News Round-up

SPA Conference moves to Bath

Social Policy at Manchester

CPAG & CRSP in focus
The first international journal devoted to the study of evidence-informed policy and practice

"This is a journal that many researchers, decision makers and public service providers have been waiting for."

Haluk Soydan, Research Director, Institute for Evidence-based Social Work Practice, Stockholm, Sweden and Co-Chair of the International Campbell Collaboration

Aims and scope

Evidence & Policy is the first journal dedicated to comprehensive and critical treatment of the relationship between research evidence and the concerns of policy makers and practitioners. International in scope and interdisciplinary in focus, it addresses the needs of those who provide public services, and those who provide the research base for evaluation and development across a wide range of social and public policy issues – from social care to education, from public health to criminal justice.

The Journal is edited and managed by an expert team of international academics and practitioners, all of whom are at the forefront of evidence-informed research and practice in their fields. There will be three issues of Evidence & Policy in 2005, rising to four in subsequent years.

2005 Subscription rates

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Institutional rate (combined print and online)
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Policy World is published three times each academic year, one each in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. Contributions for future issues are welcome. A factsheet for contributors can be downloaded from www.policy-world.com. Click on “Contributors” and click to download the Acrobat PDF. Please supply hard copy as a Microsoft Word document or an RTF file via e-mail to the editor John Hudson at jrhl0@york.ac.uk. Graphs, tables and images can be handled in a variety of formats – please contact the editor in advance of submitting these.

Contributors’ deadlines for forthcoming issues:
Spring 2005: 01/02/05
Summer 2005 22/04/05
Autumn 2005 25/10/05

John Hudson Linda Bauld Kirstein Rummery Suzi Macpherson

www.social-policy.com

Literally, the terms “social policy” are quite clear and straightforward. Social policy is a set of rules or regulations that are established by governments to address issues that affect the community as a whole. These policies aim to improve the quality of life for all citizens by creating a more equitable society. Social policy is divided into different categories, such as education, health care, and welfare, among others. Each category contains various programs and initiatives that are designed to meet the needs of different groups of people. These policies are often implemented through a variety of mechanisms, including legislation, regulations, and grants. Social policy is a complex and dynamic field that requires a multidisciplinary approach to address the diverse needs of society.
Editorial

Some of you may have begun to wonder what had happened to the Autumn issue of SPA News. Having received this magazine there is a good chance you are still! There are two reasons why the newsletter has gone a little later than is the norm.

The first is that there have been some significant issues for the Association to resolve in connection with our annual conference. After a successful and well-attended conference at the University of Nottingham in July (see page 23 for a report) we had planned to return there in 2005. However, following the Association of University Teachers’ ‘greylisting’ of Nottingham in late September the Executive decided to find an alternative venue for the event (see Chair & Secretary Report, page 5). This process inevitably took some time and we decided to hold off publication in order to be able to bring details of the new venue - the University of Bath - along with a call for papers from the new organising committee (see page 21).

The second reason is, that after 10 years in its old format, we’ve decided to start a new period of editorship by giving the newsletter a makeover. While doing this we’ve also had a good think about the content and structure of the publication too. Undertaking the redesign and restructuring of the newsletter took considerable effort and we wanted to make sure we had the new look right before going to press too.

Policy World – like SPA News – will continue to appear once per academic term. Aside from the new look and new name – which we hope will help to broaden both our readership and SPA membership - a key difference is that each issue will have a core theme that will provide the focus of the newsletter. In this issue we build on the ‘Where Next for Social Policy?’ debate that closed the SPA’s annual conference at Nottingham in July. Future issues will take forward themes prominent within the profession or in the ‘policy world’ more generally.

Aside from the themed section, each issue of the newsletter will be broken down into three other sections:

- SPA News: stories about the SPA’s activities, relevant conferences, publications and so on.
- Policy World Round-Up: an in-depth look at what’s going in selected academic departments, research centres, think tanks or lobby groups within the social policy world
- IN Practice: the end section of the newsletter carrying book reviews, conference reports, teaching and learning issues, electronic resource updates and career development issues.

