

# PolicyWorld

AUTUMN 2011



NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIAL POLICY ASSOCIATION

**"THE PRIME MINISTER WAS QUICK TO POINT TO OUR 'BROKEN SOCIETY' WITH ITS SINGLE PARENTS, SCHOOLS WITHOUT DISCIPLINE, REWARD WITHOUT EFFORT, CRIME WITHOUT PUNISHMENT, RIGHTS WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNITIES WITHOUT CONTROL AS CAUSES OF CIVIL UNREST. YET THERE IS MUCH RESEARCH WHICH PROVIDES A MORE SOPHISTICATED UNDERSTANDING OF THESE ISSUES."**



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The Social Policy Association (SPA) is a professional association open for membership to academics and practitioners working in social

policy, and to others with an interest in UK and international social policy. The Association hosts an annual conference and funds smaller seminar events, as well as producing journals and other publications. In addition, the Association's Executive Committee represents the interests of the membership in communication with other professional and academic bodies. The annual SPA awards – presented at the conference – include a lifetime achievement award and best newcomer award. There is also a thriving SPA postgraduate network which holds with regular events and participates in the annual conference. More information is available at [www.social-policy.org.uk](http://www.social-policy.org.uk).

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## PolicyWorld

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# EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Autumn 2011 issue of *Policy World*, publication of which marks the election of new members to the Executive Committee, accompanied by the recalibration of priorities and an expanding workload.

As ever, we cover the latest developments for both the Association and the field, with a report on the SPA 2011 conference, an account of the development of the research and information function in Israel's Knesset, and an appraisal of the worrying gap between the rich and poor in the UK.

Elsewhere, the SPA's new President Sue Duncan makes the case for rising to the imperfect challenge of demonstrating 'research impact'.

In the next issue of *Policy World* – due for publication in the January/February 2012 - we'll be looking at other interpretations of and views upon research impact, so please do get in touch with any ideas or experience you may wish to share.

Chris Blunkell, Editor

## CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION CAROLINE GLENDINNING



Welcome to the first issue of *Policy World* for the academic year 2011/12 – and to news of new people and new activities.

First, a warm welcome to our new President, Sue Duncan. You can read more about Sue on p.14 of this issue. We are looking forward to working with Sue and drawing on her expertise, particularly in relation to raising our profile with and impact on policy makers. Secondly, I would like to welcome several new members to the SPA Executive Committee. As we highlighted at this year's AGM, the workload of the Executive Committee continues to expand. As we all contribute on a voluntary basis, we have expanded the size of the Committee to accommodate the growing demands on our time and energies. New to the Executive this year are Anne Brunton (University of Buckinghamshire), who is our new Shadow Treasurer; Nick Ellison (University of Leeds), who will shadow me as Chair for a year before taking over next July; Ann Marie Gray (University of Ulster); John Hudson (co-opted as

*"We will be examining how we can develop dialogues between policy makers and researchers in government and voluntary sectors, and social policy academics and researchers."*

lead organiser of the 2012 SPA conference); Stefan Kühner (University of York); Ingela Naumann (University of Edinburgh); Nicki Senior, co-opted

to take over responsibility for the website and email lists; and Lorenza Antonucci (University of Bristol) and Sarah Brooks-Wilson (University of York), who are sharing the role of Postgraduate Representative. Welcome too to Nicola Moran who has rejoined the Executive Committee after her maternity leave. We are particularly pleased to have representatives from Scotland and Northern Ireland on the Executive once more, to help prevent us becoming too England-centric.

### Priorities

We have identified two main priorities for this year. First, the SPA's role in supporting teaching and learning in social policy. SWAP, the subject centre for teaching and learning in social work, closes this year. Over the years, SPA has benefitted from very close collaboration with SWAP, first through Jackie Rafferty and latterly with the help of Rebecca Johnson. One of SWAP's last activities has been to fund an SPA survey of UK HE institutions, to find out where social policy courses are currently taught and to identify the key issues facing teaching and learning in social policy.

There are very few single departments of social policy now - at undergraduate level social policy is likely to form part of many different courses ranging from applied social studies, criminology and public policy, to vocational courses like nursing. And current patterns look set to change too, as courses and departments are restructured in response to future changes in funding and demand. The survey will provide a sound evidential basis for future SPA activities. We will also be meeting with the new Discipline Lead for Social Work and Social Policy at the Higher Education Academy with a view to continuing some of the fruitful collaboration we enjoyed with SWAP and producing resource and other material to support practice in social policy teaching and learning.

More broadly, we will be ensuring the SPA participates in national debates

*"We are particularly pleased to have representatives from Scotland and Northern Ireland on the Executive once more, to help prevent us becoming too England-centric."*

on structural issues affecting social policy teachers and students. For example, one issue that has been raised by the British Academy and Royal

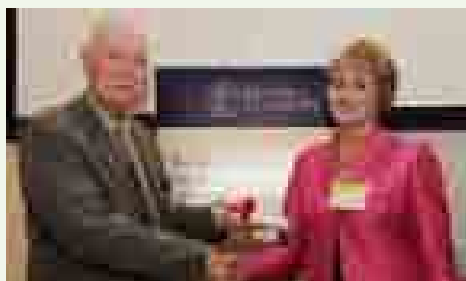
Statistical Society is the level of quantitative and statistical training received by social science undergraduates, and the SPA will be represented at a meeting to discuss this.

Secondly, we want to enhance our public and policy profiles. We intend to take a broad approach to this and both increase the profile of the SPA as an organisation as well as opening up new opportunities for members' research to reach public and policy audiences. We will be examining how we can develop dialogues between policy makers and researchers in government and the voluntary sectors, and social policy academics and researchers. Several people have commented recently, for example, on how few non-academics attend our annual conference now, in contrast to a decade or more ago. Should we try and encourage more policy makers, voluntary organisations and pressure groups to join SPA, taking advantage of the special 'organisational' membership rate? Developing the SPA website (as suggested at this year's AGM) and ensuring we maximise opportunities for media coverage will also be high on our agenda. As part of this, we will be looking at the use of new social media and how we can exploit this, again both for the benefit of the SPA as a whole and for members to promote their work and ideas. In the first instance, we have registered as a partner to socialsciencespace ([www.socialsciencespace.com](http://www.socialsciencespace.com)), which is a resource for social scientists and other relevant organisations. This will allow us to post press releases, blogs and other comment pieces.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone whose terms of office on the SPA Executive came to an end this year – Nick Timmins (President); Alan Deacon, Adam Whitworth and Rachel Dobson. All have given an enormous amount of time and energy to the SPA and we will miss their valuable contributions.

**Caroline Glendinning**  
SPA Chair

## BRISTOL-OU COLLABORATION WINS PETER TOWNSEND PRIZE



Randall Smith receives the Award from Peter Townsend's widow Baroness (Jean) Corston

A book co-authored by Randall Smith, Professor of Social Gerontology in the School for Policy Studies at Bristol University, and colleagues Julia Johnson and Sheena Rolph from The Open University, has won the inaugural Peter Townsend Policy Press Prize.

The book, *Residential Care Transformed: Revisiting 'The Last Refuge'*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in June 2010, and is based on an ESRC-funded research project led by Julia Johnson. It highlights continuities and changes that have taken place in the care home industry since the late 1950s. The book follows on from Peter Townsend's *The Last Refuge*, a seminal study of residential care for older people in England and Wales that exposed care homes as a poorly resourced final port of call that should be scrapped and replaced with better domiciliary support for older people or sheltered housing-style schemes.

Peter had agreed to write a foreword to the new book, but died in 2009 before the text had been completed. The Peter Townsend Policy Press Prize, supported by the British Academy and The Policy Press, has been established to honour his memory.

The £2,000 prize is awarded by the Academy every two years for outstanding work with policy relevance and academic merit in one of the fields to which Peter made a major contribution – poverty and inequality, ageing and the lives of older people, disability or inequalities in health.

Professor Smith said: "It was very pleasing for us to be nominated for this new award, let alone win the prize. It is a great privilege to hold an award in the name of a very illustrious UK social scientist, who was also a supportive colleague at the University of Bristol. He is much missed."

The British Academy judging panel said of the book: "This study gives us a unique insight into the changing nature of institutional care over half a century. It is methodologically innovative, using older volunteers to help in the research, but it is reflective and self-critical about the limits of its approach - a model for students in the subject. It is beautifully written with moving accounts of the quality of the last years of individuals' lives. It could not be more relevant to policy in an ageing society."

The award was presented on 6 October at a ceremony including the Academy's other annual prizewinners.

## RICHARD TITMUSS



SPA Immediate Past President Nick Timmins has invited help from members with a biography of Richard Titmuss – commissioned by the LSE. He explained: "I would be immensely grateful for any anecdotes, insights, assessments, criticism or praise of the subject - particularly material that brings him alive and captures the disputes and tensions of his times - as well as for any advice on already existing material, academic or otherwise, that I should read." Nick would also be grateful for any offers from those who knew Titmuss well to be interviewed. All such contributions will be fully acknowledged. He can be contacted at [nick.timmins@ft.com](mailto:nick.timmins@ft.com).

## ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES WELCOMES LORDS RECOMMENDATION FOR APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF SOCIAL SCIENTIST

The recommendation by the House of Lords Science and Technology Subcommittee's report *Behaviour Change*, published in July 2011, to appoint an independent Chief Social Scientist has been welcomed by the Academy of Social Sciences – the representative body for social scientists in the UK.

When the previous holder of the post, Professor Paul Wiles, retired in 2010, the role was downgraded and shared

between two people, who each had other responsibilities to fulfil. The Academy voiced its concerns about the reduction in status of the post and the consequent loss of the ability of social scientists to influence government at the most senior level. The Academy of Social Sciences made a submission to the House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee in April calling for the post of Chief Social Scientist to be reinstated and said the same to the House of Commons

Science and Technology Committee secretariat.

Professor Cary Cooper, Chair of Council of the Academy of Social Sciences, said: "Most of the social and health problems we are facing cannot be solved by physical science alone. We need behaviour change and a Chief Social Scientist at the heart of government. We strongly support the House of Lords recommendations today for this important role."

# THE NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S REFLECTIONS ON THE NATIONAL DEBATE ON MEASURING NATIONAL WELL-BEING

25 JULY 2011

CHURCH HOUSE, WESTMINSTER

by Liz Such

Current debate about measures of well-being has great significance for social policy researchers both in the UK and globally. It reflects a growing and, it seems, concerted effort to examine what matters to society beyond – but including – economic prosperity. It reflects contemporary anxieties about the instability of global markets, the sustainability of economic growth and the impact of negative externalities on people and places. With nations such as France and Australia leading the way and with OECD and EU-level engagement, the UK has been exploring the possibility of developing new measures of 'how the nation is doing'.

