

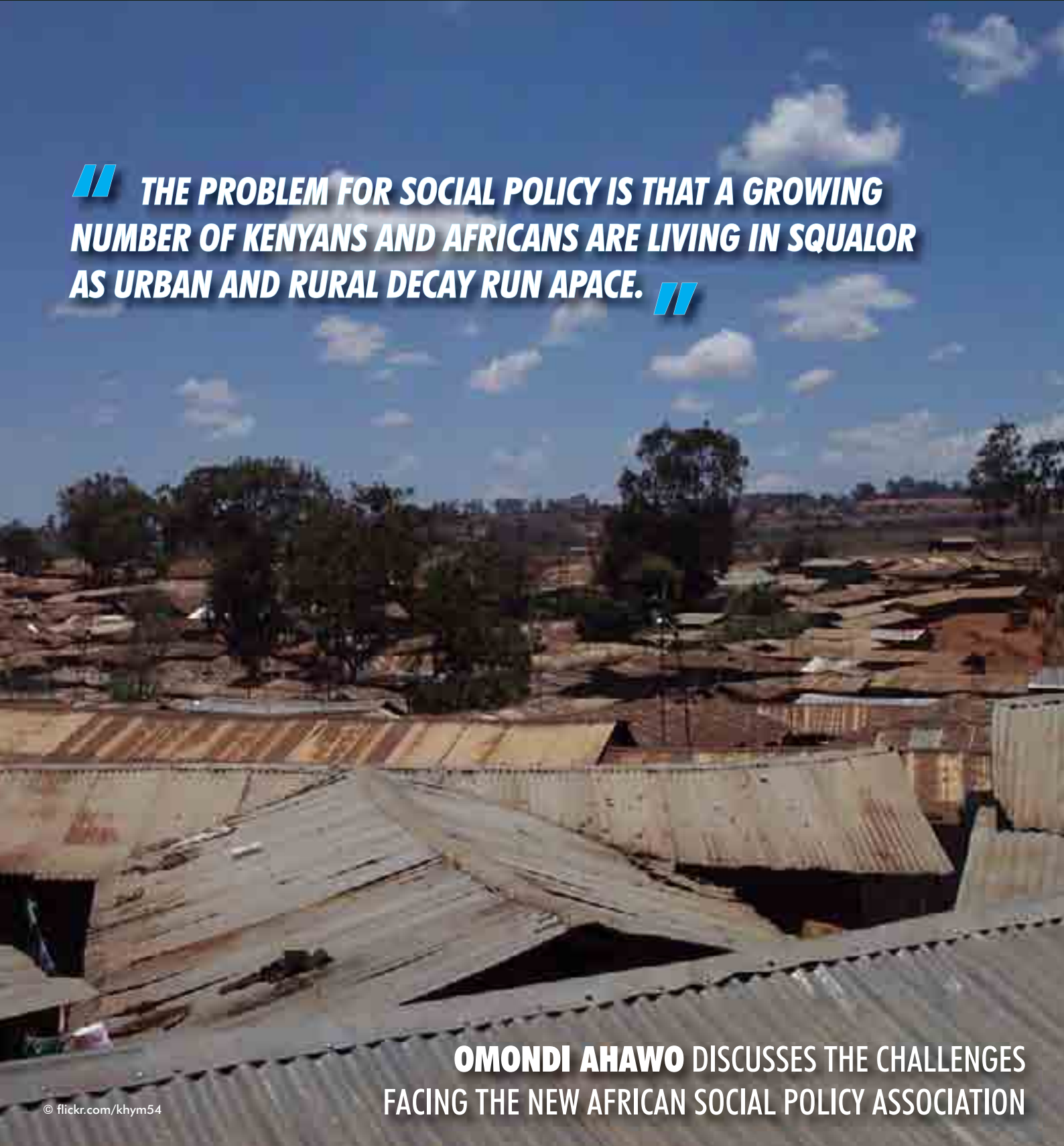
PolicyWorld

SUMMER 2011



NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIAL POLICY ASSOCIATION

“ THE PROBLEM FOR SOCIAL POLICY IS THAT A GROWING NUMBER OF KENYANS AND AFRICANS ARE LIVING IN SQUALOR AS URBAN AND RURAL DECAY RUN APACE. ”



OMONDI AHAWO DISCUSSES THE CHALLENGES
FACING THE NEW AFRICAN SOCIAL POLICY ASSOCIATION

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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.

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Summer 2011 issue of *Policy World* - as ever, we cover the latest developments for both the Association and the field. Our main features see an international focus on Africa, where moves are afoot to establish a Social Policy Association, and on women and poverty in Malta. Following the successful publication of the SPA's *In Defence of Welfare* report in February, our UK features see further discussions of politics and social policy as they apply to Scotland and Northern Ireland. We

also feature an article explaining the purpose and activities of the Campaign for Social Science, with ideas on how members might lend their support.

The next issue of *Policy World* – due for publication in the Autumn – will cover the 2011 SPA conference, so do look out for it if you weren't able to part in Lincoln this time around.

Chris Blunkell, Editor

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION CAROLINE GLENDINNING



We are coming to the end of another extremely busy year for the SPA. Some of our activities, such as the SWAP-SPA survey on social policy teaching, are reported elsewhere in *Policy World* - here is some of our other news.

Turbulence and change

The wider changes in HE are beginning to impact on teaching and learning in social policy. We were dismayed to learn that the social policy undergraduate degree at London South Bank University (LSBU) will not be continued after the current cohort of students graduates in 2014, which we understand will leave London with only one (LSE) and a half (London Metropolitan University) social policy degrees. The loss of the degree from a post-1992 university that traditionally attracts mature students and those from minority ethnic groups who cannot move away to study is a serious blow, and we have written to LSBU

asking them to reconsider their decision. We anticipate there may be more course reconfigurations in coming years. The Subject Centre for Social Policy and Social Work (SWAP)-funded survey on social policy teaching (see p19) will provide us with important baseline information and, we hope, some indication of possible future changes too.

SPA is also considering its future role given the closure of two other organisations. SWAP – which will be wound up later this year (see p21) – has been enormously important in providing resources and specialist support for teaching and learning in social policy. The partnership between SWAP and the SPA has been an extremely productive one with many joint events and this leaves a big gap in the SPA's activities around teaching and learning. Secondly, the Social Policy Joint University Committee (JUC-SP) has also folded. The JUC is made up of departments rather than individuals and, whilst the Social Work and the Public Administration Committees of JUC continue to thrive, it has been difficult to maintain momentum for the Social Policy Committee. This is partly because of the reconfigurations of many departments (there are very few single social policy departments now) and partly because the SPA itself performs many functions of the other JUC committees (such as organising conferences). Nevertheless, JUC has provided a forum for discussing social policy teaching and research in HE and has also been able to contribute financially to some joint events.

These developments mean new roles for the SPA, particularly in relation to teaching, learning and wider HE institutional issues. We're thinking of having an Executive 'Awayday' to take stock and plan for the future. How should SPA develop, and what roles do you need us to play? Please let us know.

In Defence of Welfare



We were delighted with the extensive coverage we achieved for this publication detailing the impacts of the Coalition Government's Spending Review. It is of course difficult to identify any specific impacts, but we do know that it helped to raise the profile of the SPA with government organisations, the voluntary sector and other learned societies. We also learned a great deal about what does and doesn't work in attracting the attention of the mainstream media. Thanks to the unpaid work of the contributors and editors, the total cost of producing and mailing out the report was modest – just over £5,000. We have discussed whether to produce a follow-up publication next year, but not reached any firm conclusions so far. Again, your views would be very welcome.

2011 Conference and AGM

Finally, we are looking forward to another successful conference at the University of Lincoln. The SPA's Annual General Meeting will be held during the conference and will include elections for new members to the Executive Committee. I do hope you will consider standing. The work is not onerous and the company is congenial (I suspect we may be on the verge of initiating a new 'tradition' of ending Committee meetings in a nearby pub). Given the challenges likely to be faced in the coming years, we need as much active involvement as possible so the SPA can continue to promote and support social policy teaching, research and practice.

**Caroline Glendinning
Chair SPA**

LEARNED SOCIETIES

The SPA has had agreements with other UK learned societies – the British Sociological Association (BSA), the British Society of Criminology and the Socio-Legal Studies Association - for some time. These enable members to attend each others' conferences at the members' reduced registration rates. We are now extending these links.

RESPONSES TO CONSULTATIONS



The SPA has responded to consultation on the Economic and Social Research Council's

(ESRC) strategic priorities. We argued strongly that the ESRC should give greater recognition and emphasis to the nature and impacts of public services and welfare provision across each of its three Priority Areas.

For example, socio-institutional arrangements and policies are crucial determinants of Economic Performance and Sustainable Growth (Priority Area 1), and public sector organisations and welfare make critically important contributions to a 'Vibrant and Fair Society' (Priority Area 3). Thanks to Nicola Yeates for preparing this response.

We have also contributed to the Academy of Social Sciences submission to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee's Enquiry into Peer Review. Like other contributors, we wholly endorsed peer review as the means of securing independent assessments of quality. Similarly, we drew attention to the difficulties increasingly experienced by journal editors and others in securing peer reviews, particularly from more senior academics. The importance of peer review as a core academic activity needs stronger endorsement, and the Academy will be taking this up with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Our thanks to Hartley Dean and Tania Burchardt for preparing the SPA's contribution.

HE FUNDING CHANGES AND POSTGRADUATE SOCIAL SCIENCE TRAINING

There has been widespread speculation about the impacts of the latest cuts in public spending on demand for undergraduate places. Much less attention has been given to the knock-on effects of significant further increases in student debt on demand for postgraduate research training. This was the subject of a recent meeting organised by the Academy of Social Sciences, with speakers including John Beath from the ESRC Training and Skills Committee and Richard Bartholemew representing the Government Social Research Service.

