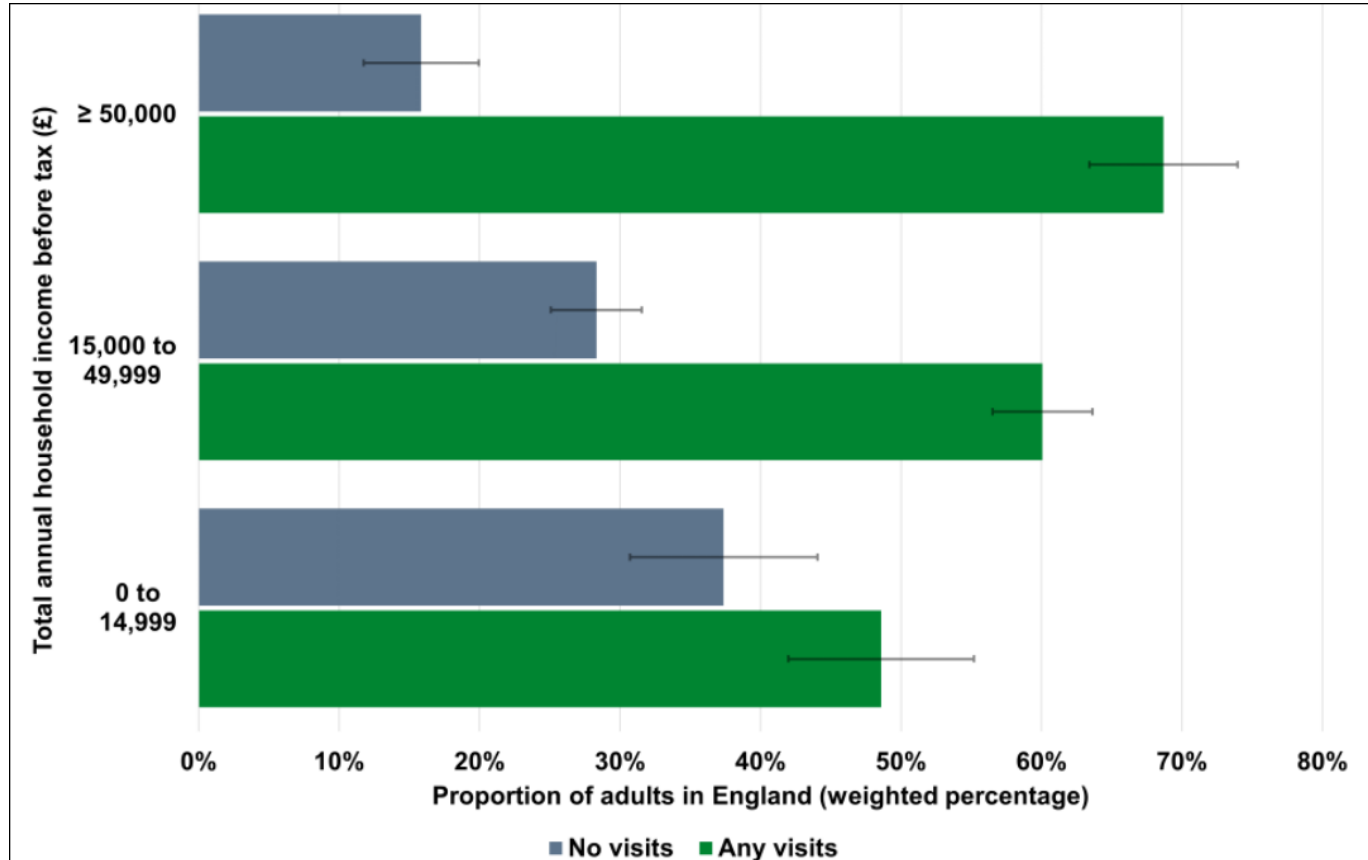
Figure notes

Source:
Q6 / No_Of_Visits: How many times, if at all, did you make this type of visit to green and natural spaces in the last 14 days?

26

Commuting behaviour in the Census

International Energy Agency data - 1

International Energy Agency data - 2

What else is there?

- UK Time Use Surveys 2000 and 2014/15
  - Detailed travel behaviour (duration, mode, reason)
  - Detailed leisure behaviour
  - Remote working patterns

- ReShare repository of deposited data from ESRC-funded research projects
- Significant number of sustainability and environment-related data:

Making Climate Social: Tweets Related to "Climate Change: The Facts", 2019

Details		Access data

Details

Title:	Making Climate Social: Tweets Related to "Climate Change: The Facts", 2019
Study number (SN):	855229
Access:	These data are safeguarded
Persistent Identifier:	10.5255/UKDA-SN-855229
Data creator(s):	Pearce, W,

Sponsors and contributors

Topics

Media, communications and language
Science and technology
Society and culture

Thank you for your attention

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