It is perhaps a difficult time to promote the slogan 'There is more to life than GDP' but the Prime Minister has used this line in his push for including well-being in policy making and policy evaluation. He commissioned the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to develop measures of wellbeing in November 2010. They set about conducting an extensive national public consultation on "What matters to you?" The aim of the consultation was to help define the slippery concept of well-being. It elicited 34,000 responses.

This large response denotes real public engagement in the topic. Surveying the list of contributing organisations also reveals interest in policy circles: the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) all submitted formal responses to the consultation.

The launch event of the National Statistician's report, chaired by the by the head of the civil service, Sir Gus O'Donnell, attracted a substantial number of 'big hitters' in the well-being research and policy arena. It began with a presentation of the headline themes from the consultation. These were the importance of the following factors to well-being:

- Health
- Good connections with friends and family
- Job satisfaction and economic security
- Present and future conditions of the environment
- Education and training. (ONS, 2011, p.6)

In addition, consistent themes emerged on the importance of balancing time spent at work and at home, participation in cultural or creative activities, time spent outdoors, the availability of green spaces and the quality and extensiveness of public services. According to the consultation, it was apparent that a large section of respondents thought that national well-being could be improved by enhancing fairness and equality in society. It is these themes that will be pursued by the ONS in the coming months as they generate standardised survey questions for national measurement. National subjective well-being data will, however, be available from 2012 with the publication of results from four questions on life satisfaction and happiness included in the Integrated Household Survey this year.

Discussion drew out several important issues with policy implications. Foremost was the claim by the head of the civil

service that well-being indicators were required to inform policy design and to assess policy impact. The policy maker's bible, the Green Book, is being revised to account for the well-being implications of policy and HM Treasury/DWP are actively engaged in devising new valuation methods to evaluate the costs/benefits of policy beyond the usual economic measures (Fujiwara and Campbell, 2011). This development may be more pressing now that targets, including Public Service Agreement targets, are being drawn back or decentralised. There was a sense of a void in policy making and evaluation that measures of well-being could partially fill. Undoubtedly, the complexities of measuring well-being combined with the problem of establishing causality are barriers to this aspiration.

The debate goes on: the ONS intend to devise, test and consult well-being measures as part of an iterative process. It presents social policy analysts with the opportunity to establish how they might make use and ask questions of well-being data. It also enables researchers to identify their requirements and be part of the picture of well-being in social policy as it unfolds.

A full copy of the report and supplementary papers is available at: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/article.asp?ID=2718>

## References:

- Fujiwara, D. and Campbell, R. (2011) Valuation Techniques for Social Cost-Benefit Analysis: Stated Preference, Revealed Preference and Subjective Well-Being Approaches, HM Treasury/DWP. [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/green\\_book\\_valuationtechniques\\_250711.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/green_book_valuationtechniques_250711.pdf) (last accessed 27.7.11)
- ONS (2011) Measuring What Matters. National Statistician's Reflections on the National Debate on Measuring National Well-being, ONS.

## NEW MAGENTA BOOK

A completely revised edition of HM Treasury's Magenta Book has been published in order to improve and embed evaluation across government. It explains how evaluations should be designed and managed to provide high quality evidence, and why thinking about evaluation before and during the policy design phase

can help to improve the quality of evaluation results without needing to hinder the policy process.

For more information visit <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/magentabook> or email [gsr-web@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:gsr-web@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk).

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Social Issues, Policy and Practice series

Series Editor: Saul Becker, University of Nottingham



## Understanding 'race' and ethnicity:

Theory, history, policy, practice

Edited by **Gary Craig**, University of Durham, **Karl Atkin**, University of York, **Sangeeta Chattoo**, University of York, and **Ronny Flynn**, independent consultant

*"...a much needed and engaging examination of questions of equity and citizenship in health and social welfare."* **Yasmin Gunaratnam, Goldsmiths, University of London**

This much-needed textbook combines historical and theoretical approaches to the issue of 'race' and ethnicity within welfare provision, including an examination of how minorities experience welfare in a range of service settings.

**PB** £22.99 **ISBN** 978 184742 770 0 • **HB** £65.00 **ISBN** 978 184742 771 7 • 304 pages tbc • February 2012  
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## Understanding disability policy

**Alan Roulstone**, Northumbria University and **Simon Prideaux**, University of Leeds

In an era of scarce social resources the question of the changing social policy constructions and responses to disabled people has become increasingly important. *Understanding disability policy* explores the roles of social security, social support, poverty, socio-economic status, community safety, official discourses and spatial change in shaping disabled people's opportunities.

**PB** £21.99 **ISBN** 978 184742 738 0 • **HB** £65.00 **ISBN** 978 184742 739 7 • 256 pages tbc • January 2012  
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## Understanding the environment and social policy

Edited by **Tony Fitzpatrick**, University of Nottingham

*"Tony Fitzpatrick has assembled a very thoughtful collection of chapters which examine the various ways in which social and environmental concerns intersect with one another."* **Andrew Jordan, University of East Anglia**

This textbook explores the key social, political, economic and moral challenges that environmental problems pose for social policy in a global context.

**PB** £21.99 **ISBN** 978 184742 379 5 • **HB** £65.00 **ISBN** 978 184742 380 1 • 384 pages • February 2011  
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# SPA PARTNERS SOCIALSCIENCESPACE

The SPA has been confirmed as a partner to 'socialsciencespace' – an on-line discussion network run by the publisher Sage which, as the name

suggests, is a resource for social scientists and their representative organisations.



Established in January 2011 alongside the Campaign for Social Science at the House of

Lords, socialsciencespace carries themed discussion fora, blogs, resources and news and is partnered by 50 organisations – many of them high profile. The site has also attracted 1,800 individual members.

Mithu Lucraft of Sage explained: "Socialsciencespace facilitates conversations between members and partners online to widen access to those discussions globally, and to raise visibility of these debates by making them discoverable and accessible.

"Contributors are those with a passion for their subject and the desire to communicate the challenges and opportunities they face. They write on topics beyond discipline-level concerns, on issues that unite all social scientists whether they be funding, impact, or ethics."

For more information, or to sign up as an individual member, visit [www.socialsciencespace.com](http://www.socialsciencespace.com).

## SPA IN THE NEWS

A recent SPA media announcement that Sue Duncan had been appointed President of the Association was picked up by the Times Higher Education Supplement, Research magazine, socialsciencespace, market research industry websites and the University of Bath website. Sue was subsequently invited to write a feature on the 70th anniversary of the Government Social Survey for Research magazine.

# HEFCE CONSULTATION ON REF 2014

HEFCE has published the draft assessment criteria and working methods for the main panels and sub-panels for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF), for consultation. The SPA's response has focused on three issues:

We have endorsed the need to ensure that appropriate expertise is available to assess research on race and ethnicity. We have urged Panel C (of which social policy and social work is a sub-panel) to consider the appointment of one or more additional suitably qualified assessors to judge the quality and impact of 'race' and ethnicity-related research. This is an area where research user expertise could helpfully be employed across more than one sub-panel. We have also called for assessments of the 'originality' of research to take into account research into issues and groups that have hitherto largely been excluded from research interests; and for units of assessments' accounts of their research strategies to contain specific, concrete evidence of how they promote equality and diversity among staff and research students.

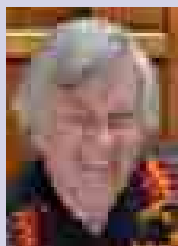
Along with other learned societies, we have expressed concern at the proposal to allow the submission of less than four outputs only if 14 or more months of maternity (or paternity or adoption) leave has been taken during the REF cycle. This is far too stringent. The average period of maternity leave is only six to nine months, but nevertheless often leads to a significant reduction in productivity without necessarily falling into the discretionary category of 'complex circumstances'. We have argued for a reduction of one submitted output for each period of maternity leave (of whatever duration) taken during the REF cycle. A significant period of bereavement should also be specifically included as a 'complex circumstance' that justifies a reduction in the number of submitted outputs.

Earlier HEFCE guidance on submissions set out the arrangements for double-weighted outputs, including allowing units of assessment to add a 'reserve' output in case a sub-panel does not accept an argument for double-weighting. However, apparently Panel C does not intend to allow a 'reserve' output in case a proposed double-weighting is not allowed. In such cases, this would mean the item would be treated as a single submission and the 'missing' output graded as 'unclassified'. This is likely to be of particular relevance to Panel C submissions, including social policy, where large reports and books will form a bigger proportion of outputs than in, say, science and engineering subjects. We have therefore argued that the option of nominating a 'reserve' output, in cases where arguments for double weighting are being made, is available for all Panel C sub-panels.

**Caroline Glendinning**  
SPA Chair

## 'Race' and the REF panel for social work and social policy

In an open letter to the REF sub-panel for social work and social policy chair Peter Taylor-Gooby, Gary Craig argues for the panel's inclusion of ethnic minority researchers. In reply, Peter echoes the importance of taking 'race' and ethnicity seriously but counters that, rather than being representative, the sub-panel must be sufficiently expert to assess academic merit of the material that comes to it.



Dear Peter,

I am writing about the composition of the REF panel for social work and social policy which I have just seen. I am thinking in particular of the issue of 'race' and ethnicity. Of the panel members, only one lists 'race' as amongst their major research interests and of course much of that research is confined to the Scottish context where the minority ethnic population is much smaller and has different characteristics to some degree than in England; two other sub-panel members mention the issue in their profiles but in a very very marginal manner.

The competence of the panel individually and as a whole is not here in question but that their primary (or even secondary) concern with 'race' issues clearly is in terms of their own research profiles. The SPA mentioned in its recent newsletter that it was concerned to ensure a gender balance on the panel. Is this not also an issue for the dimension of 'race' and ethnicity? The coming census will demonstrate that the UK population has at least a 14% ethnic minority population (roughly one in seven) and of course that proportion will be much larger in the urban centres (in some cases exceeding 50%) where most social policy, social work and health studies research is undertaken. At the same time, the government claims that multiculturalism is dead, John Denham says it is "time to move on from 'race'", and Trevor Phillips grows increasingly hostile on the issue whilst seemingly marginalising 'race' in the deliberations of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. The book I am completing with colleagues in the Understanding Social Welfare series for Policy Press, demonstrates not only that the 'race agenda is not dead but that in every division of welfare, racism is alive and very well indeed.