The picture is complicated and any conclusions remain speculative. The Browne report into HE funding was optimistic that a major increase in undergraduate fees would not affect demand for postgraduate places. However, Browne's analysis included overseas students, where demand for postgraduate training has remained buoyant. Evidence from the first cohort of postgraduates affected by the original introduction of tuition fees shows no apparent reduction in demand for postgraduate courses, but this picture is complicated by the recession and the possibility that at least some applicants for postgraduate courses are simply postponing labour market entry.

The potential effects of increased undergraduate tuition fees are further

complicated by changes in ESRC funding which include a reduction in the number of studentships from 750 to 600, the ending of the Small Grant scheme (which was particularly attractive to early career researchers) and the restriction of ESRC involvement in research methods training to Doctoral Training Centres.

Some at the Academy meeting anticipated an increase in demand for taught Masters courses, which offer an income premium and an opportunity to upgrade qualifications without the financial commitment of a full PhD – a pattern noticeable during the last major recession. Even so, most taught Masters students are part-time and self-funding - it is not clear how far students will be able or willing to meet the fees given the increase in their undergraduate tuition fees, the further adverse impact on their credit ratings and the reduced availability of bank loans to fund postgraduate study. A further factor affecting demand for training is the emerging globalisation of postgraduate education, with some overseas universities recruiting students from the UK for Masters courses taught in English.

The anticipated reduction in demand for, and funding of, research degrees will have a huge long-term impact on the health of social science disciplines. The Academy meeting agreed there is an urgent need to improve support for post-doctoral researchers to prevent them leaving HE and protect their careers until academic job prospects improve. ESRC; the Department for Education; and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills have important roles to play in commissioning research on how to maintain demand for postgraduate research degrees. The contrasting approach of Scotland provides an ideal opportunity for a 'natural experiment'.

Caroline Glendinning

- We have agreed with the BSA that a representative from each organisation will attend the other's executive committee meetings. This enables us to identify issues of common interest and concern and, where appropriate, co-ordinate our respective activities.
- We are discussing with the Social Research Association whether we can work together on organising training events on topics such as research ethics and governance, maximising the impact of research, and the use of social media in research.
- We have approached the Political Studies Association (PSA) with a view to setting up reciprocal arrangements for members and exploring the potential for collaboration on wider issues affecting higher education.

NEW PARADIGMS IN PUBLIC POLICY



Peter Taylor-Gooby

Colleagues in social policy may be interested to hear about this project, established by the British Academy (BA) in 2010 as part of the work of its Public Policy Centre (www.britac.ac.uk/policy/policy-centre.cfm). The project will lead to briefing papers and seminars later this year and an edited book in 2012 (see foot of article).

As we all know, public policy in Britain faces severe challenges from many directions, including long-standing concerns about Britain's economic decline, the challenges of ethnic diversity, climate change, demographic shifts, community problems, increasingly critical citizens and declining trust in politicians - all in the context of growing social inequalities. The economic crisis and its aftermath bring these issues to the forefront of public debate, but risk obscuring underlying issues in political tussles over the recovery programme, constitutional reforms, banking bonuses and other immediate questions.

These issues have been extensively discussed in a wide range of publications (including SPA's own *In Defence of Welfare*), and an equally wide range of policy responses advanced. The BA project stands back from the immediate debate. It maps out what social science has to offer to policy makers and how best it may make that contribution.

Policy futures

The core of the work is contained in seven commissioned papers each taking an overview of debates in a particular field and reviewing scenarios for policy development in the medium-term future. Andrew Gamble discusses economic futures, Ian Gough climate change and mitigation policies, Pat Thane the debates about demography and population ageing, Gerry Stoker the issues raised by popular disaffection with the whole political process, Anne Powers the contribution of neighbourhoods to concentrated local problems, Peter Taylor-Gooby the strengths and weaknesses of the now fashionable application of psychology to policy issues in democratisation and 'nudge', and Tariq Modood the problem of how multi-culturalism can be remade. His paper charts out a new more inclusive stance to ethnic diversity that incorporates both respect for difference with commitment to a common social space.

A number of common themes emerge across the papers:

Cross-disciplinary perspectives

The problems that face public policy now cross-cut the units of government organisation and often national boundaries. We need to include analysis of economic and social impacts in thinking about climate change policy. The extension of democratic engagement requires changes in institutions, but also shifts in cultural assumptions and also policies that make the citizenship of individuals in different social groups more equal. Analysis of population ageing needs to take into account contributions in social support as well as economic costs to the labour force, and so on.

Parallel to this point is the argument that reliance on a single disciplinary perspective is unlikely to deliver the goods. Social science can be most fruitfully engaged through interdisciplinary approaches. The problems of reducing atmospheric carbon or of managing economic development are best understood in terms of a political economy that understands people as social and political actors rather than simply through the lens of economics. Social

policy and sociology as well as political science contribute to understanding popular responses to multi-culturalism and analysing the ways forward. Local neighbourhood problems again require social policy, sociology and politics, as well as a sense of history.

Top-down and bottom-up

A further point concerns the role of government. All the contributions point out that government has a strong role to play in relation to the issues considered. They show how market forces and social behaviour, left to themselves, fail to achieve a resolution of the issues. This is an important corrective to one of the chief policy directions of recent years. At the same time, the local level of citizen empowerment has a strong contribution to make, to concentrated local issues, in making political engagement worthwhile and in helping to ensure that people's choices move in a positive direction. The problem then becomes one of understanding how the state provides the appropriate framework for and supports the actions of individuals and social groups.

The project deals with the future, which is necessarily uncertain. Each paper sets out a range of scenarios and tests its arguments across them.

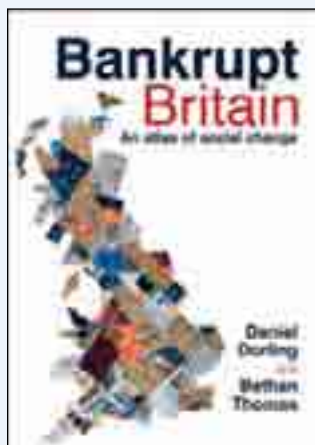
A truly multi-disciplinary social policy?

Many of these points will perhaps strike social policy academics as somewhat stale. After all, social policy work is more or less normally multi-disciplinary and recognises all the issues of co-ordination and engagement across government departments. These points need to be made repeatedly in a context where particular disciplinary perspectives tend to play trumps. Social policy may have been less successful in engaging with the full range of disciplines in social science and directing contributions from political science, social psychology, economics, social philosophy and history as appropriate to the understanding of policy issues, than in drawing on sociological perspectives. I hope that colleagues will find this project of interest as the papers emerge during the next few months.

New Paradigms in Public Policy, (ed. P Taylor-Gooby) Oxford University Press, Oxford.

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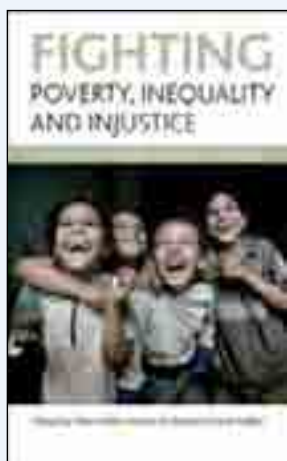
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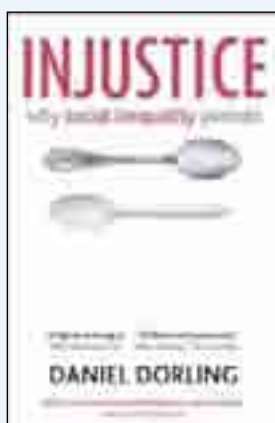
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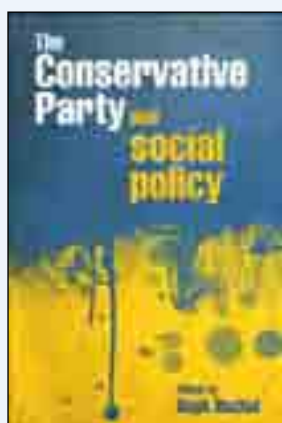
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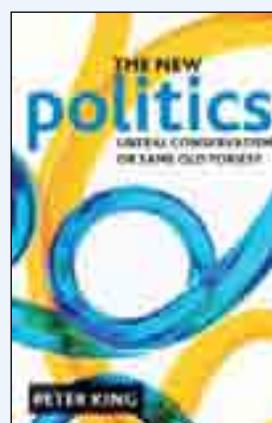
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THE SECOND TOWNSEND MEMORIAL CONFERENCE

SALIENT ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY POVERTY MEASUREMENT

The Second Peter Townsend Memorial conference hosted a wide range of speakers from the five continents of the world, who presented and discussed measurement issues in poverty, social exclusion and living standards research. The common denominator was the focus on consensual measures of deprivation, drawing on the work initiated in the 1960s by Peter Townsend. The event was a platform for emerging findings from the Poverty and Social Exclusion 2011 survey and encouraged discussions across different national applications.

Among the presenters, Brian Nolan dwelled on the weaknesses of relative income measures (such as 60% of median income) in times of economic crisis. The Irish scholar underlined the importance of using alternative measures and proposed using a tiered EU-wide approach to consistent poverty.

The issue of adaptive preference was addressed by research from South Africa, which found a certain level of agreement in the identification of necessities between homelands and more wealthy areas. Bryan Perry guided the audience through his study of living standards, exploring material deprivation among the poor but also the material wealth of the rich, widening the scope of the debate to both necessities and luxuries.

Finally, Bradshaw's presentation explored children's subjective wellbeing. His approach can be considered an example of what Hartley Dean calls a 'thick' (or extended) notion of well-being; different from other research aimed at the understanding of happiness, his research develops a theoretical framework based on children's perspective.