Not everyone reading this issue of Policy World will be a member of the SPA. If this is you then please take a moment to consider what you’re missing! Membership of the SPA carries a range of benefits including three issues a year of PolicyWorld, four issues of each of our two peer reviewed journals, the Journal of Social Policy and Social Policy & Society, access to our online Social Policy Digest and a copy of the annual Social Policy Review. Membership rates are very competitive - starting at just £18 a year. Full details and a downloadable membership form are available on our web site at http://www.social-policy.com/

We would like to encourage members at large to make more use of the newsletter as a forum for promoting events, spreading news, disseminating research and starting debate. If you have a story, a conference report or an event you’d like to cover then please get in touch - even if it’s just to provide a seminar date or a one line story for the news section. The next issue is due out at the end of February - the deadline for contributions is 1st February 2005.

John Hudson
Editor, Policy World
From the Chair and Secretary

Social Policy Association Conference

Two events have dominated since Saul Becker took over as Chair of the Association in July 2004: RAE 2008 (see page 6) and the 2005 SPA conference.

2005 SPA conference: The 2005 SPA conference was scheduled to take place at the University of Nottingham in July 2005, following the successful 2004 conference at the same venue. However, the greylisting of Nottingham University by the Association of University Teachers, which commenced in late-September, has posed serious financial and other risks to the Association if members do not offer papers or if they do not make bookings to attend. Given these risks, and following cordial discussions with Social Policy colleagues at Nottingham, the Executive decided to make alternative arrangements for the 2005 conference, and a number of universities were approached. We can now confirm that the 2005 conference will take place at Bath University, and we are extremely grateful to colleagues at Bath for agreeing to organise the conference in these difficult circumstances. The conference will take place a little earlier than is usual for SPA conferences, from Monday 27th to Wednesday 29th June 2005, so please put these dates in your diary now. Further details of the conference theme, and a call for papers, can be found elsewhere in this issue of Policy World.

The 2006 and 2007 conferences will return to their scheduled venue and July slot, at The University of Birmingham.

Saul Becker, Chair, and Catherine Bochel, Hon Secretary
S.Becker@bham.ac.uk
cbochel@lincoln.ac.uk

SPA Conference Papers Available Online

A selection of papers delivered at the SPA Annual Conference in Nottingham are available online at the Association’s website. They can be accessed from the following address:

http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/spsw/spa/conf.htm

SPA Annual Conferences 2006-7 Venue Confirmed

Birmingham University will host the 2006 and 2007 conferences, 18th-20th July 2006 and 17th-19th July 2007.

http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/spsw/spa/conf.htm

Peter Beresford, Professor of Social Policy and the Director of the Centre for Citizen Participation, at Brunel University, has been announced as the winner of a national essay contest run by the National Conference of University Professors (NCUP). Entrants were required to write on the theme of “The Changing Role of the Professor.” Beresford, who became a professor six years ago, had spent “eight years on the poverty line, drawing benefits, and 12 years as a mental health service user,” including time as an in-patient in a psychiatric hospital and describes himself as being an “’out’ mental health user”.

In his essay he argued that his personal experience helped him in his career - against all the odds, and expectations: “In ‘tabloid-speak […] I qualify as a ‘nutter,’ ‘psycho,’ ‘crazy,’ and ‘loony.’ As far as I know, I am the first person actively involved as a mental health service user to be promoted to professor.” He goes on to argue that his background as a long-term mental health service user was not a barrier to his promotion, but, rather, was seen as having a helpful contribution to make in his field.

“I’m amazed. I feel proud that in writing about these things, that they thought it worth first prize. It’s a vindication. I really hope that this can open doors for others to talk about their experiences.”
SPANews

SCOTTISH SOCIAL POLICY NETWORK (SSPN)
The newly established Scottish Social Policy Network (SSPN) held an open meeting at the SPA Annual Conference in Nottingham in July and followed this with its launch seminar - ‘Is there a Scottish Welfare State?’ - at the University of Stirling on 8th October. The network, which is funded by the Social Policy Association, the University of Stirling and the Open University, is free to join and is coordinated by Gerry Mooney at the Open University and Sharon Wright at the University of Stirling. If you would like to get involved, you can contact them at G.C.Mooney@open.ac.uk or sharon.wright@stir.ac.uk

The SSPN have a dedicated jiscmail discussion list. To join the list, go to www.jiscmail.ac.uk, type ‘sspn’ into the box ‘FIND LISTS’, click on ‘Join or leave the list’ and follow the instructions.