In this context, it seems to me appropriate that the panel should have included at least two or possibly even three minority ethnic researchers - of whom there are an increasing number - or at the very least two or three researchers for whom 'race' is a central feature of their work. This is something I have argued with HEFCE for, now, four RAEs and yet nothing changes. The professional associations which nominated must presumably take some of the responsibility at least (and I don't know how the final mix was reached) but presumably also HEFCE has the final say having taken a strategic view. I don't know what influence you are able to bring to bear at that stage. You will know that I complained bitterly at the 2006 SPA Nottingham conference about the disinterest or even hostility within the social policy profession to thinking about 'race' and ethnicity in a speech which was then rewritten for the JSP and published in 2007. Social policy, of all professional academic disciplines, should be taking this issue seriously but yet again it appears to be marginalised and I know what kind of implicit message this announces to the academic world and particularly to minority researchers and those working in this area. It says yet again that 'race' does not matter and the marginalisation of 'race' will have continued, with the collusion of the professional associations. This is not a matter of quotas but of ensuring that the dimension of 'race' is dealt with appropriately.

I hope it is not too late to redress this situation: I know that a late intervention secured the services of a health services researcher onto the panel so I imagine it is still possible to think again in this area.

Gary Craig



Dear Gary and Everyone,

Thanks for raising this important question. I'm not convinced the characterisation of the expertise of sub-panel members in the letter is accurate, as we discussed in our previous correspondence, but will focus on the main issue, the fact that the sub-panel does not currently include black minority ethnic members.

The sub-panel is intended to include sufficient expertise to assess the range of material that comes to it competently, and also to include members who will command the respect of the academic community, so that the outcomes are generally accepted. It is not intended to be representative in any sense. If members saw themselves as representing particular interests we might end up bargaining about the grading of outputs from those interests, rather than assessing them on their academic merits. All sub-panel members would certainly agree strongly with you that 'race' and ethnicity are issues that should be taken seriously in the REF.

We do need to be confident that we cover the diversity of the social work and social policy (and criminology) communities and of the other groups likely to submit work to us, to command their respect for our judgements. We cover a very large area, so this raises issues. Membership has been constrained by the fact that members are drawn from those nominated by learned societies, and in practice from the sub-set of those who feel able to take on the task when approached. We will have an opportunity to recruit further members after the Survey of Submission Intentions in December 2012 and this is when we can decide how to address this issue.

I would urge all those responding to the survey to be as clear as possible about the areas in which they are likely to submit material. In RAE2008 the survey question was vaguely worded, so that responses varied from simple reference to a discipline such as social policy to the name of a particular research centre. Responses that list the topics which will need to be assessed, including material on minorities, will be extremely helpful, because then we can make a well-founded case for new members in areas which are not at present covered.

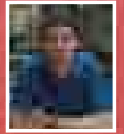
I hope that is helpful and look forward to comments from others in the next issue.

Best wishes, Peter

# CONFERENCE REPORT

## LINCOLN 2011

By  
Hugh  
Bochel



Following on from the successful conference held in Lincoln in July 2010, it was pleasing that in 2011 interest in the conference remained high with over 230 delegates and around 170 papers given across eight parallel sessions in seven time slots. Although the conference theme - 'Bigger Societies, Smaller Governments' - reflected much of the debate around social policy in the UK since the 2010 general election, and in particular the concerns of the Coalition Government at Westminster, the conference again saw a large number of delegates and presentations from around the world, with the continued growth in the involvement of overseas delegates being a very welcome development. The inclusion of SPA membership in the full conference price meant that a further 35 members were signed up through the conference. The relatively recent innovation of symposium sessions, which allow both focus and flexibility to participants, proved popular in 2010, and 2011 saw a further increase in the number of such sessions.

The programme for the 2011 conference was exceptionally full. In addition to the three plenary sessions, the paper sessions, and the SPA AGM, there were other major sessions including a debate between the Conservative MP Jesse Norman and the Labour MP Roberta Blackman-Woods on the idea of the 'Big Society', a session on the REF and a session led by the new Chief Executive of the ESRC. There was also a launch for a book inspired by the work of Peter Townsend - *Fighting poverty, inequality and injustice*, published by The Policy Press.

### Plenaries

In the first plenary, Jan Pahl, of the University of Kent, focused on 'Tax Policy, Social Policy and the "Big Society"'. She argued that there is a strong case for social policy analysts paying greater attention to taxation policy and systems for raising taxes, and that it would be possible to construct an alternative discourse which would see tax as the money that we pay to buy the goods and services that we collectively want. She ended her presentation with a series of questions, including: "What might be the characteristics of a fair and efficient tax system?", and "What should the principles be behind reforms in our national tax system?".

The second plenary speaker was Sarah Cook of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. Her topic was 'Combating poverty in the global south: the role of social policy', and she pointed out that structural changes in the economies of less developed countries have disrupted social policies and that this needs to be managed. The historical lessons from the developed countries are that those which have tackled poverty rapidly did so through universal social policies – broadly integrated into other areas such as economic development and social cohesion – and that interventions targeted only at the poorest have little effect. Reflecting on developments over the past 30 years, she noted that it is unfortunate that as the need for a broader agenda is being recognised in

less developed countries so developing countries are moving to fiscal constraints, and that social policies in developing countries are now often in conflict with those which are required in less developed countries. She also suggested that, increasingly, social policies will not be solely national issues but will become more international - for example, being affected by and concerned with the global economy, climate change and security.



**Karl Wilding, Pete Alcock and Ruchir Shah discuss the government's approach to the Big Society.**

For the final plenary session there was a panel of Pete Alcock of the University of Birmingham, Karl Wilding of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, and Ruchir Shah of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. Pete Alcock discussed the government's approach to the Big Society, analysing both the reasons for the emphasis and the policies and mechanisms by which it is seeking to develop it. Karl Wilding reflected thoughtfully on the impact that the Coalition government and its policies have had on the voluntary sector, while Ruchir Shah considered the rather different position in Scotland - including the impact of devolution - raising the prospect of greater diversity of policies and approaches to the third sector across the constituent elements of the UK.

### Unusual

As well as the plenary and paper sessions there were a number of other interesting

and informative sessions. In an unusual session for the SPA it was interesting to hear two MPs providing their views on the idea of the Big Society. Jesse Norman approached the idea very much from a philosophical perspective (perhaps unsurprisingly given his previous incarnation as a philosophy academic), thereby enabling himself to criticise both the position of the government and the Labour Party. Roberta Blackman-Woods, Shadow Minister for Civil Society and formerly an active SPA member, provided a considered critique of the ideas that have emerged from the Coalition Government. There was also a session by Paul Boyle, the new chief executive of the ESRC, who set out that body's latest thinking on research funding and responded to a number of questions from the audience. In addition, there was a discussion on the REF, considering both the latest positions from HEFCE and lessons from the impact pilots - led by Peter Taylor-Gooby of the University of Kent with contributions from Kirsten Rummery from the University of Stirling and Caroline Glendinning from the University of York. This provided an update on the latest position and enabled a range of views to be aired from the floor.

### Innovations

A new feature of the 2010 conference had been the integration of postgraduate activities into the programme, and this was retained for 2011. It again proved to be a successful development and undoubtedly contributed to encouraging nearly 60 postgraduates to attend the conference. As a result, there were specific paper sessions and symposia organised by postgraduates, while a number also chose to present their research as part of the traditional paper sessions. Certainly, the level of postgraduate participation in the conference has been high over the past two years, and it is to be hoped that this will be maintained in the future.

Another innovation from 2010 was the decision to place the conference papers on the SPA's website, rather than those of the host institution. However, in 2011 this proved to be rather less successful than the previous year, largely because many

more delegates either did not provide the conference organisers with full papers, or asked for them to be withheld from the website for a variety of reasons. This is likely to be something that the SPA and future conference organisers will wish to reflect upon.

Whilst the University of Lincoln itself is relatively youthful, some of the conference venues reflected Lincoln's past. A reception sponsored by Cambridge University Press celebrated 40 years of publishing the *Journal of Social Policy* and 10 years of publishing *Social Policy and Society* – together with cakes designed as covers of each of the journals! This was followed by the Annual Dinner and SPA Awards were held in the Engine Shed (literally,

a restored Victorian era railway engine shed), with Nick Timmins giving, as ever, a great performance for his final speech as SPA President, and then presenting the Awards. On the second evening of the conference delegates were able to attend a reception, sponsored by the publishers, in The Collection - a striking contemporary building that acts as a museum with exhibits from Lincoln's history from the Stone Age, through the Romans and the Normans, to the medieval period. The reception also saw the award of the *Social Policy & Administration* prize for the best article by an early-career researcher to Karen Nielsen, from Bredihal, Aalborg University.

As in 2010, one of the most remarked about features of the conference was

the student helpers, who were again widely praised for their enthusiasm and helpfulness. Life for delegates was also aided by the compact nature of the University of Lincoln's Brayford Pool campus, with accommodation and conference sessions on the same site, and the proximity of the city centre and the railway station which helped to minimise travelling time between venues.

Having previously hosted the conference in 1997 and 1998, the return to Lincoln for 2010 and 2011 was welcome. In 2012 the conference moves to the University of York where, in another new development, it will be held as a joint event with the East Asian Social Policy Network.

# LEWIS, DUFFY AND WHITFIELD RECOGNISED WITH SPA AWARDS

Jane Lewis (Chair in Social Policy at the LSE), Simon Duffy (Director of the Centre for Welfare Reform) and Dexter Whitfield (Director of the European Services Strategy Unit at the University of Adelaide) were named as winners of the 2011 SPA Annual Awards – presented by outgoing President Nick Timmins at the Association's July Annual Conference at the University of Lincoln.

## Lifetime Achievement

The Lifetime Achievement Award – granted to Jane Lewis - is given to Association members the judges feel have made persistent contributions to research and organisation, have an international reputation, have contributed to professional bodies and associations, have made an impact on political process or discourse, and have been recognised in both academic and non-academic circles.

Jane's award marked her work as an eminent social policy academic, and particularly her development of the subject in the voluntary sector, European social policy, family policy, care, childcare and gender. Her ground-breaking article 'Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes', has been credited with transforming the analysis of welfare regimes. On receiving her award she told delegates: "I care deeply about social policy as a subject within our universities. The rationale for social policy departments rests in large measure on the capacity of its academic staff to look across different research areas, which are becoming ever more specialised... the situation we find ourselves in demands ever more imaginative and brave researchers who are prepared to try to put the pieces together."

## Outstanding Contribution from a Non-Academic

Awards for Outstanding Contribution from a Non-Academic - granted to Simon Duffy and Dexter Whitfield – are made to individuals or organisations adjudged to have made significant and lasting contributions to the field of social policy - either through campaigning, lobbying, service provision, fundraising, journalism, funding of research, dissemination of research or other non-academic means.