The examples above illustrate the richness and breadth of the event, which also included presentations on the re-emergence of the moral underclass discourse and cultural deficit theory, the different understandings of the term poverty and necessities across cultures, the use of well-being in research on developing countries and issues around food consumption in Latin America. All speakers reminded the audience of the huge contribution to these topics made by the much missed Professor Peter Townsend (1928-2009).

A complete list of speakers and presentations can be found at www.poverty.ac.uk/content/conference.

For a full version of the review see Antonucci and Pomati (2011) *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice* Vol.19 (2).

Lorenza Antonucci and Marco Pomati

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE IN THE SHEFFIELD CITY REGION

25 MAY 2011

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD, UK.

On 25th May 2011, an open forum involving over 40 academics, businesspeople and local stakeholders took place in the Interdisciplinary Centre of the Social Sciences at the University of Sheffield. The event, co-funded by the SPA and HEIF 4, marks the beginning of 'Project Resilience' - a research project focusing on aspects of economic resilience within regional economies. The aim of the open forum was to debate different strategies to make the Sheffield City Region economy more resilient in light of continued economic transformation and public sector cuts, the outcome of which will now inform the focus of the research project.

The day began with Ekosgen and Yorkshire Cities presenting their 2011 'Index of Economic Resilience', which highlighted variation in the Sheffield City Region. Other presentations from the City Council, Chamber of Commerce and CFE (formerly the Center for Enterprise) highlighted the challenges, pathways and practicalities of becoming more economically resilient by focusing governance, skills and work. One of the key topics within the day's discussions was the implications of the transition from Regional Development Agencies to the newly formed Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The next phase of Project Resilience is to embark on a programme of policy-relevant research building on the outcomes from the forum. The research will begin by examining the challenges facing the Sheffield City Region, with the aim of developing a stronger evidence base for better informed policy making. A report will be published in Autumn 2011, and a further dissemination event co-hosted with Ekosgen and Yorkshire Cities to which SPA members are most welcome.

For more information contact Dr Peter Rodgers (peter.rodgers@shef.ac.uk) or Dr Tim Vorley (tim.vorley@shef.ac.uk), or visit the project website (www.project-resilience.co.uk).

CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING: THE RESEARCH & POLICY CHALLENGES

YORK, 27-29 JULY 2011

The 3rd biennial conference of the International Society for Child Indicators (ISCI) – to be held in York (UK) from 27-29 July 2011 and supported by a large grant from the SPA – will pursue the theme of 'Children's Well-Being: The Research & Policy Challenges'.

Over 180 abstracts have been accepted from contributors in more than 30 countries, and it is expected that 300 delegates will gather for what will be the first ISCI conference to be held in Europe – previous events were held in Chicago (2007) and Sydney (2009).

The abstracts cover the following themes:

- National and international surveys of children
- Subjective child well-being
- International comparisons of child well-being
- National child well-being strategies
- National reports on child well-being
- Child well-being in developing countries especially Africa, Asia and Latin America
- Combining qualitative and quantitative measures
- Indicators in evaluation studies
- Community level child well-being indicators
- Constructing indices
- Longitudinal studies
- Different domains of child well-being
- Listening to children/child participation in research
- Inequality among children, intergenerational transitions
- Policies services that achieve good outcomes for children

Plenary lectures will include Professor Kathleen Kiernan; Peter Adamson and a panel on child poverty and well-being.

York, an exquisitely preserved medieval city in the north of England, was the northern headquarters of the Roman Empire (Eboracum) and the site of the coronation of Constantine the Great. Subsequently, it was a large Viking settlement (Jorvik). The conference dinner will be held in the National Railway Museum.

Full details of the conference including the draft programme and all abstracts can be found on the conference website <http://www.york.ac.uk/conferences/ISCI2011/>. Those wishing to attend can also register on-line. Members of ISCI or the UK SPA pay a reduced conference fee, as do students. Exhibition space is also available to anyone who would like to book a stall.

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. During 2011, 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 Large Grants Officer, Majella Kilkey (M.M.Kilkey@hull.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 Small Grants Officer, Kate Bradley (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).

SCOTLAND AFTER MAY 2011 – Towards a ‘new’ Scotland?

Gerry Mooney of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Open University in Scotland, considers the political and policy implications of the SNP’s victory in the May 2011 Scottish Parliament Elections.



Seismic, historic, mould-breaking, transformational! These are just some of the terms used to describe the Scottish National Party’s (SNP) unprecedented success in the 2011 Scottish elections. Few could have predicted the outcome – including even the most fervent and committed SNP supporters. Without a doubt it was an outstanding result for the SNP and perhaps not surprisingly it has generated news headlines across the world, many of which see in the SNP victory the beginning of the end of the United Kingdom.

Such claims have been voiced before by some commentators, for instance when devolution was enacted in 1998, and again following the 2007 Scottish elections when the SNP managed to form a minority government. Certainly the political landscape of Scotland – and that of the UK – is very different following the 2010 UK general election and the 2011 Scottish election, and once again Scotland appears to be divergent from the rest of the UK. In May 2010 the Tories managed to hold their one Scottish seat and gained only 16% of the vote. Their subsequent coalition partners won 11 seats and 19% of the vote. The SNP gained six seats and a disappointing 20% of the vote – and the Labour Party won 41 seats and 42% of votes cast. The 2010 general election was important not only in that it marked the political landscape of Scotland as sharply divergent from the rest of the UK, but this also helped to set the scene for the 2011 Scottish elections.

In these elections the SNP scored 45% and 44% in the constituency and regional votes, with Labour on 32% and 26%, with the Conservatives trailing a poor third on 13.9% and 12.4% respectively and the Liberal Democrats on only 8% and 5% on each vote. This was not only a resounding

defeat for the UK government coalition partners, but also for the party which has since the late 1950s been the staunchest defender of the unity of the UK state – Labour, who won only 37 seats against 69 for the SNP.

In the May 2011 Scottish election campaign, Labour presented itself as the only party able to protect Scotland from the savage cuts introduced by the UK Coalition government, even if some of these were to be administered by the Scottish government, neglecting in the process to present any coherent vision for the Scottish Parliament and the future direction of government in Scotland. For many years now Labour has relied on an approach which presents the SNP and nationalism in very negative terms. This approach was a resounding failure in 2011 and while Labour’s overall share of the vote was only marginally down on May 2007, many Labour voters stayed at home, particularly in some of its key heartland constituencies in Glasgow and the rest of West Central Scotland.

A vision for Scotland

By contrast the SNP, while also presenting the UK Coalition government as anti-Scottish, were able to build on their period in office as a minority government to project a vision for Scotland that won the appeal of many Scottish voters. Their track record in government, implementing a number of progressive and popular measures, also meant that on some key social and public policy issues they were able to outflank Labour on the left by promising a continuing commitment to no student fees, to no privatisation of the NHS, to a range of other policy proposals that many would see as classic ‘old Labour’. By contrast Labour’s campaign was entirely negative, with no real sense of what a Labour controlled Scottish government would look like or what vision for Scotland it was advancing.

That only around 23% of the electorate in Scotland actually voted for the SNP, and that Labour’s support has remained broadly steady since 2007 (and most observers believe that were there a general election tomorrow Labour would win well in Scotland), tells us that caution is needed when using the terms ‘seismic’ or in claiming that the country has been ‘united’ behind the SNP, as one newspaper editorial put it. There is also certainty that the SNP government will be a cutting government, administering some of the deepest cuts in public services ever seen in Scotland, and Scotland remains a deeply unequal society, with inequalities rising by some measures since 1999.

However, the result of the 2011 election could be said to be path-breaking in a number of ways. It has seen the first majority government since devolution in 1999 – and we should not forget that the Scottish Parliament was designed to prevent a majority government, encouraging coalition as part of a ‘new politics’, as well as to ensure that the nationalists would never win complete control. On this criterion alone the result is unprecedented but it also heralds a very different context for relations between Scotland and the rest of the UK.

An independent Scotland?

SNP leader and First Minister, Alex Salmond, was not slow to proclaim that his was a victory for Scotland, for the building of a ‘new Scotland’ with the nation behind it. The SNP were also quick to announce that they would hold a referendum on independence during the lifetime of the parliament, leading Prime Minister David Cameron to announce that he would ‘campaign to keep our United Kingdom together with every single fibre I have’.

Salmond and the SNP have already
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SOCIAL POLICY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Ann Marie Gray of the Institute for Research in Social Studies, University of Ulster, maps the challenges for Northern Ireland arising from the 2010 Spending Review and calls for a critical debate on social policy priorities.



The UK Spending Review resulted in a loss of £4 billion from the Northern Ireland (NI) budget over the spending review period. There is no doubt that this presents serious challenges for social policy in the region, particularly given a weak labour market, levels of need and the fact that provision in key areas of social policy including adult social care, childcare and early years provision already lags behind other areas of the UK.

The process of agreeing a budget for NI took some time. It was conducted in a very piecemeal department-by-department way and lacked the collective responsibility normally associated with cabinet government. The draft budget published in December 2010 was not accompanied by a Programme for Government and was therefore unrelated to any identified social priorities or objectives, apart from a reiteration by the Minister for Finance that the priority for the Executive would continue to be economic growth. This lack of policy priorities resulted in a salami-slicing approach being adopted in departmental allocations. A budget was agreed on 9 March without the support of the Ulster Unionist and SDLP ministers in the Executive.