WRAMSOC WEBSITE
The Welfare Reform and the Management of Societal Change project has been re-launched with new material that includes in-depth ‘policy maps’ of recent reforms in key policy areas in seven European countries and papers written by the research team. It can be found at: www.kent.ac.uk/wramsoc/

NEW ACADEMICIANS
Two SPA nominees were elected as Academicians of the Academy of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences (http://www.the-academy.org.uk/) in September: Alan Deacon and John Dixon. Alan Deacon, who was Chair of the SPA from 2001-2004, is Professor of Social Policy at the University of Leeds. His recent publications include Perspectives on Welfare (Open University Press, 2002). John Dixon, who was Honorary Secretary of the SPA 2000-2002, is Professor at the University of Plymouth; his recent publications include The State of Social Welfare: The Twentieth Century in Cross-national Review (Greenwood Press, 2002).

RAE 2008 Panel Nominations

The SPA has made a joint submission with the Social Policy Committee of the Joint University Council for UoA 40 and Main Panel J of the next Research Assessment Exercise. The joint submission was compiled through a process of consultation with members of the academic community through a committee of SPA and JUC executive members. The nominations for the sub-panel (UoA 40) were as follows: Professor Pete Alcock (Birmingham University), Professor Dave Byrne (Durham University), Professor Jochen Clasen (Stirling University), Professor Dee Cook (Wolverhampton University), Professor Gary Craig (Hull University), Ms Sue Duncan (Government Chief Social Researcher - user/practitioner), Professor Eithne McLaughlin (Queen’s University Belfast), Professor Jane Millar (Bath University), Professor Peter Taylor-Gooey (University of Kent - chair), Professor Carol Walker (Lincoln University) and Professor Fiona Williams (Leeds University).

Nominations to the main panel were: Professor Maurizio Ferrera (Milan University - international representative), Professor Ruth Lister (Loughborough University - additional main panel member), Professor Sheila Shaver (University of Western Sydney - international representative) and Professor Win Van Oorschott (Tilburg University - international representative).

NEWS Items

SPA joint submission with the Social Policy Committee of the Joint University Council

Upcoming Conferences

ESRC Family, Community and Social Change Seminar: Learning about long-term trends. London South Bank University, 6th January 2005. Further information: williajv@lbsu.ac.uk

The British Sociological Association Annual Conference - The Life Course: Fragmentation, Diversity And Risk – will take place Monday 21st – Wednesday 23rd March 2005 at the University of York. Plenary Speakers will be: Liz Stanley and Jenny Hockey. Further information: www.britsoc.co.uk

The Political Studies Association Annual Conference will take place at the University of Leeds 4-7th April 2005. The main conference will take place between 5th and 7th April 2005, with the graduate conference starting on Monday 4th. Further details: http://www.psa.ac.uk/2005/default.htm

The Housing Studies Association Annual Conference – Building on the Past: Visions of Housing Futures – will take place at the University of York, 6th-8th April. This is an extended anniversary conference to mark 50 years since the founding of the HAS. Further details: http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/chp/hsa/spring05/index.html

Cash And Care: Understanding The Evidence Base For Policy And Practice

RESEARCH TEAM NEWS

The 2005 European Network for Housing Research International Housing Conference will take place in Reykjavik at the University of Iceland, 29th June–3rd July. Further details: http://registration.yourhost.is/en/hr2005iceland/

The Foundation for International Studies of Social Security is running its eleventh annual International Research Seminar on Issues in Social Security at the Sigtunahöjden Conference Centre in Sigtuna, near Stockholm, Sweden, from 19th – 21st June 2004. The theme of the seminar will be ‘International cooperation in social security: How to cope with globalisation!’. Details at: http://web.inter.nl.net/users/fiss/

The University of Brighton will be holding a conference on ‘Communities and Care’ on Saturday, 23rd April, 2005 at Falmer, Brighton. Speakers will include Marian Barnes, Marjorie Mayo and Bill and Charlie Jordan. Further details: www.brighton.ac.uk/ sass/research

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SWAP Developments

SWAP is now part of the Higher Education Academy. LTSN Subject Centres will continue to exist in their present format and role and will be a core part of the Academy. They will contribute to the Academy’s outreach to practitioner communities and ensure the effective dissemination and sharing of good practices with subject communities. A review, however, is underway regarding the current configuration of disciplines within each subject centre. Decisions will be reached by the end of the year. SWAP supports the continuation of the existing social policy and social work focus and would welcome an extension of further links with allied Health Professions and Sociology, Anthropology and Politics. Pat Young, who has been the Social Policy lead in SWAP, has moved on to a new post. Julia Waldman, who has worked with SWAP in a consultancy capacity, has been redeployed as a Learning and Teaching Adviser and will be working with the Social Policy constituency.