Simon's award recognises his contribution to the creation of personal budgets and their introduction in the contexts of adult social care, health care and children's services; and his recent work as lead coordinator of the 2011 Campaign for a Fair Society which opposes the Coalition Government's cuts in funding for disabled people. He commented: "It is a great honour to get this recognition from the SPA. Individual budgets are one important tool for reform of the current welfare state. It is vital that we rebuild the welfare system so that the disabled people, the poor, women and families get fairer treatment and opportunities for citizenship. It is exciting that the academic community has been open to explore some of these new approaches."

Dexter's award celebrates his work in campaigning, research and advocacy for fairer UK state services over 40 years and, in particular, his defence of welfare services against privatisation and marketisation. Accepting the award, he commented: "I have always believed in the importance of a methodology that combines action research, strategy development, alternative policies and trade union and community organising. The recent research and exposure of PFI equity profits and the offshoring of the ownership of schools and hospitals to tax havens is a good example of this approach. The need for this four-part methodology is greater than ever given the economic and financial crisis and the planned transformation of public services and the welfare state."

Presenting the awards, Nick Timmins described the UK Coalition Government's social policy reforms – pursued, he observed, whilst public spending is being slashed and the running costs of the civil service reduced by a third – as perhaps the most radical and ambitious we have seen since the Attlee government. He questioned whether all the policies being developed were deliverable, and pointed to various policy U-turns in telling delegates "There is plenty of evidence this year that academic engagement can improve things – that the worst can always be mitigated, and the best strengthened. In my view, you are to be congratulated for that." Nick described his time as President as "a real pleasure" and, handing over to Sue Duncan, thanked the Association for having him.

# SOCIAL POLICY POSTGRADUATES UPDATE AND OPPORTUNITIES



SPA Postgraduate Representatives Sarah Brooks-Wilson and Lorenza Antonucci

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves as the newly elected SPA Postgraduate Representatives. While introducing some of our ideas, we would also like to invite your comments and feedback in order to refine our strategic focus. An update of the most recent postgraduate discussion will also be provided for those who could not attend the conference in Lincoln.

## SPA conference 2011

Thanks to the efforts of Rachel Dobson - the outgoing Postgraduate Representative - postgraduate attendance and participation at Lincoln reached record levels this year. In addition to the poster presentations, postgraduates presented papers in many sessions, promoting discussions within a wide range of policy areas. The added possibility of presenting a paper in either the main or postgraduate stream provided further participatory

flexibility. We would like therefore like to share the sentiments of the postgraduate community and Executive Committee in expressing our gratitude towards Rachel and the conference organisers for these opportunities. The tireless support of the University of Lincoln postgraduates is also kindly acknowledged.

## Opportunities for experience

As incoming representatives we had the chance to meet with postgraduates at the conference. Tina Haux chaired a postgraduate discussion group where a variety of topics were covered, thus directing the priority areas for follow up action. The transition into the labour market was found to be of great concern, with opportunities for additional support in this area being welcomed. In particular it was felt that the opportunity to meet and even work for those in posts or organisations of interest would be highly

valued. The capacity to secure publications was also a central concern with the SPA support again considered as crucial. As no nominations were received in connection with the last two years' Best Postgraduate Conference Paper award, a subsequent review of the qualifying criteria has been welcomed. Subsequently, those wanting to be considered for future awards will need to present their paper at the conference, having submitted a full copy by the specified deadline. We will shortly be in contact with those eligible for the next award, based on the postgraduate papers that were presented in July at Lincoln.

In terms of scope, those present at the meeting reflected a wide range of nationalities. This underlined the importance of reinforcing existing international connections such as those with ESPAnet (Europe) and EASP (East Asia). In this respect the next conference - being held jointly in York with the East Asian Social Policy research network - was perceived as an excellent opportunity for increased cohesion between the social policy postgraduate community at a domestic and global level.

## Promoting active postgraduate participation

This initial postgraduate conference consultation was highly valuable, and presented an important initial opportunity. However, the inclusion of only a few social policy postgraduates has made it a priority to extend this dialogue further. Subsequently, we will be extending active communication opportunities to Facebook and Twitter - where contributions and commentaries relevant to social policy and individual

research may be posted, as well as news relating to SPA activities (postgraduate events, SPA Annual Conference and other special offers for SPA members). It is anticipated that social networking could increase the possibility of meeting others, while improving the opportunities to attend such events, gain experiences and secure publications. However, your participation would be critical for the success of such a tool so we urge you to enhance its value through your participation. Moreover, we are planning to both organise and encourage postgraduate events so welcome further discussion about topics and subjects of interest.

## Get in touch

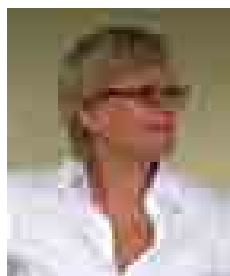
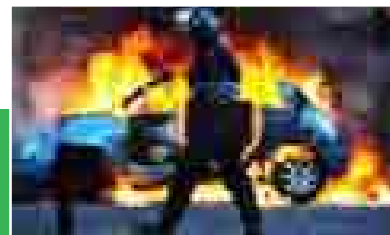
We are planning to build the opportunities for postgraduates to participate further at the joint SPA/EASP conference in York on July 16-18th next year - we hope you will be able to attend and look forward to meeting you there. In the meantime, we will be meeting with the SPA Executive Committee in early January and would welcome your valuable input onto the postgraduate agenda. Please contact us by the end of December if you wish to discuss anything for inclusion at: [spa.postgraduates@gmail.com](mailto:spa.postgraduates@gmail.com). You can join the SPA postgraduate mailing list at: [www.social-policy.org.uk/maillinglists.html](http://www.social-policy.org.uk/maillinglists.html).

To keep in touch with the latest postgraduate opportunities, 'like' the SPA Postgraduate Facebook fan page or follow '@spapostgrads' on Twitter. All the best for this Autumn term!

Lorenza and Sarah  
SPA Postgraduate Representatives

# EAT YOUR GREENS:

## WHY DOESN'T SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH HAVE MORE IMPACT?



By SPA President Sue Duncan

Mention 'research impact' to an academic and you are guaranteed a reaction - the 'I' word seems to trigger feelings of frustration, despair or resignation.

Yet surely, asking researchers to demonstrate the

value of their work is a no-brainer, akin to telling kids to eat cabbage. We all know it makes sense, but it's often not the bit we like best and we sometimes wish we didn't have to. But, when research funding is being cut across the board, why wouldn't you want to demonstrate how valuable research is?

There are two obvious reasons for resistance. First, making an impact is difficult - it cannot be left to the end of a project and has to be 'designed in' at the outset. There are all sorts of ways of doing this, ranging from more traditional methods of involving users in research advisory groups, to more inclusive methods of 'co-production', where users have a more active role in the research process. Whichever method you choose it takes time and effort, and some of the current frustrations are fuelled by being asked to demonstrate impact after (or half way through) the event. Secondly, because the relationship between research and action is complex, iterative and often long-term, it is often hard to actually demonstrate impact. To date, none of the efforts to measure it have truly captured the complexity of the process, so the tools are not yet fully fit for purpose.

Research will always struggle to have impact if there is a lack of common understanding between users and researchers. Put simply, researchers will not maximise impact unless they understand users, and funders will not measure it effectively unless the tools of measurement take account of the complexity of the process. For potential beneficiaries, using research is no simple matter and those who seek to have impact need to understand why. There is no substitute for face-to-face engagement, and though better insight into what users want (and how they think and work) will not make the relationship easy, it may at least open up some paths into the jungle. The research-user relationship is inherently difficult and the world of policy making provides a good context in which to examine it. All users are different, but there are some common threads.

In the world of social policy, government often seems to be uncomfortable with social research, while the academic literature on 'research utilisation' expends more effort on observing the diversionary tactics employed by politicians and policy makers - to minimise or delay the impact of research - than it does on identifying solutions. So what are some of the things that make the research-policy relationship difficult?

### Information overload

The much cited quote from John Maynard Keynes, about how information makes decision making more complicated and difficult, well reflects the problems<sup>1</sup>. Within government, the bold assertions of joined-up and evidence-based solutions which characterised New Labour seem to have been partially eclipsed by scepticism about the value of research and emphasis on intuition in policy decision making. One Minister judged some of the surveys run by his department to be "... a cosmetic exercise which never change anything..."<sup>2</sup> while the Prime Minister has observed that politics is "... about what you feel in your gut..."<sup>3</sup>. In truth, all governments have to weigh different sources of evidence

against manifesto commitments. New Labour did not 'invent' evidence-based policy making, any more than Coalition politicians are unique in sometimes weighing political values more strongly than facts. Insights for policy come from many sources - research, professional experience, political dogma and public opinion all play their part. Though 'use of evidence and analysis' is a core skill for all civil servants, there is no blueprint for weighing the different sources of evidence or judging how they play in a political context. This is a complex and difficult business, so it is not surprising that research can sometime feel like a problem rather than part of the solution.

### Inconvenient truths

Research can be problematic because it tells it like it is, and that means showing when people's views and actions run counter to the assumptions inherent in particular policies and when government is asking the wrong question or seeking the wrong solution. While no serious Whitehall-watcher would assert that research provides all the answers for policy, many would argue that it has a significant role to play. All policy, of course, has to take account of the 'how many?' and 'how much?' questions, but it also needs to reflect an understanding of how people behave and why - and what they know and believe. The current emphasis on 'behaviour change' is a reflection of this, but this information sometimes causes problems for politicians, because it often challenges political wisdom.

The aftermath of the recent riots demonstrated how observers of social policy regularly fall back on popular wisdom, rather than well-grounded evidence. The Prime Minister was quick to point to our 'Broken Society' with its single parents, schools without discipline, reward without effort, crime without punishment, rights without responsibilities and communities without control as causes of civil unrest. Yet there is much research which provides a more sophisticated understanding of these issues<sup>4</sup> - a look at the ESRC website demonstrates that there is a whole raft of data which could usefully inform the development of appropriate and workable policy responses<sup>5</sup>.

*"The aftermath of the recent riots demonstrated how observers of social policy regularly fall back on popular wisdom, rather than well-grounded evidence."*

*“Research can be problematic because it tells it like it is, and that means showing when people’s views and actions run counter to the assumptions inherent in particular policies and when government is asking the wrong question or seeking the wrong solution.”*

The world is full of amateur social scientists who have their own ‘commonsense view’ of society, but research often challenges these views and, sometimes, comes up with politically uncomfortable findings that policy isn’t working as intended. Awkward findings sometimes lead to a ‘shoot the messenger’ culture, where researchers are seen as inconvenient, problematic or just wrong. There is really no point in doing research if only one answer will do because decisions have been made, or because data which shows that the world is not perfect cannot be accommodated. Policy makers have to be able to accept that a politically ‘wrong’ answer is a positive contribution to the evidence base (though this is not always comfortable), and policy analysts have to find more effective ways of challenging popular wisdom.