The May 2011 Assembly elections saw Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist parties returned as the two main parties. The Assembly has responsibility for most areas of social policy, yet in the previous session of government social policy had a subordinate role to economic policy with the focus on 'rebalancing the economy' by building the private sector and reducing the public sector. The previous Programme for Government (2008-11) was criticised for not having a single definitive policy. The new Programme for Government

has still not been published but, given the challenges facing NI, there is a strong case for giving much greater priority to social policy. The full impact of the public expenditure cuts has yet to be felt, and these will have a substantial effect on the poorest and most vulnerable members of the population.

Difficulty in reaching agreement with the Executive is perhaps a symptom of the mandatory coalition under which the NI Executive operates. But it was very evident between 2008 and 2011 and is argued to have contributed to a cautious and conservative approach to social policy making. Agreement was reached with regard to some pragmatic measures where it was relatively easy to find consensus, including the abolition of prescription charges and free travel for the over-65s. However, in other more contentious areas of social policy - including reform of local government and arrangements for transfer to secondary school - there has been policy impasse.

Key challenges for the new government

The NI labour market continues to be weak. The latest Labour Force Survey (May 2011) shows a trend of rising joblessness while rates are falling in the UK as a whole. The actual numbers claiming unemployment-related benefits are at a 13 year high. Almost half of claimants (47.7%) have been unemployed for a year or more. Unemployment is likely to increase as jobs are lost in the public sector, which accounts for 32% of all employee jobs. It is estimated that jobs losses as a result of the Spending Review will be in the region of 35,000 - 6% of total jobs in the region. Yet, the Welfare to Work reforms being introduced in NI, as elsewhere in the UK, assume availability of surplus employment. The lack of jobs combined with very stringent

benefit conditionality measures will increase poverty. Final decisions on welfare reform policy rests with the NI Assembly as social security is a devolved matter, but the NI administration has shown little inclination to depart from the principle of parity.

There is real concern that the lack of progress in policy terms coupled with the impact of welfare reform measures will lead to an increase in child poverty. The Child Poverty Strategy published in March 2011 has been criticised for lacking detail and for the absence of action plans, targets, measurable outcomes and an attached budget - deficiencies which have been very apparent with regard to earlier inter-departmental strategies such as the anti-poverty strategy and the gender equality strategy. The March budget did contain a proposal to establish an £80m Social Investment Fund aimed at reducing poverty and unemployment by "building pathways to employment, ending dereliction, increasing community services and tackling the systemic issues linked to deprivation". The funding, totalling £80 million, is to be allocated across the budget period. There was no discussion of whether this money would have been better allocated across existing programmes and there are as yet no published criteria in relation to how funding will be allocated.

There has been considerable pressure on the Executive to address NI's very poor childcare provision - especially given the obligations on lone parents to seek work. In a post-budget announcement in April the Minister for Finance allocated £12m over four years for childcare - but still no childcare strategy. At the same time £61m was allocated to NI's sporting facilities with the bulk of the money going to soccer and Gaelic games - double the investment originally anticipated.

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A SOCIAL POLICY ASSOCIATION

Where would one start in setting up a Social Policy Association in Tropical Africa, and which direction would it initially take?

Dr Omondi Ahawo of Maseno University, Kenya, discusses social issues facing African countries, the problems facing social policy as an academic discipline, and the work of the recently constituted African Social Policy Association.



In the first place, there is no difference between policy and politics in Africa, deliberately or otherwise. Secondly, there is no awareness of the existence of social policy as an academic discipline which can be taught at all levels of university education.

I came from Bristol with a PhD in Social Policy in 1999 and went straight to the Directorate of Personnel Management (DPM) in Nairobi to report my presence and availability for the service of my country. I was told that social policy did not exist in the list of disciplines in their register. The situation is the same to date. Why? Because policy specialists do not sit well with Third World politics because of their tendency to speak to power. Development in Africa is still guided by classical economics and capitalism.

Kenya is a typical poor, capitalist country in tropical Africa. For the sake of realistic development, academicians in and for Africa have to be ready to turn this pain into gain. The best way to understand the genesis of the African Social Policy Association (ASPA) is to keenly consider the future of Africa in the current absence of social development. The Alma Ata Declaration's 'Health for All by the year 2000' did not materialize, and nor did 'Education for All', Water for All, etc. The Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015 were made in New York and had a tangential relationship with African development needs and requirements. The list continues to get longer.

Lack of policy is also policy. Therefore, one way to underdevelop a society is either

to do nothing about a real policy issue - for example, poverty, health, education, water, housing or employment - or to do something but in a way that minimally or never benefits the average citizen. Since most African regimes are still centralised and capitalistic, the trickle down formula only works to the benefit of the top. Kenya is a classical example of this scenario. Such free market regimes have also been kept in place by outside interests that are themselves welfare states.

The extent to which the Beveridge evils (want, squalor, ignorance, disease and shelter) became the basis for the first welfare state in the world has a lot from which countries in Africa can learn. It would not be a dream for one to argue that a truly independent state must make a conscious decision to become a welfare state at some point in time in the future - however long it takes. Instead of African countries wondering how the Asian Tigers made it to where they are now, each of them should take the crucial first step on the journey of a thousand miles. It is this journey that ASPA intends to take, alongside countries in Africa.

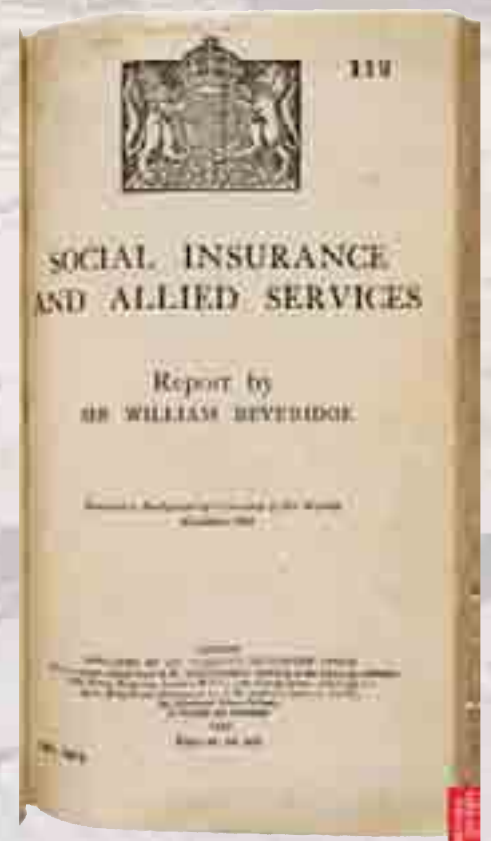
Beveridge and poverty in Africa

It is important to take another look at the relationship between the Beveridge evils and poverty in Africa:

First, every human being has some 'wants' at each stage of his or her life. Most are sorted by money - any adult without employment and income will not be able to satisfy her or his basic wants. Kenya, for example, is currently going through an "exponential rise in the cost of living ... which has badly battered the poor and

the low- income earners, in the process pushing a few more thousands into the poverty index"¹.

Two schools of thought emerge from this debate. One argues that "What we need is to grow the economy so that we can impact on real wages and benefit the majority of Kenyans" (ibid. page 6). This is typical of trickle-down economics. The second is that "We need to cushion the very poor and these measures seek long term sustainable solutions to high cost of oils and fuel, while providing immediate relief to the poor and the vulnerable" (ibid. page 6). It is highly sensible that the very



ATION FOR TROPICAL AFRICA

poor and vulnerable need immediate relief as well as cushioning from the face of death.

Second, it is laughable for any government which claims to be modern and democratic if her citizens are living in squalid conditions. The fact that Kenya is proud of having Kibera as the largest slum in Africa, and perhaps in the whole world, tells it all. The problem for social policy is that a growing number of Kenyans and Africans are living in squalor as urban and rural decay run apace.



Statue of Jomo Kenyatta, the first Prime Minister and President of Kenya. © flickr.com/rogiro

Third, it is true that an ignorant person is a blind person and that education is the key to development. Kenyan freedom fighters struggled for eradication of poverty, ignorance and disease. It would puzzle any curious onlooker as to how the minds of Kenyatta and Odinga, for example, were similar in their thinking to Beveridge, whose *Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services* (1942) formed the basis of the welfare state. By the end of the century Kenya was among the poorest countries in the world. What happened?

Fourth, the question about universalised and targeted access to health services is seriously contentious, especially in the Third World. Just as education and many others, access to the best health services a country can offer its citizens is a basic right. This issue has marked time

in Kenya until the current Minister for Health came out clearly about the need for a universal health insurance for all Kenyans. While political economists argue that this amounts to bringing socialism into their house by the back door, social policy professionals like Beveridge and the Kenyan freedom fighters would fully agree with the Minister.

Finally, as a basic right, access to decent shelter is among the big five. The obvious way for under developing the Third World has been to encourage the growth of dualism in all aspects of the economy. The fact that Kenya was 'forced' to develop along rural/urban, formal/informal, modern/traditional sectors has everlasting impact on the development of Kenya and Africa in general. How do Kenyans in rural areas - say, Turkana - continue to live in such structures, while the Government keeps looking away? How can natives of rural western Kenya be living in so-called traditional huts in the 21st century? ASPA was conceived from a serious concern for these issues.

The African Social Policy Association

The registered objectives of ASPA are as follows:

- To further the development of the discipline of social policy in Kenya and the rest of Africa.
- To promote research in social development in Kenya and Africa.
- To promote education and training in social policy and social development in Kenya and Africa.
- To offer consultancies that relate social policy research, analysis and advisory services to all sectors and all bodies that may require the consultancies and services world wide.
- To promote any publications of books, journals etc as shall be directed by the academic affairs committee.



Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, first Vice-President.
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The seriousness of the lack of social policy as an academic discipline in Africa cannot be overemphasised. For example, poverty cannot be eradicated in Kenya through the minimalist, targeted and market-based approaches that she is currently forced to exercise. Secondly, Kenyans are now slowly starting to realise that economics is no more than just an academic discipline, with nothing to do with the ordinary Kenyan or African's personal development. Economic development benefits the top, to almost virtual exclusion of the bottom of the population pyramid. This is not sustainable development in the 21st century.