New SWAP Report
SWAP has published a report based on research undertaken by Pat Young and Zoe Irving titled Changing practices in teaching undergraduate social policy. A summary is available at http://www.swap.ac.uk/learning/Research.asp

SWAP Event
In January 2005 SWAP will be co-hosting a workshop on Service Teaching in Social Policy (provisional date is 21st or 24th). This workshop was provided earlier in the year in Birmingham and its success led to the decision to run a second workshop, this time in Stirling in Scotland. Full details are available on their website at: http://www.swap.ac.uk/events/events.asp?show=2

Conferences Round-up


ESRC Family, Community and Social Change Seminar: Learning about what changes and what stays the same.

The 2005 Annual Conference of the European Group of Public Administration will take place at the University of Bern, Switzerland, 31st August-3rd September, under the theme: Reforming the Public Sector: What about the citizens? Further information: http://www.iiasa.oeaw.ac.at/egpa/agac2005.htm

The Annual Conference of the UK Public Administration Committee (UK-PAC) - Public Administration and Management 2005 (PAM2005) – will take place 5th-7th September at the University of Nottingham. Further details: colin.talbot@nottingham.ac.uk

The 7th Conference of the European Sociological Association will take place at Nicholas Copernicus University, in Torun, Poland, 9th–13th September 2005. Further information: http://www.vait.helsinki.fi/esa/conferences.htm

The 2005 ESPNet Annual Conference - ‘Making Social Policy in the Post-industrial Age’ will take place September 22nd-24th at the Department of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Fribourg, Switzerland. For more information: espanet05@unifr.ch or www.espanet.org

The 2005 Association for Public Policy and Management (APPAM) conference will take place November 3rd-5th, Washington, DC, USA at the Washington Marriott Hotel. Further information: williajv@lbsu.ac.uk

ESRC Family, Community and Social Change Seminar: Learning about the past from the present. London South Bank University, November 2005. Further information: williajv@lbsu.ac.uk

ESRC Family, Community and Social Change Seminar: Learning from the past from the present. London South Bank University, June 2006. Further information: williajv@lbsu.ac.uk

The XVI International Sociological Association World Congress of Sociology will take place in Durban, South Africa, 23rd-29th July 2006 under the theme ‘The Quality of Social Existence in a Globalising World’. Further details at: http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/congress2006/
Where next for Social Policy?

At the SPA's Annual Conference, the final plenary session featured a lively debate on the issue of 'Where Next for Social Policy?' Here we feature shortened versions of the papers by Paul Spicker, Adrian Sinfield and Nick Ellison that opened that session along with additional papers from Stuart Lowe and the PolicyWorld editor John Hudson. These are followed by an extended article celebrating social policy at Manchester by Duncan Scott and Paul Wilding that kicks off the next section of the newsletter; it also offers much food for thought in connection with this debate.

Saving Social Policy

Social Policy is in deep trouble. It has suffered greater falls in the number of students in the UK than any other social science. Degrees are closing, and departments will follow. This has not happened because of a loss of interest in applied social science: other subjects like Sociology and Social Work are thriving. Social Policy's problems are self-inflicted.

Social Policy developed with a clear applied focus.

The principal areas relate to

- policy and administrative practice in social services, including health administration, social security, education, employment services, community care and housing management;
- social problems, including crime, disability, unemployment, mental health, learning disability, and old age;
- issues relating to social disadvantage, including race, gender, sexuality and poverty; and
- the range of collective social responses to these conditions.

It is clear that many people working in Social Policy are dissatisfied with the scope of the subject as it currently exists, and there are constant pressures to change it. It has been suggested, for example, that social policy ought to be looking at the environment, communications, leisure and shopping. There are reasons why people might need to consider these issues, but they are not reasons which have anything to do with the agenda of Social Policy. Social Policy is not sociology, it is not politics, and it is not about the study of welfare in society. Recently, I sent a proposal to a publisher for an introduction to the subject, focussing on issues of need and disadvantage. A reviewer complained: “The study of social policy comes across as a dismal pursuit ... It is possible to introduce social policy in a much more positive frame - as the study of human well-being and of systems for achieving well-being ...”