#### From research evidence to policy solution

Even the best research and analysis leaves room for a considerable amount of creative thinking in the development of policy - it does not directly offer bespoke policy solutions, but it can help to shape them. Policy making is both a pragmatic and an interpretive process, so for impact to happen researchers need to be prepared to engage. This role falls outside the comfort zone of many social policy researchers, who often see their role as honest purveyors of reliable data – an invaluable role, yet one that underplays their potential. If they were more willing to apply their knowledge at the sharp end, where policy is made, they could potentially make a real impact.

#### Keep your powder dry

It is sometimes argued that doing research on sensitive topics is difficult for government, because its opponents will know policy is being reviewed and government will lose the ‘upper hand’. Research is sometimes delayed until the problem is so acute that a policy response can no longer be avoided and research is needed to provide information to shape that policy. At this point the argument may move to ‘blame the tools’, and the assertion that research is so slow it can never be any use to policy makers because it cannot respond to political timetables. In this case, the academic social policy community can be invaluable in

anticipating the emergence of policy issues and problems, so data is there when it is needed - timing is a key ingredient of impact.

#### The circus moves on

Related to this is the view that research can never keep pace with political agendas, because they change both within and, more radically, between administrations. This is to misunderstand the relationship - the literature on research utilisation emphasises the rarity of a direct linear relationship between research results and policy change. Research on a policy problem or issue - homelessness, poverty or obesity, for example - can explain and quantify known problems, but it is most unlikely to point to an unequivocal policy solution. Research has a ‘drip drip’ impact on policy, with insights only gradually entering the policy debate.

#### The world is flat/the world is round

Research findings that are apparently contradictory and academic experts who disagree are a source of frustration for policy makers and practitioners, and a damper on impact. The research enterprise is part of the process of knowledge accumulation, and if we want research to have impact we have to present it in the context of a body of knowledge. Users need to know how research findings add to, challenge or confirm knowledge, yet researchers are sometimes guilty of being so tied up in a specific project that they don’t see the wood for the trees.

#### Making research palatable

So how do politicians respond to this frustration with research? It is interesting to observe how they have reframed some of the territory of research and analysis in the language of stakeholder engagement, user consultation and empowerment. This is another way of saying: “We need to build into policy and delivery an understanding of what people think, what their concerns and beliefs are, and how they behave and what they understand”. Politicians have talked of giving ‘real power back to the people’ and adopting new approaches to engaging the public. A researcher might argue that research is a positive and rigorous means of delivering some of the aims of the ‘Big Society’, yet politicians seem to prefer more direct and less rigorous approaches to seeking the views of the public. We have to ask ourselves why.

#### Where to next?

So where does all this leave us? For researchers, putting effort into ensuring that the insights from social policy research reach their target, arguably, is as important as is eating greens to a balanced diet. There are, of course, some excellent examples of research having a positive and powerful impact on policy and practice, and the social science community is currently expending a lot of energy in highlighting these. Promoting understanding of social science, and what it has to offer, is essential in creating a climate in which research impact can happen, but there are many missed opportunities and we need to spend time in asking ourselves why social policy research is underused. Academics have an important role to play in helping politicians and policy makers to be less suspicious of research and to make better use of it, and I would argue that everyone engaged in researching social policy shares a responsibility for this. More effort to break down the Chinese walls between those who generate data and those who use it could help to maximise impact. For policy researchers engagement in policy debate and a better understanding of the context in which research is used could increase impact, but there also needs to be a willingness on the part of government to spend time on external engagement. Here I see an important role for the SPA in both promoting the value of social policy research and in looking for ways to actively engage with government - and especially the government research and analytical community.

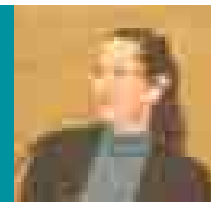
So what of measuring impact? This is not an easy process, but I’d argue that building more bridges to user communities - be they policy makers or practitioners - is an essential first step. Engagement with, and insight into, user communities might ensure we have more impact to measure.

#### (Endnotes)

- 1 Quoted in Skidelsky, R (1992) John Maynard Keynes: A Biography. Volume 2. The economist as saviour 1920-1937, London: Macmillan p630
- 2 Grant Shapps (2010)
- 3 David Cameron (2011)
- 4 David Cameron (2011) Prime Minister’s fightback after the riots August 15th 2011 [www.number10.gov.uk](http://www.number10.gov.uk)
- 5 ESRC (2011) Riots and rationality 9th August 2011 [www.esrc.ac.uk](http://www.esrc.ac.uk)

## ESTABLISHING A RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CENTRE IN THE ISRAELI PARLIAMENT (KNESSET)

By Dr. Shirley Avrami, Director, Knesset Research and Information Centre



The Israeli parliament (Knesset) Research and Information Centre (RIC) recently celebrated its first decade.

It was set up in the year 2000 to supply members of parliament with information, data and research studies in various fields related to their parliamentary work. Celebrating RIC's first decade, former speaker, MK (member of Knesset) Abraham Burg<sup>1</sup>, explained: "I will tell you how this idea began. In those days some Knesset members received parliamentary assistance - I am not talking about that they got from the Knesset, but there were NGOs who paid for this. Nobody knew why they offered this help and who had gained from it, and I thought this and the parliamentary library shouldn't be the only sources of information - parliament members should have an in-house unit to provide objective information, available to all of them. I realised that we could reduce excuses, that a Knesset member would not be able to say: 'I did not know, I did not have the data and information'...The modern parliament deals with the most important issues and decisions, and I felt that we were being cheated - we were not told the truth, and had no professional tools in order to make decisions. Parliament members were crushed by the most powerful interest groups. This was the name of the game, which today no longer exists. There were huge powers who tried to resist the idea, very conservative powers, and the intention was to broaden the sources of information".

Current speaker (and parliament member at the time of the establishment of RIC), Reuven Rivlin<sup>2</sup>, was consulted by Burg on the idea. He explained: "The background to establishing the Centre was the feeling that over the years the Knesset had suffered a gradual reduction in its status, and in its ability to fulfill its tasks properly. Knesset members were asked to cope with enormous amounts of unorganised information and, unfortunately, even with attempts to hide relevant information from them. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century parliaments all over the world, including our parliament, have found it hard to cope with the complex issues that occupy the public agendas of modern states. Up to a decade ago Knesset members, having no other option, had to rely on external

sources of information in order to deal with the issues on the parliamentary committees' tables."

"Ironically", added Rivlin, "they had to rely on information...from governmental sources, and in the worst cases they received biased information serving specific interests." Rivlin pointed out the main problem as he saw it, to which an in-house source of information is the solution - namely the attempts of lobbyists to influence the parliamentary decision making process: "Lobbying had become one of the central characteristics of modern democracy and the modern economy. In recent decades the numbers of lobby groups in the parliaments of the most developed democracies took off, and we must treat this phenomenon very seriously...parliament must supply its members objective and independent knowledge agents, namely RIC researchers".

The power of knowledge in the world of politics has two meanings - it provides a basis, reinforcement and an anchor for the positions of its user, and at the same time is perceived as an objective source that is independent of any specific political viewpoint. Over the years, the Centre has acquired a reputation for producing reliable, professional, objective and impartial studies.

### RIC Roles

Parliaments have three main functions - legislating, overseeing the executive, and initiating debates on issues which are on the public agenda. The Centre's documents assist parliamentary committees and members in the implementation of their tasks - for example, through the provision of background documents for committee debates, international comparisons, economic analyses, comparative surveys and long-term studies.

### Evidence-based policy

Designed to be user-friendly, documents on every topic describe the main players, the dilemmas, the existing legal and formal situation, and the decisions to be taken. Where relevant, they include comparative information on past actions in the proposed area of legislation - a description of the existing situation around the world and what might

be learned from it, and how any conclusions might be implemented through legislation. This enables the Knesset and committee members - and particularly chairpersons - to hold a substantive debate and to take evidence-based decisions.

Parliament members have come to realise that the use of knowledge and of data from the Centre empowers their parliamentary activity. This is true whether the knowledge is used to strengthen their ability to oversee the activity of the government (the executive branch), whether it is seen as a new work tool that provides them with professional background material for debates and for explaining their positions, or whether it enhances their ability to learn and to acquire more in-depth information on issues on the public agenda. In the field of social welfare and public health this is even more vital, given that interest groups try to influence the parliamentary decision making process on a daily basis.

### RIC Activity, Structure and Staff

3,000 documents were written by the Centre's 30 researchers, who between them have academic backgrounds in law, economy, public policy, and sociology, history, literature and environment studies. This variety enables researchers to consult each other and learn from each other's experiences. Researchers always take part in the committees' debates for which they have prepared documents - in most cases they are asked by committee chairs to present their main finding at the beginning of the discussion, or to assist with additional data during it.

**"Parliament members were crushed by the most powerful interest groups."**

How such services are used is arguably the most important question regarding in-house parliamentary research services in the Knesset, as much as in all the other parliaments with equivalent services. According to Weiss, (in Hird)<sup>3</sup>, two models of policy analysis and research exist in the political context. The

political model sees research as enabling policymakers to rationalise decisions and support previously held views on public policymaking, while the tactical model views research as a tool aimed at increasing the prestige of policymakers. Evidence to support both of these models has been found in the way Knesset members perceive their work with the RIC and, in addition, parliament members have mentioned the fact that the data supplied by RIC researchers has encouraged them to change previous held views, and enabled them to better understand the issues and come prepared for committee debates. MK Einat Wilf wrote to the researcher who prepared a document on high school final exams: "Thanks for the document. I have learned a lot from it and even changed my mind about the issue."<sup>4</sup> MK Oron<sup>5</sup> said that "I think the most important contribution of RIC to the parliamentary work is that Knesset members are no longer be able to say 'I did not know what am I voting about', because we have information prepared for us on a wide range of subjects, and I think this is a highly important professional tool for us". But what he had to say also fitted the 'supports previously held views' model: "In many cases I find support in RIC's papers to the positions I already held." Finally, commentary from the former Speaker on the RIC fits the 'increasing-prestige' model: "Its main achievement, and at the same times its big hope for the second decade, is its incredible prestige"<sup>6</sup>.