(Endnotes)

- 1 *Special Report* in the The Financial Journal, page 6 in the Standard, Nairobi May 3, 2011.

WOMEN AND ACTIVE AGEING

Implications for Policy in Malta

The unequal distribution of economic resources and women's poverty within households in Malta may be underestimated, and requires the government to look abroad for policy lessons argues
Dr Frances Camilleri-Cassar of the **University of Malta** and *Special Associate Professor at the* **University of Nottingham**.



Women account for just over half the population in Malta with women living longer than their male contemporaries, and while fertility rates are low the population is ageing and contributing to the development where fewer workers support more retirees. Statistical data suggest that women in the older age brackets are at a lesser risk-of-poverty than men in the same age group, as the proportion of women living in low-income households in Malta is lower than the proportion for men, and the gender gap is the smallest at EU-27 level.¹ However, numerical values must be handled with caution within Malta's welfare regime of an extreme male breadwinner model²: Malta's poverty figures may be underestimating the problem of an unequal distribution of economic resources, and women's poverty within households – especially with women's low labour market participation and their financial dependence on men.

The state has made some progress in implementing measures to deliver on its employment and education challenges. However, Malta has the highest share of low educational attainment at EU-27 level, and also distinguishes itself by the large gap in the employment rate between women and men. The theme of lifelong learning is recurrent on the state's political agenda, although - despite claims of good practice - Malta still lacks a coherent policy strategy and measures to encourage the employment and social inclusion of women and men of late working and early retirement age. Overall,

a gender mainstreaming approach in the development of lifelong learning and training is still missing in Malta, and a more strategic approach is needed for mobilising measures specifically for the purpose of enhancing active ageing and achieving gender equality.

Pension reform

An apparent problem for Malta is the high level of benefit relative to the minimum wage that may discourage effective job search, and possibly even encourage undeclared work, and where reinforcement of obligations and imposition of penalties in the event of non-compliance in formal work is weak. Moreover, the share of low-skilled workers in the 55 – 64 age group is at over 80%, which accounts for the low share in employment rates of older workers³. The ratio of elderly non-workers to workers, which reflects the effective economic old age dependency ratio when assessing the impact of ageing on budgetary expenditure above all for pension public schemes, is overwhelming. The recently enacted pension reform seems to reflect a progressive alignment of the retirement age of women to that of men although, in practice, Malta has made limited progress.⁴ For example, the state is still without an occupational pension scheme,⁵ and while a number of countries have implemented systemic pension reforms, shifting part of the previously public pillar to a mandatory funded private pillar, Malta remains without.⁶ Malta's coverage ratio at 65 years is decreasing,⁷ although the current low coverage can be explained by a situation where women are not entitled to their own contributory old age benefits but are considered covered by their spouses' pensions.⁸

Elderly women are particularly likely to have low incomes, and to be exposed to Malta's social security system and its treatment of women as dependants of men.⁹ Malta's tax and benefit system is biased in favour of men, and the feminisation of poverty in Malta is partly due to a social security system that reinforces women's economic dependence on men. In practice, elderly women are often left with insufficient funds or entitlement to a retirement pension due to an interrupted career, and the gender imbalance in pension entitlement is exacerbated in case of marital breakdown when women must resort to social benefits as means of subsistence.¹⁰

Local voluntary involvement in the social field has been in Malta for quite some time and many elderly people are involved in voluntary work and community service. Indeed, over half the population (68%) suggests they would consider participating in community work or volunteering after retirement.¹¹ In parallel, the national health service provides comprehensive public healthcare at the point of delivery to all residents, and long-term care covers a broad spectrum of people and benefits. However, despite women's generally greater longevity, policies in long-term care remain gender neutral, and do not target elderly women who are the most vulnerable and at risk of poverty. While longer life in itself exposes women more than men to the degenerative diseases of old age, and to the disabilities imposed by reduction and loss of ordinary function, Malta stands by the ideology that women in old age are integrated into their family. However, this does not necessarily reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion

among elderly and dependant women in Malta. For example, address to adequate housing and independent living is still gender neutral, and the specificities and needs of elderly women and men are largely ignored.

Despite claims of good practice, Malta still lacks a coherent policy strategy, common goals and methods for the employment and social inclusion of women and men of late working and early retirement age. Most good practices are as good as they can get - however, they remain sporadic and there is little evidence of gender mainstreaming, or that a gender impact assessment will be carried out to improve the quality and efficiency of measures. Is Malta willing to look abroad for lessons in the development of effective policies with real impact on women's lives, and to make active ageing more profitable and the costs of economic inactivity and early retirement more obvious and less attractive?

Dr Frances Camilleri-Cassar is the author of 'Gender Equality in Maltese Social Policy? Graduate Women and the Male Breadwinner Model', published by Agenda Malta in 2005.

(Endnotes)

- 1 The Social Situation in the European Union 2009, European Commission, p. 286.
- 2 Camilleri-Cassar, F. (2005) *Gender Equality in Maltese Social Policy? Graduate Women and the Male Breadwinner Model*, Agenda, Malta.
- 3 *Employment in Europe (2007)*, European Commission, p.97.
- 4 The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060)', European Economy, n.2, 2009 http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/publication_summary14911_en.htm p. 20.
- 5 The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060)', European Economy, n.2, 2009 http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/publication_summary14911_en.htm p. 82.
- 6 The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060)', European Economy, n.2, 2009 http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/publication_summary14911_en.htm p. 82.
- 7 The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060)', European Economy, n.2, 2009 http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/publication_summary14911_en.htm p. 92, Table 14.
- 8 The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060)', European Economy, n.2, 2009 http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/publication_summary14911_en.htm p. 92. Table 14.
- 9 Pascall, G. (1997) *Social Policy: a new feminist analysis*, Routledge.
- 10 National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008 – 2010 Malta, p.48.
- 11 Flash Eurobarometer 2008 no. 247, European Commission, DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities – Unit E1.

SCOTLAND AFTER MAY 2011 - continued

demanding that the Scotland Bill - currently going through Westminster, and promising more fiscal powers for Scotland by 2016 - is both toughened up and brought forward, with the UK government prepared to give way on the question of the borrowing powers under the remit of the Scottish government. For the SNP, control of Corporation Tax and full devolution of Crown Estate revenues (particularly in relation to revenues from the resource-rich Scottish seabed) is also a must. Politicians and newspaper columnists have also been speculating on how the UK armed forces might be divided between Scotland and the residual UK, among other issues. We are in for a period of renewed tensions between governments in Holyrood and in Westminster.

Yet the SNP are also faced with some serious questions. Arguably, relatively few people in Scotland have a clear idea what an independent Scotland would look like and how it would finance itself – not least after the economic collapse of some of the role models advanced by the SNP in the not too distant past – notably Ireland and Iceland. And what does independence actually mean in practice? Would Scotland adopt the Euro? Who would be head of state? Might border controls be put in place? There are as yet many unanswered questions.

That the SNP has a mandate to push for independence is clear – but already there are debates around both strategy and the timescale for this. New terms have been

used to describe some other short-term possibilities – 'devo-max' within the context of the UK, or 'independence-lite', where the Scottish government would share with the UK parliament responsibility for defence, foreign policy and social security. The May 2011 Scottish election result has UK-wide implications for the welfare state and for questions of both territorial and social justice.

In all of this we have been reminded once again that devolution is a process – one that is now entering a new and uncertain stage and in which the issue of Scottish independence is no longer an eccentric demand but is now among the key political issues facing the entire UK.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE

Social policy research should be at the heart of effective government, especially in straitened times. Recent stories in the media about the organisation of frontline healthcare services, the potential damage to social cohesion of rising unemployment and the impact of higher university fees on social mobility are just three examples of the crucial role played by social policy research and the social sciences – in their broadest sense – in shaping society.

We know that evidence of the impact of social science is everywhere around us. David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, has commented that he attends meetings most days where social science evidence is used. Yet it is apparent from the media that the wider public is not aware of the crucial role that the social sciences play in policy making, let alone what ‘social science’ actually means. The thinking apparent in last Autumn’s Spending Review and the implications of the changes to HE funding provided warning bells about the need to take action. As a result the Academy of Social Sciences decided that a Campaign for Social Science was urgently needed.



The Campaign will build on the lessons learned from the highly successful Campaign for Science and Engineering, which began 25 years ago as ‘Save British Science’, together with its own work in the *Making the Case for the Social Sciences* series of publications to demonstrate the very real difference social science research makes to society.

Top of the Campaign’s ‘to do’ list is to create a popular vision of what social science is and the difference it makes, as well as to raise awareness of the high quality research that is being carried out in the UK in particular. It is also working to stimulate debate and dialogue, promote the value of social science education, encourage social scientists to publicise their work more widely and engage with the media.

As Professor Cary Cooper, Chair of the Academy of Social Sciences, commented: “It is time for social science to come out of the woodwork and make itself understood; if no-one knows what it is for, who will fight for it?”

What is the Campaign doing?

Changing attitudes will not happen overnight. So the Campaign has to put in place the structures and processes that will see it through the next five years at least. This means getting known, building networks and relationships, and developing infrastructures that will ensure the Campaign’s activities are built on sound foundations.

There is a number of audiences. Broadly, these are policy makers and the general public, with each requiring different approaches. There is an opportunity to give only a flavour of activities here. For government we have, for example, been developing relationships with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Social Science and Policy and the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology (at their request). We have now secured agreement to make two presentations a year to the All-Party Group – of around 50 parliamentarians interested in social science – and showcase social science research. And we are speaking to the Select

By **Anne Nicholls**,
Press Officer,
Campaign for
Social Science



Committee about current and forthcoming issues we can start gathering evidence for.