I know that some people in the SPA will share this view. I do not. Social policy is not about the good things of life. It’s not about love, partnership and emotional nurturing. It isn’t about aesthetics, music, poetry, comedy, leisure, or entertainment. As a description of the subject, the claim that social policy is concerned with the good life is just plain wrong. As a prescription for future directions, it’s tenable but uninteresting, because there is no obvious reason why we should try to study these things together.

Social policy, as it was initially conceived, was study for a purpose. It was aimed at future public and voluntary sector administrators who needed to know about the problems and processes they would be dealing with. The core of the subject was Social Administration, an area of study which is now vilified and neglected. Social Administration studies the structure and operation of services, the process of service delivery and the effect that services have on the people who receive them. This is as central now as it’s ever been. Topics like community planning, partnerships, participation, rationing, quality assurance, empowerment and the redress of grievances are basic to public services in practice. They’re not as exciting as love and laughter, true, or even “Men and Masculinity”, which was given as an example of a popular course, but they do have something to do with getting students a job. When we lost sight of the vocational purpose of Social Policy and Administration, we sacrificed the heart and core of the subject - and removed the principal reason why people should want to study it.

Can we save the subject?

I don’t think we can hope to reverse the immeasurable damage done to the subject since 1987, when the SPA abandoned “Social Administration”, but we need to stop things getting worse. We need to re-establish the identity of the subject, so that we can establish its distinctive contribution, recruit students to it, and give it a defensible presence in higher education.
We need
- to reintroduce the term “Social Policy and Administration” in the titles of our degrees, our departments and our professional association;
- to re-emphasise the distinctive character of the subject, by strengthening our application of the contributory disciplines we have forgotten - psychology, philosophy, economics and law;
- to ensure that taught courses contain elements relating to social services, social administration and policy analysis;
- to re-forge the link with vocational courses, including the establishment of placements; and
- to stop trying to change the agenda.

Social Policy lost its way because people in the field decided they wanted to do something else instead. The identification of the subject with sociology and politics has not expanded the field, because the effect of cutting out a rich, diverse subject area has given up more territory than it has gained. The subject has been abandoned, lured into a back alley and stripped of articles of value. Social Policy across the country has been reeling under a series of impacts: amalgamation with other subjects, loss of degrees, and a loss of students. We may already be too late.

Paul Spicker
The Robert Gordon University

When I spoke at the SPA
On how we’d come to lose our way,
I put the claim in verse, to make
The bitter pill less hard to take.
My tale was gruesome to relate,
On how some kiddies met their fate
Once they had strayed into the wood.
(It rhymed, but wasn’t very good.)
This version’s still weighed down with gloom
But, for the poem, there isn’t room.

Paul Spicker

Changing Roles, Changing Boundaries: Historical Perspectives on Health and Welfare
10.00 – 4.00 Friday 18 March 2005
Glenside Campus, UWE Bristol

Changing professional roles and boundaries are at the heart of current policy to modernise health and welfare services. But policy makers often neglect the lessons that historical perspectives bring to understanding such complex change processes.

This conference will explore the two interconnected themes of changing roles and changing boundaries in health and welfare. Contributors come from a range of disciplines, but the conference will particularly bring contemporary health and social care academics together with historians with a shared interest in changing health and welfare roles and boundaries. Two plenary sessions will cover overarching themes. Virginia Berridge will begin the conference by discussing ‘history in public health: roles and boundaries,’ whilst David Gladstone will focus on ‘boundaries and the whole’ in health and welfare.

Concurrent sessions will give participants the opportunity to explore streams on ‘changing roles’, ‘boundaries in health and social care’, ‘oral history’ and ‘archival research’.

For further information and details of the programme, visit http://hsc.uwe.ac.uk/hsc/newsevents.asp or contact Caroline Lapthorn at Caroline.Lapthorn@uwe.ac.uk or on 0117 328 8441.

Supported by grants from the Social Policy Association and the Royal College of Nursing History of Nursing Society.
Are people’s lives any better, or any worse, than they were? And which people, and in what ways?

We have got very skilled at comparing welfare states and individual policies, their developments and their restructuring. The welfare of societies and the differing experience of different peoples have not received as much attention as their welfare states. We need a political economy of welfare, and not only a political economy of welfare states.

To achieve this we need to develop better connections to context in social policy analyses: don’t let more technical work lead to context-stripping. As a part of this, we need to restore the balance between work ‘upstream’ on more structural analyses at higher levels of causality and leading to societal and preventive policies and work ‘downstream’ on more remedial and ameliorative policies with their more individualised focus on those trapped below or on the margins.