### Working dilemmas

The existence of a professional research centre raises several dilemmas and conflicts, to which there is no clear-cut solution. Here are two examples:

**List of priorities** - Because Knesset members use the RIC massively, it is impossible to comply with entire requests in the short timetables which characterise parliamentary work. We need to prioritise, therefore – but on what basis? Can a civil servant decide that one parliament member's request is more important than the request of another parliament member? Obviously not. Accordingly, we prioritise according to deadlines - namely dates of committee discussions, and then later deal with the requests with no deadline. This solution is not an ideal one, because it means we give priority to committees over parliament members.

**Public interest** - This is probably one of the Centre's most interesting and ongoing dilemmas. The Knesset general manager, Adv. Dan Landau, recently explained: "We have in the Knesset different views regarding this dilemma. There is the belief that every document must be available to all. But there is also the view that there is competition for information. There is a dialogue between these two perceptions."<sup>7</sup>

### Social policy issues

In the summer of 2011, Israel faced a long-lasting social protest, initiated on Facebook, which saw mass demonstrations and thousands of youngsters living in tents in the big cities. This phenomenon gave the protest its name as the 'tents protest' – concerned with social issues such as affordable housing, education, changes in taxation policy, and improved public health



services. The RIC's work has touched upon the protest in many ways. First, almost three years ago, a document published by RIC warned that governmental housing policy may lead to social protest. When this warning was borne out this document was highlighted and re-published, giving the Centre the name of the 'Protest Prophets.'<sup>8</sup> Second, Knesset members are using existing documents and have asked the Centre's researchers to prepare new documents concerning their involvement in the protest as public representatives. MK Galon, for example, asked for a document specifying the income of various parts of the population stemming from labour and from capital. According to RIC findings, she requested changes in the Israeli taxation policy in order to make it more equal and to reduce economic and social gaps<sup>9</sup>. In other cases parliament members have asked RIC for relevant data and cost analyses concerning, for example,

the issues of free education and financing day care centers in order to encourage participation in the labour market.

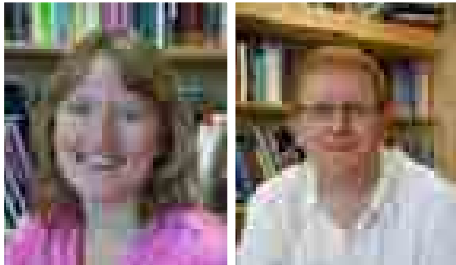
### Discussion

Today most parliaments have an in-house research unit, allowing them to establish their decision-making on objective, non-biased sources of information. The product must meet parliamentary needs and ways of working, and be professional, accurate and reliable. It must be brief, coherent, prepared to short timetables and in many cases on short notice, and yet remain high quality. This is our challenge. As the Knesset speaker, MK Rivlin put it<sup>10</sup>, "The Knesset research and information center is but a symbol to the long path Israeli parliament had gone through and a sign to the way we still have ahead of us, in order to upgrade the Knesset work and its outputs".

### (Endnotes)

- 1 Burg, A. (2010). Knesset minutes from the RIC's first decade anniversary. Knesset minutes, 21.12.2010. Retrieved 29.8.2011.
- 2 Rivlin, R. (2010). In: Knesset minutes. 1<sup>st</sup> decade of the research and information center. 21.12.2010. <http://www.knesset.gov.il/AllSite/mark02/h0210108.html#TQL>. Retrieved: 22.8.2011.
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- 4 Wilf, E. (2011). A letter to the RIC. 16.8.2011
- 5 Oron, H. (2010). In: Knesset minutes from the RIC's first decade anniversary. Knesset minutes, 21.12.2010. Retrieved 29.8.2011
- 6 Burg, A. (2010). In: Knesset minutes from the RIC's first decade anniversary. Knesset minutes, 21.12.2010. Retrieved 29.8.2011
- 7 Landau, D. (2010). Knesset minutes from the RIC's first decade anniversary. Knesset minutes, 21.12.2010. Retrieved 29.8.2011
- 8 Aderet, A. (2011). Prophets on Rothschild: the people who warned three years ago that there is housing protest approaching. Haaretz, 30.7.2011
- 9 Zrahia, Z. (2011). Galon: Capital taxation should be linked to income tax levels". The Marker, 30.8.2011
- 10 Rivlin, R. (2010). In: Knesset minutes. 1<sup>st</sup> decade of the research and information center. 21.12.2010. <http://www.knesset.gov.il/AllSite/mark02/h0210108.html#TQL>. Retrieved: 22.8.2011.

# HOW CAN WE GIVE EVERYONE A FAIR CHANCE ?



By Karen Rowlingson and Stephen McKay

In his speech to the Liberal Democrat conference in September this year, Vince Cable talked of the “appalling inequalities of income and wealth” in the UK and unveiled plans to “call time on payouts for failure” with the launch of a consultation document that outlines plans for greater transparency on boardroom pay and for shareholders to have a bigger say in pay deals. His Coalition partners the Conservatives, however, are keen to abolish the 50 per cent tax rate on earnings over £150,000 which they see as stifling entrepreneurship and therefore growth.

Issues around wealth and the wealthy have become increasingly prominent since the economic crisis began. For example, bankers’ bonuses received high profile coverage in the media and amounted to between £6-7 billion in 2009. Such bonuses are being paid to a small group of individuals at a time when the banks are being propped up either directly or indirectly through government financial support. The cost of such support is being felt now by the much wider public as government spending is cut (see the SPA’s recent report *In Defence of Welfare*).

But the issues around wealth and the wealthy are not just confined to bankers’ bonuses or even to the current economic crisis. Since the 1980s, there has been a major shift in responsibility for financial security from the state to the individual, driven by both Conservative and Labour governments. During this same period, there has also been a major shift in the distribution of income and wealth such that the gap between the

rich and poor has grown steadily wider. The two are linked together as policy changes which have reduced the role of the state have favoured the better off.

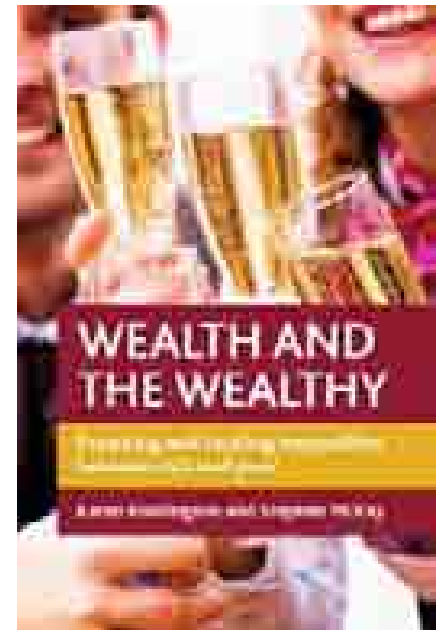
## Personal assets

A major mechanism for achieving a shift from collective to individual responsibility has been a range of government policies which have encouraged people to build up their own personal assets in the form of financial savings, housing wealth and private pension wealth. ‘Asset-based welfare’ for those on lower incomes has been much discussed, but the two flagship policies - the Child Trust Fund and the Saving Gateway - were fairly small scale in practice and, indeed, the Saving Gateway was extensively piloted but then abandoned before it was introduced nationwide. The Child Trust Fund has also been abolished by the Coalition government. And although various financial inclusion policies have increased the number of people with bank accounts (alongside the withdrawal of order books for paying benefits), and provided more advice to people with debt problems, the number of people on low incomes who have savings to fall back on remains very small.

There has been greater success, it seems, in relation to housing wealth, where more and more people have become owner-occupiers. Some have benefited greatly from this and seen their housing wealth soar - up to 2007 at least. However, the outlook is not as positive as the economic situation and related job losses may cause increasing numbers of owner-occupiers to struggle with their mortgages, and negative equity may become an increasing problem if house prices continue to fall. And some owner-occupiers, particularly older people, may be on very low incomes and have homes that need repairs they cannot afford. There is also an issue for those who are not homeowners as it is increasingly difficult to get a foot on the ladder, and the alternatives (in terms of social and private renting) are not particularly attractive for a range of reasons. Thus, the shift towards more individual responsibility for security through housing has not achieved its desired ends.

There has been even less success in relation to private pension wealth. The number of people with private pensions has actually fallen in recent years, despite a raft of government policies to encourage non-state provision. Private sector employers are increasingly reluctant to support occupational pensions with a general move away from Defined Benefit schemes (where the employer shoulders most of the risk) to Defined Contribution schemes (where the individual shoulders most of the risk). Public sector pensions are currently the subject of strike action, as the government is planning to cut them back substantially and people are wary of investing in the stock market through personal pensions.

## Financial security and the state



In our recent book - *Wealth and the Wealthy: exploring and tackling inequalities between rich and poor* - we argue that the shift towards more individual responsibility for financial security has gone too far, and that it is time for the state to step back in to ensure financial security. This is not to say that individuals should play no part in this as they will need to make contributions to state pensions, social housing and savings schemes. And they can also make contributions, on top, if they wish to do so, to more private schemes. But there is a need

to develop a more holistic policy on assets which starts by outlining the goals of such a policy and takes into account the appropriate balance between: state and individual; assets, incomes and services; housing, pensions and financial wealth; and accumulation and decumulation.

We also argue for a fundamental review of policy responses to the growing concentration of income and wealth which has occurred since the 1980s. Once again, this review needs to start with an analysis of the nature of any 'problem' caused by this trend, and we outline five key problems here:

- There is evidence that a large gap between rich and poor is likely to cause health and social problems irrespective of poverty.
- The rise in wealth at the very top looks likely to have contributed to, if not caused, the economic crash we have witnessed in recent years.
- There is evidence that those who get to the top do not generally do so because of their own talent and hard work but, in many cases, because they were lucky to be born to rich parents.
- Even if people succeed on their own merit, there are strong arguments that the degree of reward that those at the top receive is difficult to justify.
- The kind of work which is rewarded by the market (albeit a very imperfect one at the moment) is not necessarily the kind of work on which people place most social value.

Each of these 'problems' leads to different policy responses although each is linked by a need to reduce the current level of inequality.

In our book, we consider three main policy areas: equal opportunity policies, taxation policy and original income and wealth policies. We argue, first of all, that equal opportunities are almost impossible to guarantee when outcomes are so unequal. Even with the right policies, schools, universities and employers cannot entirely make up for the differential advantages of children born to rich families as opposed to poor ones. And we are a long way from having the right policies as primary and secondary schools with increasing diversity

of schooling and segregation by social class. Early years intervention looks set to make some difference and the Equality Act 2010 may also help improve equality in the workplace, but the chances of someone from a poor family going to a top university or entering one of the professions are slim and may indeed be reducing relative to children from better-off families.