For the general public we have begun to issue a series of press releases and articles (which we have commissioned) on the relevance and excellence of UK social science. As part of this work - thanks to the generous offer of a research assistant from the University of Northumbria - we have, in conjunction with the Deans of social science faculties in UK universities, begun research monitoring on the state of social science capacity and capability in the UK to inform future comments.

How can SPA members get involved?

First, you can come along to one of the regional roadshows that are taking place around the country and tell us what you think. Details of these are on the Campaign website (address at foot of article).

Second, you can tell us about how your successful research has made a real difference to society. The Campaign team will endeavour to get those stories known so that the SPA’s own voice can join the wider debate.





MEMBERS OF THE CAMPAIGN BOARD

The Campaign Board is headed by Tony Crook of Sheffield University, a former Pro Vice Chancellor and current chair of the national homelessness charity Shelter. Other members are: Professor Paul Wiles (ex Government Chief Social Scientist); Kate Barker AcSS (ex Monetary Policy Committee); Ceridwen Roberts AcSS (Academy Council); Professor Michael Harloe AcSS (Academy Council and former VC Salford University); Professor Ivor Gaber AcSS (Professor of Political Journalism); Judith Mudd (CEO British Sociological Association); and Helena Djurkovic, CEO of the PSA.

Finally, you can donate to the Campaign. To deliver the Campaign we need to raise £300,000 over three years. The SPA has taken the lead in making a really generous and worthwhile donation, but we also need the support of individuals. We have already reached the first £50,000 milestone but we need to keep up the momentum. Any donation, no matter how small, is gratefully received and will be put to work straight away. One way might be to make a standing order of, say, £2 a month. The amount is not hugely noticeable but will build up

over time. It is not simply about money, but also about demonstrating that we have a broad base of support amongst junior and senior researchers – those who have made a career in the social sciences and those still building one – and amongst academics, practitioners and policy makers. That is why your participation is crucial.

If you would like to donate, please visit the Campaign website <http://www.campaignforsocialscience.org.uk> and click on the 'donate' button.



SOCIAL POLICY IN NORTHERN IRELAND - *continued*

Key budgetary decisions remain to be made by the new Executive, including those on tuition fees and the future of the Education Maintenance Allowance. While politicians from the two main parties continue to express their opposition to tuition fees there is also an unwillingness to raise additional revenue through local taxation by raising rates or introducing water charges. There is cross-party support for the devolution of the setting of Corporation Tax with a review to reducing it. The case for a differential rate relates

partly to geographical proximity to the Republic of Ireland where Corporation Tax is 12.5% and the need to make NI more competitive in attracting foreign direct investment. The claim that NI would benefit from 80-90,000 extra private sector jobs over 20 years has not been well-evidenced. In March 2011 the UK government launched a consultation on rebalancing the NI economy (the outcome of which will raise interesting issues with regard to Scotland and Wales). If NI is to be allowed to levy a lower rate of

Corporation Tax the reduction in the block grant could have a significant negative impact on the development of social welfare.

Ultimately what is needed is a critical debate about social policy and decisions about what principles and values should underpin social policy. The mandatory coalition perhaps restricts this, but it is difficult to see how social policy in NI can develop and respond to these challenges without a clearer identification of priorities.

FACING FORWARDS AND CONFRONTING CHALLENGES: ISSUES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
13 MAY 2011

The idea for 'Facing Forwards and Confronting Challenges' emerged from findings of the joint SWAP/SPA 'Postgraduates who Teach Social Policy' survey which was completed in 2010. In line with similar surveys, postgraduates were asked about their experience of teaching with a view to identifying areas of teaching practice which the SPA and the Subject Centre for Social Policy and Social Work might support. The survey highlighted some interesting practical insights (for example, postgraduates teaching four hours or more were confident teachers than those doing more) as well as some areas where UK-wide resources could be usefully developed – such as information on resources for teaching qualitative and quantitative methods. However, the most striking finding was that postgraduates really valued opportunities to critically reflect on why they were doing what they were doing when it came to teaching. Why do we assess student presentations? Why do we discuss in groups? Why is the curriculum designed as it is, and how does the module I teach fit into the wider picture? In response the SPA and SWAP created a programme to stimulate thinking around those very questions - why we do what we do in the way that we do, and within the constraints of the university environment.

The main programme

SPA postgraduate representative Rachael Dobson put together a stunning programme of speakers who identified a wide range of challenges as well as possible responses to them.

Shona Hunter (University of Leeds) explored mainstream understandings of social policy. Amongst other things, Shona discussed how the readings we set suggest epistemological and ontological positions to our students and have the potential to 'trouble' representations of the discipline. Some of this 'trouble' feeds through into student evaluation of courses, and Shona suggested ways in which these responses could feed into preparations for future students' learning – such as students who have completed a module writing a letter to those about to start.

Helen Lucey (University of Bath) continued the exploration of emotions in the classroom by offering a psychosocial analysis of 'love, hate and learning'. She argued that most work in the sociology and psychology of education rests on an understanding of self, the social and the institutional as governed by rational processes. The power of irrational, unconscious processes and emotions in learning relationships (particularly student anxiety about achieving and the impact this can have on lecturers) can be the elephant in the room.

Mary Evans (LSE) offered some thoughts across generations about the constraints facing scholarship - in particular, the increasing casualisation of lecturing staff, the expansion of HE and the implications for how and what we teach, the amount of teaching taking place, the growth in numbers of students working whilst studying, and the mechanistic culture that over-dependence on aims and objectives can foster. Despite these constraints, Mary suggested that academics were still well placed to craft innovative and creative learning by thinking in binary and oppositional ways.

In addition, delegates took part in two workshops where they had the opportunity to discuss and explore challenges in further depth.

24 people attended the event, the majority of whom were postgraduates in social

policy. Several were just beginning to teach or reflecting on teaching they had recently completed. Feedback was unanimously positive about the focus and content of the event - all delegates agreed or strongly agreed that they would be able to build on the information received at the event with one commenting that they would "enhance practice by using ideas/rationalisations raised". Delegates particularly enjoyed the opportunity to "talk through challenges", "meet like-minded teachers", and "the opportunity to reflect" (with one commenting that "all workshops and plenaries allowed exploration and reflection"). They particularly appreciated "the chance to hear interesting, alternative and exciting ideas from practitioners/thinkers in my field".

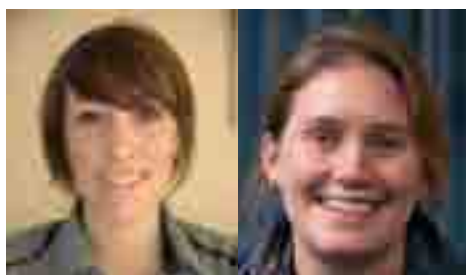
Conclusion

On reflection, there are several lessons from this event which may be valuable for future events for social policy academics with a learning and teaching focus. It may sound obvious, but the first is the true value of identifying and challenging assumptions underpinning the status quo. By actively asking why we do what we do rather than how to fit in with current practice, this event suggested a way to avoid drift and disassociation from dominant learning and teaching discourses in universities. It is not at all clear what exactly it is about what we do in the public sector that needs such close monitoring, but it is important to understand the assumptions behind that monitoring. Secondly, postgraduates starting out in teaching deeply appreciate reflections on the learner-teacher relations from likeminded teachers 'rooted in experience'. Hearing interesting, alternative and exciting ideas freed them to do likewise. Interestingly, when asked for ideas for future events suggestions included "how to host an event – the costing, resources required, pitfalls, venue, audience" and "It would be great to see more events like this, perhaps setting up regional networks or similar".

Rebecca Johnson, SWAP

"This was a very stimulating event. The workshops provided very good opportunities for discussion of issues that are often neglected when thinking about learning and teaching and the presentations were most interesting and highly relevant." – delegate.

NEW SURVEY TO MAP UK SOCIAL POLICY TEACHING



Kate Brown and Ruth Patrick of the University of Leeds report on a forthcoming research project that will help the SPA to effectively support and serve members, and represent the subject in a time of rapid and unprecedented change.

The changes to student finance and the broader government austerity programme have scope to alter the teaching of social policy in unprecedented and profound ways. Cuts to subsidies for social science teaching and learning are already being felt, with 2011 bringing the demise of SWAP, the planned closure of the JUC-SP and the possible withdrawal of social policy teaching at some universities. The full implications of the imminent introduction of higher tuition fees for the discipline are yet to be grasped. The pace of change is rapid.

The SPA has a unique role to play in protecting and promoting the teaching of

social policy in this difficult context. What is more, in an uncertain climate and tough environment for the humanities, ensuring that those teaching social policy are included within the broader SPA community has never been more important. If the SPA is to provide the best possible and most appropriate assistance in helping academics safeguard the discipline of social policy it is first necessary to have accurate information regarding where social policy is taught and by whom. Digging even deeper, it would also be useful to find out what those currently teaching social policy identify as key challenges for the future, their training needs and related support requirements.

That is the rationale for the research project which we are currently conducting. 'The Current and Future State of Social Policy Teaching in UK HEIs' is a small-scale, exploratory study commissioned by the SPA, and funded by SWAP. SPA chair Caroline Glendinning explains the importance of this research: "Over the past decade the profile of social policy teaching and learning has changed dramatically. Single subject departments of social policy have merged with others such as social work and sociology, or into broad-based applied social science departments. Social policy teaching is also likely to form part of more vocational courses such as health and social care.

