



Professor Ignazio Cabras

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## The Academy of Social Sciences welcomes Northumbria Professor to its Fellowship

An economics expert from Northumbria University, whose research has highlighted the important links between community cohesion and regional development, has been elected to the Fellowship of the Academy of Social Sciences.

[Professor Ignazio Cabras](#) is one of 63 leading social scientists who have today been elected after demonstrating excellence in their fields and their substantial contributions to social science for public benefit. Selection takes

place via independent peer review which recognises the impact of their research.

As Professor of Regional Economic Development in Northumbria's [Newcastle Business School](#), Professor Cabras's research has directly increased the level of public understanding regarding the importance of pubs as anchors for rural communities and their value in terms of social cohesion and economic development. As debates over the number of pub closures continue, several influential groups have engaged with this research, including charities such as the Institute for Alcohol Studies, organisations operating in the hospitality sector such as the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), and the Society for Independent brewers (SIBA), as well as national and international media outlets.

This engagement raised public awareness on the importance of pubs in rural areas and strengthened the case for policymakers who used the findings of the study to support community action. The issue has been raised in the House of Commons which saw tax freezes and an 18 per cent decrease in beer duty between 2017 and 2021, while [the research findings](#) were also raised in the House of Lords.

Policy change enacted in the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, which altered the planning permission stipulations regarding the demolition of a drinking establishment, was also supported by Professor Cabras's research. This change means planning permission is now required for any demolition or change of use of a pub – not only those in listed buildings, a conservation area, or registered as an asset of community value (ACV). This change empowers communities to raise objections to proposals to repurpose pubs, increasing the likelihood that they can save their local pub from closure.

The extensive reach of his research has led Professor Cabras to deliver speeches at events organised by the [Royal Society of Medicine](#), [Royal Society of Statistics](#) and the [Regional Studies Association](#) (RSA) – where he is also a trustee, treasurer and Chair of the RSA North East branch.

As an economic geographer, Professor Cabras is the Academic Data Lead for [Insights North East](#), a collaboration between Newcastle and Northumbria Universities, the NHS and regional local authorities which aims to harness investment in research and knowledge for the long-term benefit of the North-East region. He is also a Visiting Professor at the EU\*Asia Institute's

prestigious ESSCA Ecole de Management in France.

Professor Cabras is an expert consultant for a number of research and innovation funding programmes, including for the European Commission, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), the British Academy, the Paris Region Fellowship Programme and the Latvian National Research Programme.

Speaking of being selected for the Academy of Social Sciences Fellowship, Professor Cabras said: “I am honoured and humbled by this Fellowship, as it validates and reward the impact of my research. And generating impact is a very complex, long-time process, completely unrelated with someone’s title, role, or position in any academic institution or educational organisation. Impact defines the contribution of scientists and academics in informing policies and shaping societies, making changes that sooner or later, in some form or way, will affect all of us. I am sincerely grateful to the Academy for welcoming me among a very selected group of impactful researchers, and I wish to express my gratitude to all colleagues at Northumbria and across my network who helped me to develop my research work over the years.”

[The Academy’s Fellowship](#) comprises 1,700 leading social scientists from across the world who work in academia, the public, private and third sectors. Professor Cabras now joins this international community and is the ninth Northumbria academic to be elected to the Fellowship in the last two years.

Speaking about the new cohort of Fellows announced today, President of the [Academy of Social Sciences](#), Will Hutton FAcSS, said: “It’s a pleasure to welcome these 63 leading social scientists to the Academy’s Fellowship. Their research and practical applications have made substantial contributions to social science and wider society in a range of areas from international trade policy and inclusive planning systems through to innovative entrepreneurship and governing digital technologies. We look forward to working with them to promote further the vital role the social sciences play in all areas of our lives.”

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

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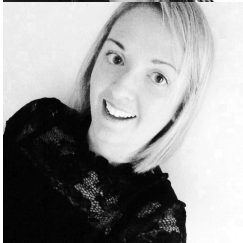


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