In ‘A Tale of 3 Tails’ John McKinlay and Lisa Marceau have challenged public health analysts to take a broader perspective with more upstream analyses. Disappointing results in public health, they argue, ‘can be traced, in part, to preoccupation with 3 tails – the tail end of the normal distribution, the tail end of causality, and the endless pursuit of our own tails’.

Similarly, in social policy we have given too much research time and energy to looking at the tail end of the income distribution and to the tail end of causality – very often in proper response to the commissioning requirements of our funders, official and independent. We have not been invited by them to raise our heads – and I do not think that we have realised how far our heads have remained bowed in our more independent activities. With a few outstanding exceptions we have overlooked the force of Richard Tawney’s observation before the First World War: ‘What thoughtful rich people call the problem of poverty, thoughtful poor people call, with equal justice, the problem of riches’.

It is impossible to engage with the underlying causes of poverty without taking account of the ways in which resources are distributed throughout society. Poverty therefore has also to be studied as a characteristic of society and not just of those people who are currently living in poverty. ‘We cannot ... delineate the new frontiers of poverty unless we take account of the changing agents and characteristics of inequality’.

Central to analyses linking private troubles and public issues must be the combination of higher inequality and reduced mobility reinforced by ‘the most fundamental change in Britain over four decades ... the respect now shown for wealth and money-making’. These developments are making it significantly more difficult to bring an end to poverty and to achieve many other objectives with which social policy is regularly concerned. As in public health, structural inequalities must be recognised both as a major cause of problems with which the subject is centrally concerned and as a major obstacle to their resolution.

This is a plea for a re-balancing of social policy analysis, not a denunciation or repudiation of certain types of work. It is a ‘not only but also’ argument, but in any such plea the second element is a necessary complement to the first, not an optional add-on. Without it the contribution of social policy will continue to be wanting in important respects.

So which way for social policy? Towards a political economy of welfare, which connects to broader structural changes and their consequences for the welfare of people - in a word, upstream!

**Adrian Sinfield**

**School of Social and Political Studies**

**University of Edinburgh**


**About the Author**

Adrian Sinfield is Professor Emeritus of Social Policy in the School of Social and Political Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He is currently Senior Vice-Chair of the Child Poverty Action Group and is a former President of the Social Policy Association.
I see a vibrant field of study that should still be alive and kicking when I hang my mortarboard up in 2039.

As an academic field, social policy so often seems to be on the back foot – a subject in crisis, unpopular with students, under threat from new fields, squeezed out by the old social science disciplines. In recent years this unease has snowballed as degree programmes and departments have faced closure. Some colleagues have even posed the question ‘Whither social policy?’

I am a relative newcomer to the field and to the profession. I took up my first full-time academic position in 1998 and already the ‘crisis’ mood was in full swing. Yet, despite this, and the fact that we are in political science, I made an active decision to nail my colours to the social policy mast. I do not regret this for a moment. Why? Because I do not see a subject in crisis. I see a vibrant field of study that should still be alive and kicking when I hang my mortarboard up in 2039.

In saying this I do not wish to sound complacent or underplay the very real challenges we face. But I see plenty of reasons to be hopeful.

Research Base.
The 2001 RAE returns showed that there were more researchers in social policy than in the supposedly bigger subject of sociology. Political science, meanwhile, had only a handful more than ourselves. While some of this is, of course, a consequence of gaming, it is also clear that social policy academics are as much a feature of UK universities as sociologists or political scientists – albeit dispersed across the social sciences rather than residing in a neat social policy home base.1

Booming Interest from Policy Makers.
In part the above reflects the high number of those in the subject working as full-time researchers on projects funded by policy makers. The general political climate, the downsizing of government departments and trends such as ‘evidence based policy making’ are all leading to a greater interplay between academia and government. These trends are of greater benefit to our subject than any of the other social sciences. The income generation and user engagement associated with all of this are real strengths of the field that other social sciences look towards with envy. They are also popular with Vice-Chancellors!