"This picture is likely to change yet further in the future as the impacts of changes in student funding begin to take effect. SPA needs to have an up-to-date picture of where social policy is taught and on which courses, and the challenges facing those who teach it. This will enable us to provide effective support and services to our members and appropriate representation for the subject in discussions with external bodies such as ESRC and HEFCE. We look forward eagerly to the results of the SWAP-

funded survey and to sharing these with our members."

This research project has two central parts. Firstly, we are conducting a desk-based audit of all UK HEIs to discover where social policy is taught and in what context. In particular, we are looking at whether it is taught in single or joint honours, as part of broader social sciences and related degree courses, as well as capturing information on course content and cost. This audit will inform the second element of this study - an Internet survey of those teaching social policy across the UK. This will generate data regarding who is teaching social policy, their contact hours with students, identified training requirements, concerns for the future and ideas for the future role of the SPA.

We are planning to launch the survey in September 2011, and will report the findings before the end of the year. In developing and designing the survey, we want to draw on and incorporate the ideas of SPA members. To this end, we will have a presence at the SPA annual conference in Lincoln and would encourage anyone with thoughts on key areas that the survey should cover to get in touch with us directly.

Most importantly, though, if an email pops into your in-box asking you to complete this Internet survey, please do take the five minutes necessary to fill it in and help us build a better, more accurate picture of the reality of social policy teaching in HEIs in Britain today. Please also pass the survey onto colleagues teaching social policy, as this will enable us to generate the fullest possible data set and help in the broader project of building a sustainable future for the teaching of social policy across the UK.

For more information contact Kate Brown (k.e.brown@leeds.ac.uk) and Ruth Patrick (r.patrick@leeds.ac.uk)

HEA FUNDING & EVENTS

1 June-2 June 2011 – Scottish Higher Education Employability Conference: strengthening partnerships with employers, Heriot Watt University.
www.heacademy.ac.uk/eventsandnetworking

6 June 2011 – More with less: teaching, learning and assessment strategies that enhance the student learning experience and cost less (virtual workshop via Elluminate).
www.heacademy.ac.uk/eventsandnetworking

15 June 2011

Deadline for call for individual teaching development grant scheme bids.

www.heacademy.ac.uk/funding

For more information on these and other forthcoming events visit www.heacademy.ac.uk.

NEW SWAP RESOURCES

Embedding Internationalisation in the UK Social Policy and Social Work Curriculum

Debates about what global perspectives can contribute to curriculum development in both social policy and social work are once again to the fore of learning and teaching. (Yeates and Holden, 2009; Lawrence et al, 2009). The themes for the Higher Education Academy's call for bids for teaching development grants are internationalisation and employability.

Zoe Irving, Nicola Yeates and Pat Young first argued the case for the integration of a global perspective within UK social policy teaching in their article 'What can global perspectives contribute to curriculum development in social policy' (Irving et al 2005). They concluded that the signs were that "a meaningful engagement was not only established but expanding". Jackie Powell and Judy Robison's review of the international dimension in social work education (Powell and Robison, 2007) also indicated healthy engagement with international issues at undergraduate level with the caveat that this might be adversely affected "without an explicit commitment to international issues on the part of the UK Care Councils" (2007, p.296).

"internationalisation in terms of curriculum design refers to the processes of rendering the curriculum as a whole intelligible, relevant and available to students whatever their national and cultural background and wherever they reside" (Nicola Yeates, 2011)

Infocus 08-09 (Spring 2011) is SWAP's contribution to this debate. The issue includes interviews with Nicola Yeates and Sue Lawrence, who have both led the way in arguing for increased internationalisation of the social work/social policy curriculum. Both reflect on why the internationalisation of the curriculum is important, how it might be achieved and how things have

progressed since 2005. In addition, social policy and social work academics provide four case studies of how they are introducing their students to global and international themes.



Infocus 0809 can be downloaded at http://www.swap.ac.uk/docs/newsletters/infocus08_online.pdf

Colleagues may also be interested in the results of the HEA's Teaching International Students (TIS) Project (www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/internationalisation/internationalstudents).

The project has produced a Students Lifecycle Resources Bank which includes case studies, videos of focus groups recording international students experiences of university and resources designed to help staff and students with teaching and learning in the classroom.

New Information sheets

50% of postgraduates who completed the joint SPA/SWAP survey of UK postgraduates who teach social policy were teaching qualitative and quantitative methods. In addition survey respondents indicated that they would appreciate the creation of resource summaries to aid them in their teaching. Two information sheets have been produced to highlight useful resources for postgraduates teaching qualitative and quantitative methods. These are by no means comprehensive but are designed to help new teachers starting out in these areas.



These information sheets, together with further resources for new staff and educational developers, can be found at <http://www.swap.ac.uk/resources/teaching.html>.

LIFECYCLE RESOURCES BANK

Pre arrival and support

- Courses in home county
- Welcome documents

Induction

- Course preparation & academic preparedness

Teaching & Learning in the classroom

Life outside the 'classroom'

- Joining the student & local community

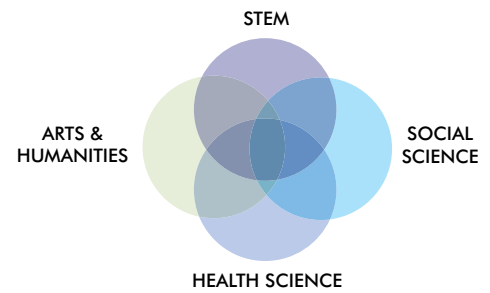
Employability and next steps

Links to:

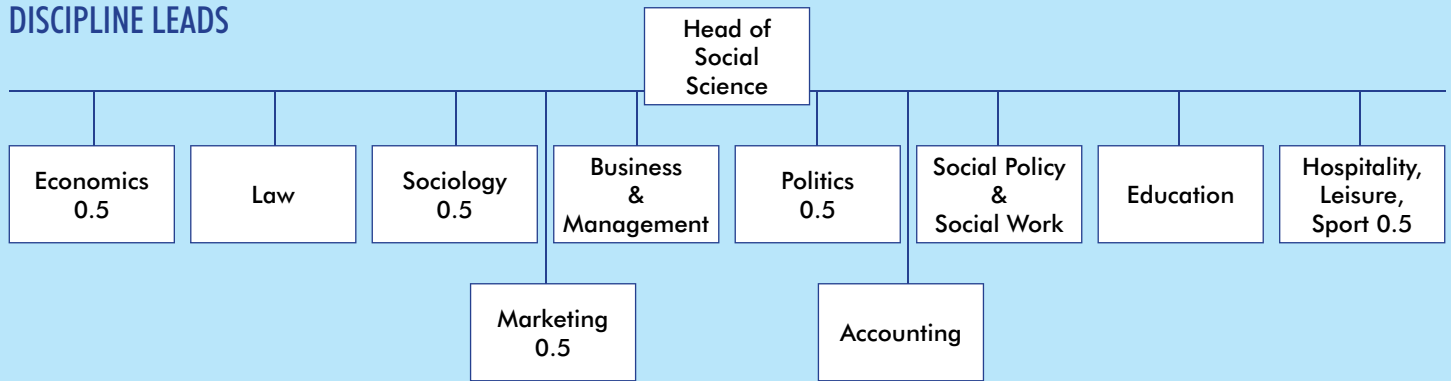
Teaching context (lectures, seminars etc)
Teaching approaches
Learning
Curriculum
Intercultural competences

FUTURE HEA SUPPORT

The Higher Education Academy's support for social work and social policy academics who teach in the UK is undergoing a significant reconfiguration. In the process, the 24 subject centres which have delivered such support to date – one of which is SWAP – will be replaced by a four faculty structure. The change is likely to be completed by September 2011. Support for social policy academics who teach will continue to be combined with support for social work academics.



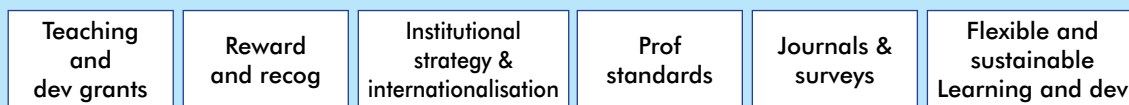
DISCIPLINE LEADS



ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS



ACADEMIC LEADS



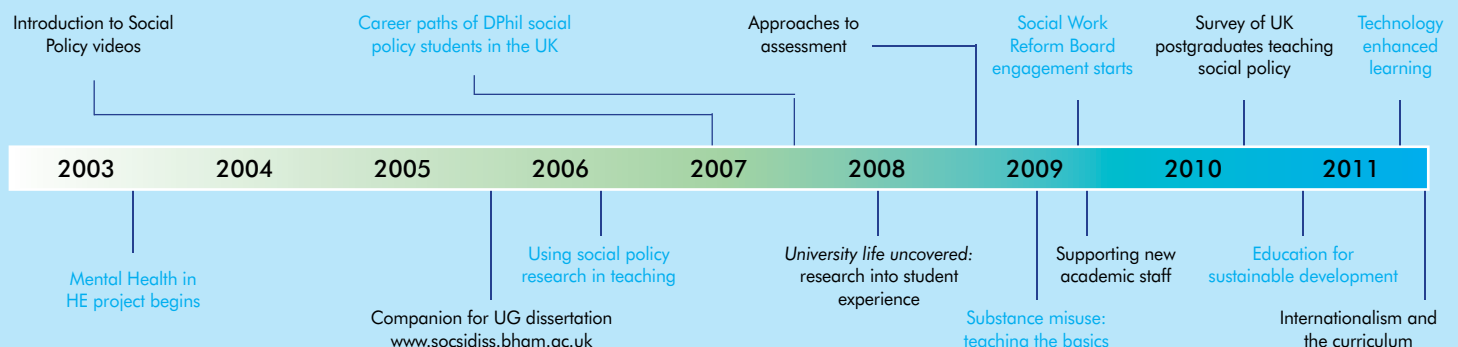
The academic development role titles profile the HEA's strategic focus, and within this new structure the emphasis will be on professional accreditation, internationalisation and flexible learning. SWAP, CSAP (Subject Centre for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics) and HSaP (Subject Centre for Health Sciences and Practice) resources will continue to be available via the HEA website (www.heacademy.ac.uk). SWAPBox (www.swapbox.ac.uk) is also a good place to find newer resources. There are now 141 users registered on SWAPBox and approximately 627 resources with many more planned.