#### A fair chance

So how can we give everyone a fair chance of succeeding? One way is to level the playing field through a more progressive tax system. It is no coincidence that levels of taxation declined substantially in the 1980s just as inequality rose. Britain now has lower rates of taxation than many other European countries. While some may see this in a positive sense as providing incentives and rewards for hard work, people reach the top in life at least partly through luck of birth rather than individual hard work, and there are many other rewards from working in top jobs. Also, the argument about rewarding hard work cannot be made in relation to inherited wealth and so there are particularly strong arguments for more progressive, and higher, taxes of this kind of unearned wealth.

*"Policy changes which have reduced the role of the state have favoured the better off."*

While taxation can redistribute income and wealth from rich to poor (or from rich to those in the middle as well as people in poverty), it does nothing to tackle the original distribution of income and wealth. Other policies - such as a minimum and maximum wage - can ensure a fairer starting point. The introduction of a National Minimum Wage was opposed by the Conservatives when it was first introduced but now seems accepted by all political parties. The introduction of a National Maximum Wage is not supported by any political party at present but the Coalition did ask Will Hutton to review the idea of a wage ratio of 20:1 in the public sector. Hutton did not, in his final report, support this idea but did outline a range of proposals to make top pay more transparent and accountable. So there are tentative moves in this direction. Original income and wealth policies also encompass basic income and capital grants ideas. Once again, these might seem quite radical but proposals for a 'universal pension'

are currently being floated in the government, and capital grants appeal to those on the left and right of the political spectrum even if they have not yet been adopted by mainstream politicians.

#### Reducing the gap

The current gap between rich and poor is too great and it needs to be reduced. But to what level? There has been very little discussion of this question but some recent research has suggested that if we were to return to the level of inequality we had in the 1970s and the level which currently exists in many European countries such as France, the Netherlands and Germany, then the health and social problems caused by inequality would be significantly reduced. The public also have a view on this question and consistently support a wages ratio of 6:1 - far lower than the 20:1 ratio discussed recently for the public sector.

The main argument against reducing the gap between rich and poor is that this would involve interfering with 'the market', but markets are imperfect as we have seen with dramatic and devastating consequences over the last few years. And in any case, we already 'interfere' with the market in many ways to ensure a certain level of welfare. As a democracy, it is the public - not the market - which should have ultimate power to direct policy. But the public are sometimes presented with a very stark choice: between a 'pure' liberal market economy with an unfettered market on the one hand versus a completely controlled command economy in which the market is subordinated to the state on the other. There are, however, many 'varieties of capitalism' and different 'welfare state regimes' to be considered. For example, Vince Cable, in his recent speech, talked of the need for a "responsible capitalism". There should be much greater discussion about the range of policy directions on offer, and we hope that the arguments and evidence in our book will contribute to this discussion and provide stronger grounds for policies which will lead both to a more equal distribution of wealth and to a closing of the gap between rich and poor.

Karen Rowlingson and Stephen McKay are authors of *Wealth and the Wealthy: exploring and tackling inequalities between rich and poor*, published by The Policy Press (2011). Copies can be ordered at 20% discount from [www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781847423078](http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781847423078).

## TIME4RESEARCH: LAUNCH OF TIME BANK RESEARCH NETWORK

14TH OCTOBER 2011, LONDON By Ruth Naughton-Doe and Lee Gregory

Time banking is a tool where participants are paid in time for the reciprocal exchange of skills and services in both community and institutional settings. It is a mechanism which is perceived to generate other impacts such as reducing social exclusion, generating social capital and facilitating co-production. The idea has attracted significant attention from both New Labour and the Conservative Government in the context of increasing policy interest in decentralisation, active citizenship and the third sector/community-led provision of services. This interest has strengthened with the advent of the 'Big Society' agenda, and several time banking projects have recently been awarded substantial funding packages.

The time bank research network was established to bring together the increasing number of academics who are currently researching, or interested in researching, time banks. Organised by two PhD students who are both members of the SPA - Ruth Naughton-Doe from the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol and Lee Gregory from Cardiff University - the launch event sought to act as a platform for the promotion and development of this new research network: Time4Research.

### The role of the network

Why is this network necessary? Firstly, for an intervention that has been established since 1985, there are surprisingly few high quality time banking evaluations. Most time bank research is out of date, anecdotal or in-house, and as such lacks sufficient rigour to appeal to funders and policy makers. It is therefore hoped the network can stimulate

the production of good quality research. Additionally, navigating existing time banking literature presents challenges as the literature is both scattered and diverse and has not previously been brought together. The network intends to provide an accessible resource by bringing current research together in one location. The intention is to make it easier for academics interested in time banking or policy makers to find research evidence.

In the context of increasing policy interest in time banking, it is especially important to maintain a relationship between current time banking evidence and time banking practice to allow for rapid knowledge exchange. The network aims to bring together evaluations, conclusions and policy proposals together in one location to create a vital resource for policy makers and practitioners to find answers to pressing questions in the field.

### Aims of the Group

Whilst the group started with this small event for academics, it is a long-term aim to expand. Firstly, the group wishes to include practitioners of time banking in the UK such as service commissioners and think tanks. Contact has been made with the University of East Anglia about the possibility of a wider event in the future which will involve organisations such as the New Economics Foundation (nef) and NESTA, who are both providing information on time banking for the Cabinet Office. Ultimately, the group wishes to expand world-wide as time banking is an international movement operating in over 60 countries.

### Presentations at the event

Lee Gregory opened the event and welcomed attendees. He outlined his own research which highlights the importance of time banking research in the current political climate. He explained the possibility that both left and right on the political spectrum could adopt time banking, as it was established to be ideologically neutral. As such, he argued we need to understand the

political motives that underpin time banking. Additionally, whilst evaluations make claims of what time banking can do, what is less clear is how time banking achieves these claims. What is it about time banking that generates inclusion and social networks? Does this only work in some policy contexts? Do the effects vary in different policy contexts? Does it actually generate co-production, as time bank founder Edgar Cahn argues? Increasing political attention on these issues make these questions important.

Ruth Naughton-Doe then presented an overview of time banking research to date and suggested a research agenda. She discussed the multitude of terminology, models, provider organisations and range of theories found in the literature. The overall standard of the empirical research into time banking is low, and much of the theoretical literature deals with contested concepts such as social capital, co-production and community with an uncritical lens. There is therefore a great need for high quality research to discuss the different models, outcomes and theories underpinning time banking.

Noel Longhurst from the University of East Anglia then presented on time banking and the wider currency movement. He discussed the spread of time banking across the world and argued that the different models are constantly evolving. He also contextualised time banking in broader social movements, including the green movement, the complementary currency movement and those arguing for monetary reform.

After these introductory presentations, the attendees had an informal discussion around their own interests in time banking and their expectations about how the research network could work.

### Attendees

The event was attended by 18 people including postgraduates, established academics and researchers from nef. To highlight a few of the participants, Mayumi Hashami at the University of East Anglia recently completed a PhD which explored the history of social care provision for the elderly in Japan, including applications of time banking. Patrick Tobi from the University of East London also attended to discuss his



interest in conducting experimental research into the health outcomes of time banks based in GP Practices.

The event was also attended by four postgraduate students currently completing PhDs on time banking. Lee Gregory is doing action research into time banking, co-production and health. Olivia Pearson (who, like Lee, is at Cardiff) is exploring ways in which time banking can be used within the field of youth justice. Ruth Naughton-Doe is doing participatory research into the outcomes of time banking. Julia Panther, University of Durham has conducted anthropological research into reciprocity and network analysis of time bank participants to see how cooperation has evolved. It was a great opportunity for the postgraduates to meet and share experiences, and they discussed the possibility of submitting an abstract for a symposium to the SPA conference in 2012.

### Contemporary issues in time banking research

The network then engaged in a lively discussion of contemporary issues in time banking research. A discussion of the problems of conducting research in the field highlighted some shared experiences, including the problems of working in the context of the fast-paced evolution of the time banking mechanism. Furthermore, several participants had experienced their research sites closing down as time banks have high failure rates, which makes managing research sites difficult. Another problem raised was that several successful time banks have been over-researched and there was a consensus in the room that new case study sites should be sought to avoid research fatigue.

The group then turned to a discussion of possible important research areas. A popular interest in the room emerged through a conversation on how the concept of co-production was at risk through policy makers ignoring the value base of time banking. There was a sense that policy makers have been distracted by the mechanism whilst ignoring the theoretical underpinnings of co-production. Another discussion was held over the need for a comparative study into different types of time banks to establish why some are so successful and others fail.

### Future of the network

The event closed with a conversation about the future of the network. It was agreed the network would be website run, with a JiscMail mailing list and annual meetings. Members will be invited to upload profiles and will collectively establish a resources section. A news blog will be updated regularly, and members will be invited to submit themed contributions or think-pieces in their area of expertise around time banking.

We hope to expand internationally and work towards an academic time banking conference in 2013. Additionally, Noel Longhurst, who co-edits the International Journal of Community Currency Research suggested the possibility of a special issue showcasing current time banking research. Timebanking UK are interested in supporting a Time4Research network session at their annual conference to disseminate findings to practitioners.

The event was considered a success, and was a great opportunity for academics with similar interests in this emerging field to meet for the first time. It marks the start of an exciting new research group which aims to connect time banking research with policy makers and practitioners and provide a forum for discussing current research needs. With thanks to the SPA for funding the event, and to Timebanking UK and NESTA for providing the room space.

Those interested in joining the Time4Research network should e-mail: [ruth.naughton-doe@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ruth.naughton-doe@bristol.ac.uk) or visit <http://time4research.wordpress.com>.

## Large Grants Scheme

The SPA invites applications for its Large Grants Scheme, designed to help fund one-off conference events dealing with research, policy & practice and/or learning & teaching in a way that is of benefit to the social policy community and SPA members. We will prioritise applications which demonstrate clear policy maker/practitioner links. The maximum award for an individual event is £3,000.

Funding is available in two rounds of applications over the year. Round one runs from 1st January to 30th June and round two from 1st July to 31st December. Applications are welcomed at any point within each award period, and funds are allocated on a first-come first-served basis.

Full terms and conditions, as well as information on how to apply, are available on the SPA website. For more information contact SPA Grants Officer, Kate Bradley ([k.bradley@kent.ac.uk](mailto:k.bradley@kent.ac.uk)).

## Small Grants Schemes

The SPA invites applications for its Standard and Postgraduate Small Grants Schemes - designed to help fund seminars and workshops dealing with research and/or learning & teaching in a way that is of benefit to the social policy community and SPA members. The focus should be on activities that will benefit a group or network rather than individuals.

Funds will be made available in two rounds of applications over the year. Round one runs from 1st January to 30th June and round two from 1st July to 31st December. Applications are welcomed at any point within each award period, and funds are allocated on a first-come first-served basis.

Each award offers a maximum of £500.

Full terms and conditions, as well as information on how to apply, are available on the SPA website. For more information contact SPA Grants Officer, Kate Bradley ([k.bradley@kent.ac.uk](mailto:k.bradley@kent.ac.uk)).

## Overseas Conference Support Scheme

The SPA invites applications for its Overseas Conference Grants Scheme which is designed to help fund the attendance of UK members at international conferences, as well as contributing towards the costs of overseas colleagues wishing to attend the annual UK SPA conference. The overall aim of this scheme is to foster links and promote dialogue between social policy academics across a range of countries.

The scheme will contribute a maximum of £300 per applicant towards the conference registration fees of:

- UK-based SPA members who have been accepted to present a paper at an overseas conference
- SPA members resident outside the UK who have been accepted to present a paper at the SPA annual conference
- SPA members resident outside the UK who have been accepted to present a paper at an overseas conference in a social policy-related area.

Currently funding is available to cover conference registration fees only, and is not available for travel and/or subsistence costs.

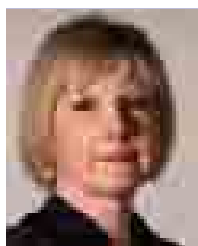
Funding is available in two rounds of applications over the year. Round one runs from 1st January to 30th June and round two from 1st July to 31st December. Applications for funding to attend the UK SPA conference should be received by 31st May in order to meet the registration deadline. Other applications are welcome at any point within each award period, and funds will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. The scheme will make a maximum of three awards per year. In the first round, a maximum of one award can be made. The limit on the number of awards to be made will be evaluated annually. There will be a total annual cap of £1,000.

Full terms and conditions, as well as information on how to apply, are available on the SPA website. For more information contact SPA Overseas Conference Grants Officer, Alex Collis ([alex.collis@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:alex.collis@anglia.ac.uk)).

# POLICY PEOPLE

Welcome to Policy People – devoted to SPA members and their news. The Association is of course keen to welcome policy makers, postgraduate students and international members to our ranks, and so it makes perfect sense to welcome and celebrate our new colleagues. Policy People is also a useful forum for us all to update colleagues on our movements and successes and to pay obituary tribute. If you are new to the SPA and would like to introduce yourself, or have other news you'd like to share – of an award, a job move, an appointment (to a committee or editorial board etc.) or the loss of a colleague – please do get in touch with me at [s.a.pemberton@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.pemberton@bristol.ac.uk).

*With best wishes, Simon Pemberton*



## ANN MARIE GRAY

Recently elected to the SPA Executive Committee, Ann Marie is Senior Lecturer in Social Policy, School of Criminology, Politics and Social Policy at the University of Ulster and Director of the ARK Policy Unit. ARK (Access, Research and Knowledge) is a joint University of Ulster/Queen's University, Belfast project. Recently a key focus of the Policy Unit's work has been to stimulate critical social policy debate and build relationships between academia, government and community and voluntary sector.

She commented: "I am delighted to be on the Executive, and am very much looking forward to contributing to the promotion of social policy teaching and research across the UK and internationally."

## INGELA NAUMANN

Ingela Naumann has been elected as chair of the Teaching & Learning Committee of the SPA Executive Committee.

Ingela is a Lecturer in Social Policy, School of Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh and Programme Director for the MSc in Comparative Public Policy. She is also a member of the EU fp6 network of excellence RECWOWE (Reconciling Work and Welfare), and of the research network of excellence NORDWEL (the Nordic welfare state – past and future) funded by the Nordic Research Council. Her research interests centre on the comparative analysis of welfare states, particularly with respect to the history and politics of work/family policies, early childhood education and care, and school reform. She is also involved in



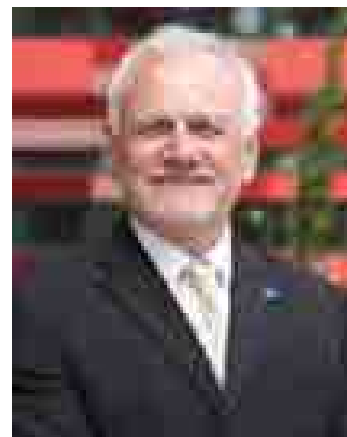
knowledge exchange activities around early childhood education and care in Scotland.

She said: "I look forward to developing a strategy for the promotion of social policy teaching in the UK and internationally. I also aim to contribute to the strengthening of relations between social policy research and policy making in Scotland."

## NICK MANNING

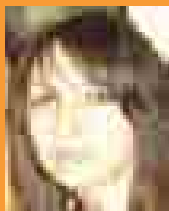
Professor Nick Manning, Director of the Institute of Mental Health, has had his directorship renewed to 2015, a move which will see him oversee the first decade of this rapidly expanding organisation. Nick launched the Institute in Nottingham in 2006 as a partnership between the University of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Healthcare

NHS Trust, with a view to helping transform understanding and treatment of mental illness. Next year sees the Institute move into a new £7 million home which will accommodate 200 staff and bring together a number of existing sub-units and centres all under one roof. The Institute is now regarded as the UK's prime location for interdisciplinary research in the mental health field. It attracts approximately £6 million each year in external research grants, has 20 full professors and publishes 200 peer-reviewed journal papers a year. More information is available at [www.institutemh.org.uk](http://www.institutemh.org.uk)



## NEW SPA POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVES

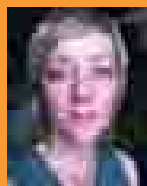
### LORENZA ANTONUCCI



Lorenza is a PhD student at the School for Policy Studies of the University of Bristol. Her research, supported by the first Policy Press studentship, revolves around the welfare and well-being of HE students in Europe.

She also collaborates with the research institute Éupolis Lombardia and is a member of the Young Academics Network of the FEPS (European Foundation for Progressive Studies).

As Postgraduate Representative, Lorenza hopes to contribute in strengthening the existing community of postgraduates and creating the basis for supporting a new generation of social policy scholars. She has a specific interest in promoting postgraduates' welfare and developing issues regarding the role of postgraduates in teaching in HE.

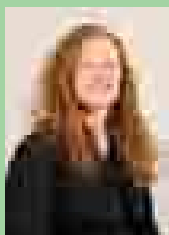


### SARAH BROOKS-WILSON

Co-elected as Postgraduate Representative, Sarah's current PhD research at the University of York is supported by an ESRC studentship, and is exploring the role of space within youth justice policy and practice. Cemented by previous experiences as a photographer, youth worker and within a Youth Offending Team, Sarah is concerned with the marginalisation of key policy stakeholder groups within the consultation process. Employment as a Research Associate at the University of York on sustainable development in schools has facilitated the development of a diverse range of visual participatory research tools - importantly extending the consultation process to these 'hard to reach' groups.

Sarah seeks to continue the development of activities in support of postgraduates. She says: "The increased involvement of postgraduates within the main SPA conference has really supported the development of skills and experiences, and I am keen to encourage new membership while further supporting those already involved. I understand the potential for postgraduates to make a wider strategic difference in the long term. Directing my energy and enthusiasm in order to help support the needs and facilitate the further development of this community is a rewarding and welcomed opportunity."

### REBECCA TUNSTALL



Rebecca Tunstall has been named as Director of the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York.

Rebecca had worked at LSE since 1994 and was a Lecturer in Social Policy and a Research Associate in the LSE's Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion. She joined as research assistant on a Joseph Rowntree Foundation funded project on social housing estates, and from 1997 to 2003 was course tutor for the MSc/ Diploma in Housing. In 2003/04 she worked at the Metropolitan Center at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC comparing UK and US cities.

Rebecca has carried out research on behalf of the Department of Communities and Local Government, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Nuffield Foundation, the Housing Corporation, the Homes and Communities Agency, the Tenant Services Authority, the National Housing Federation, the Scottish Government, and individual social landlords.

She said: "I am very much looking forward to joining CHP, to new collaborations there, and to helping to advance CHP's important contribution to British housing policy and housing studies."

### TIM BLACKMAN

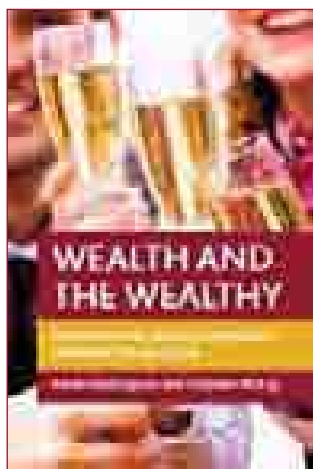


Tim Blackman, Professor of Sociology and Social Policy at Durham University, where he was also Director of the Wolfson Research Institute and Dean for the University's campus in Stockton-on-Tees, has been appointed to a Chair in Sociology and Social Policy at

The Open University, where he will also be Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Scholarship.

Tim told *Policy World*: "This is an exciting time to join The Open University, one of the great social policy achievements of the 1964-70 Wilson Government. The OU's commitment to open access remains both radical and a huge challenge as we see government cuts force large fee increases and policies for research concentration favour the most selective institutions. I'm sure, though, that the OU in its usual remarkable way will continue to demonstrate that quality in teaching and research does not depend on the academic selection of students but on a commitment to discovery and learning."

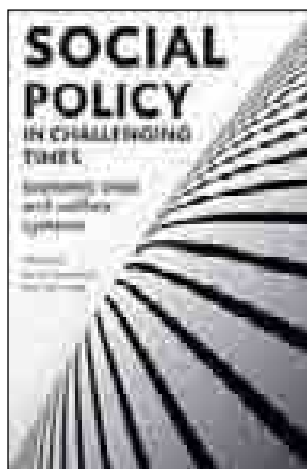
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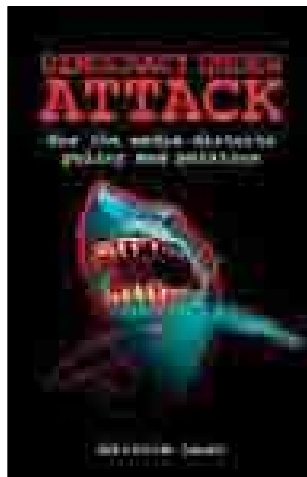
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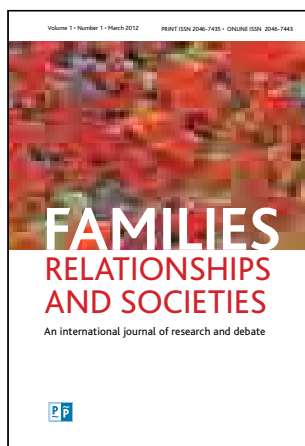


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