Within this changing environment professional bodies are likely to have an increased role in supporting teaching and learning at national level. The SPA will continue to support teaching and learning, and plans are afoot to appoint postgraduate and early career representatives. The National Centre for Research Methods (www.ncrm.ac.uk) continues to support the development of research methods across the UK and The British Library (www.bl.uk) and is maintaining an exciting programme of events introducing social science postgraduates to its collections.

SWAP has had a very productive partnership with the SPA over the last 10 years, with collaboration on events, surveys and projects. Kate Brown and Ruth Patrick's survey of where and how social policy is taught across universities in the UK (see p.19) will be an important moment to review and reflect on how best to develop teaching and learning support for social policy academics in the future. The timeline below summarises some of the highlights.

SWAP TIMELINE

Selection of teaching and learning themes SWAP has engaged with over the last 10 years. Full access and more resources can be found at www.swap.ac.uk and www.swap.ac.uk/tenyears.



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 at s.a.pemberton@bristol.ac.uk.

With best wishes, Simon Pemberton

SFHA JOINS SPA

In 2009, the SPA introduced a membership category for organisations in the public and third sectors. We are steadily increasing our organisational membership and now have seven members in this category.

A recent organisational recruit is the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) - the national representative organisation for Scotland's housing associations and housing co-operatives. Its purpose is to help members provide affordable, sustainable homes and communities by means of lobbying, representation and providing policy advice and information. Founded in 1975, SFHA is based in Glasgow and has around 30 staff members, including a dedicated policy team and an events department. It produces a monthly magazine, *Housing Scotland*, as well as a monthly policy digest and a daily e-newsletter.

With mortgages and market rents being out of the price range of many people in Scotland, affordable housing is more important now than ever. Demand for housing association properties far outstrips supply. Housing associations also make a significant contribution to alleviating and preventing homelessness. The Scottish Government's target is that by 2012 every unintentionally homeless person will be entitled

to settled accommodation. Housing associations and co-operatives provide much wider benefits to the communities they serve. Many provide facilities from community centres or cafés to apprenticeships and activities for teenagers, to advice about money management and benefits entitlements. SFHA supports and promotes this essential wider role of housing associations.

SFHA's current campaign – 'Housing Benefits' - focuses on the UK Government's ill-considered, drastic changes to the welfare system, and aims to achieve changes to policy which will protect the most vulnerable people in society.

Other current top policy priorities include influencing Scottish Government housing policy and in particular the Scottish Budget. SFHA wants more money dedicated to building new houses and adapting houses for residents with particular needs (such as the elderly), making sure 'affordable' rents stay at levels that are genuinely affordable for all. It is also working with the Scottish government and the Scottish Housing Regulator to ensure that new affordable homes are built to the best possible specifications in terms of energy efficiency, so that it can help to tackle not only climate change but also fuel poverty - a problem which blights the lives of so many in Scotland.

More information about the activities and services of the Scottish Federation of Housing Federations can be found at www.sfha.co.uk.

FARNSWORTH JOINS SOCIAL POLICY REVIEW EDITORIAL TEAM

Dr Kevin Farnsworth, Lecturer in Social Policy at the University of Sheffield, has joined the editorial team of *Social Policy Review* (SPR) - the annual review of the SPA, published by The Policy Press. Each issue presents a diverse review of the best in social policy scholarship, with critical analyses of progress and change in areas of major interest during the past year. Contributions reflect key themes in the UK and internationally. Each issue is organised in three parts. Part One focuses on developments and change in core UK social policy areas. Part Two provides in-depth analyses of topical issues from both UK and international perspectives by drawing on scholarship presented at the annual SPA conference. Part Three is a themed section providing a deep analysis of a key social policy issue.

Kevin joins SPR for its 24th issue, due for publication in June 2012, and he will initially take responsibility for editing Part Three. His chosen theme of 'Social Policy in the Aftermath of Economic Meltdown' will deal with more than 'the' crisis - rather, it will consider how social policy is evolving in the worst-hit economies including Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Iceland. Kevin's choice of theme builds on a

book he has recently edited with Zoe Irving that examines the variable impacts of the global crisis on welfare systems (to be published in late summer, 2011 by Policy Press). In addition to this, he has recently completed a book on corporate welfare (public benefits for private businesses) which will be published by Palgrave in Autumn 2011.

The other members of the editorial team for SPR's 24th issue are Dr Majella Kilkey and Dr Gaby Ramia. Majella is Lecturer in Social Policy at the University of Hull, and researches in comparative and international fields on issues related to families, gender and migration. She will edit Part One of the review, which will critically evaluate current policy developments under the Coalition Government, including its proposals for a Universal Credit and reforms in the areas of higher education, housing policy, families and children and health policy. Gaby is Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Government, University of Sydney, Australia, where he researches issues in international and comparative social policy. Gaby will edit Part Two of the review, and is eagerly anticipating the 2011 SPA Conference, where he will be commissioning contributions.



CRAIG JOINS DURHAM

Gary Craig - longstanding SPA member, Executive Committee member for nine years and one-time Secretary, has taken up a part-time post as Professor of Community Development and Social Justice at the University of Durham (www.durham.ac.uk/sass) where he is heavily involved in the work of the Centre for Social Justice

and Community Action. He continues to undertake research work on modern slavery, particularly on trafficking and forced labour, in collaboration with the Wilberforce Institute in Hull (see his chapter in *Social Policy Review 22*) and published an edited book on child slavery last year (*Child Slavery Now*, Policy Press). A second book, on the history of community development in the UK, was published last month and the text of *Understanding 'Race' and Ethnicity in Social Welfare* is currently with the publishers. He was recently invited to become a Trustee of the Desmond Tutu Foundation which supports work in the UK with young people.

NEWS FROM DURHAM UNIVERSITY

The Wolfson Research Institute - one of Durham's flagship multidisciplinary research institutes, working across the three Faculties of Arts and Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences and Health - is 10 years old this year. Currently led by SPA member Professor Tim Blackman, the Institute was established with major grants from the Wolfson Foundation and the European Regional Development Fund, and its striking building forms part of the waterfront of Durham's Queen's Campus in Stockton-on-Tees. Its research has a core focus on human health and wellbeing and, although encompassing projects based around the world, its founding principle of relevance to the needs of north east England still drives much of what it does.

Two recent examples of the Wolfson's regional role that also set international precedents for innovative and high impact collaborations are its work to establish the region-wide Institute of Local Governance (ILG) led by Professor John Mawson, and the creation at Stockton of a novel partnership between the University's research and general medical practitioner training in Durham and the Tees Valley.

The ILG was launched at the Sage Gateshead in October 2009 with set-up funding from the North East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. It is a pioneering research and knowledge exchange venture designed to maximise the benefits of collaboration between all five universities in north east England and a unique research partnership

between all the north east local authorities, police forces, fire and rescue services and other public sector partners, as well as the ESRC which is supporting the initiative from its Venture Fund. The ILG's mission in the current economic climate is to help deliver efficiencies, find new more cost-effective ways of working, source expertise locally and create academic opportunities. It aspires to be an internationally-recognised centre of excellence in local governance.

The GP training collaboration began as a project to attract newly qualified doctors to train in Durham and the Tees Valley, making it likely many will stay and practice in an under-doctored part of the country with some challenging health problems. Key to the strategy has been to co-locate with Durham University at its Stockton campus, raising the profile of GP training and creating links with research in the University's School of Medicine and Health, Durham Business School and the new Pharmacy programme due to launch in 2013. The GP trainees have access to the Wolfson Research Institute's expertise in fields such as medical anthropology, sociology, social policy, medical education, public health, pharmacy practice and communication science. A successful application was made to the Department of Health for a £5m capital grant to host the collaboration in a state-of-the-art training and research facility, adding a new wing to the Institute's building due to be completed next year.

Both initiatives show what can be done through partnership working and creating new and forward-looking collaborations designed to meet the needs of the north east, but also establish world class reputations in new areas of research and education.

PAUL GREGG

Paul Gregg is moving to the University of Bath as Professor of Economic and Social Policy from September 2011. He will be joining the Department of Social and Policy Sciences, which includes social policy, social work, sociology and international development. Paul is well known for his work on welfare reform, labour markets, poverty, education and child development, and neighbourhood effects. At Bath, he will contribute in particular to the development of applied quantitative public policy research and teaching. Other appointments at Bath in social policy/sociology and economics are also underway.

YUNUS CENTRE RECRUITS RESEARCH TEAM

The Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health at Glasgow Caledonian University has recruited a multidisciplinary team of researchers - drawn from across the University and beyond.

Launched in July 2010 and led by Professor Cam Donaldson, the Centre is named after Professor Muhammad Yunus who was awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his pioneering work in microfinance - most notably the creation of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

The distinctive focus of the Centre is on the evaluation of the impact of social enterprise and microfinance initiatives on the health and well-being of disadvantaged communities. This is a particular concern in Glasgow which has some of the highest levels of deprivation and poor health in the UK, although there is also a significant international dimension to the Centre's work. Initially, the Centre has focused on conceptualising the relationship between microfinance and health outcomes and developing evaluation frameworks to assess the health and well-being impact of social business. The next phase of work will comprise more substantive analyses.

Further information on the Yunus Centre can be found at: <http://www.gcu.ac.uk/yunuscentre/>

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