Methodological Sophistication.
In part because of our engagement with the ‘real world’ the subject has a methodological rigour – both in quantitative and qualitative terms – that generally surpasses that found in the other social sciences. It is worth noting that in political science a debate is still raging about whether there is a need for methods courses in their BA 

The Growth of Research Outside of Academia.
An MA with a strong social research methods component is increasingly becoming de rigueur for those working as policy advisors or government social researchers. Central government alone employs more than 1,000 social researchers. Our methodological sophistication and engagement with policy issues should place us in the box seat for providing training for this group. Data collected by the Commission on the Social Sciences show that, already, we attract a similar number of postgraduates as sociology and that more of ours are undertaking one-off MA programmes as opposed to the academic apprenticeship provided by a PhD.

Where, of course, we have a real problem is in undergraduate recruitment. As the report of the Commission on the Social Sciences notes, in 2001 there were 4,553 acceptances to sociology BA degrees compared with just 929 to social policy programmes. The $64 million question is, therefore, why is it we have more researchers, more research money and a similar amount of postgraduates to sociology but only attract around one fifth of the number of undergraduates?

Clearly the subject has a recognition problem amongst 16-18 year olds that contrasts with a much stronger identity amongst postgraduates and within government. There is obvious work to be done here by the SPA and others to promote the ‘brand’. As others argue elsewhere here, a clearer identity might help too.

However, there is also a sense in which we should play to our strengths. It could be – as Michael Hill has argued – that social policy makes more sense as a postgraduate subject. Here we need to do more to establish ourselves as the first port of call for those working in the public sector who wish to extend their knowledge base at postgraduate level.

But I think too that much could be gained by looking at ourselves and our own sense of identity. Though more social policy-ists appeared in the last RAE than sociologists, the BSA easily outscores the SPA in terms of members and resources. Too few academics in social policy departments see themselves as ‘social policy-ists’. This goes with the territory of an inter-disciplinary field of study but it does not help either in building up funds for the SPA to promote the subject or in protecting our institutional base.

Those of us who do see ourselves as social policy-ists perhaps need to do more to convince our colleagues of the need to commit to the cause: your subject needs you!

John Hudson
University of York

Recapturing Engagement: The ‘discipline’ of social policy beyond the Third Way

This short piece argues that the turn towards evidence-based policy making (EPBM) is reducing the critical (and political) edge that characterised social policy research in the past. In effect, the discipline is in the process of being reorganised by government for narrow political ends as a sort of research ‘service industry’. Indeed, this emerging industry already mimics the lower end of the private service sector in certain respects, including in many instances its low-paid, short-term, casualised conditions of work.

**EBPM and Third Way Social Policy**

Definitions of ‘third way’ social policy will have to be dispensed with here – but there is likely to be general agreement about the fact that it incorporates a contractualist, regulatory approach to policy in which an ‘enabling’ state operates (or appears to operate) at arm’s length from the communities and users which it supposedly serves. In view of the extraordinary array of (expensive) policy initiatives that have been rolled out under the TW banner over the past seven years or so, it is not surprising that those in government want evidence that this new approach is working. David Blunkett’s speech, ‘Influence or Irrelevance? Can Social Science Improve Government?’ (2000), made it clear that New Labour is prepared to devote millions to social researchers in return for clear indications about ‘what works’. Of course, the conviction that underpins this approach is the extraordinarily narrow one that policies and their effects can be understood and codified with evidence being ‘aggregated and disseminated: added up, joined up and wired up’, as Wayne Parsons states, without having to take account of the political processes involved in policy formulation and implementation. Nevertheless, after 18 years of UK governments that displayed no interest whatsoever in the social sciences, the research community was pleased to be recognised by New Labour as having something of value to contribute. When the call came for evidence-based research on core TW policies the response, particularly from social policy, was enthusiastic.

**The Dangers of Evidence-based research**

There are problems with enthusiasm, however, if evidence-based research is conducted without constant reference to the wider nature and purposes of academic social policy (particularly perhaps power relations – the ‘who gets what, when and how’ that social policy academics have historically been concerned to understand). These are (at least) twofold:

- ‘Cornish lanes syndrome’: navigating sunken lanes and seeing the close detail but with inadequate signposts, so having little idea about how the lanes join up, and – importantly – lacking a clear picture of the wider landscape. It is a feature of the Third Way ethos that debates about the role and purposes of welfare too often give place to discussions about strict policy detail. We increasingly think only inside the ‘Third Way box’.

- Creeping (creepy?) technocracy: the growing belief that, armed with the right methods, the evidence base will somehow speak for itself. Politics and ideology can then safely be banished from the policy process.

Because debates, research and evidence in social policy are inherently normative and political – politicians, communities, ethnicities, genders and indeed researchers themselves understandably have interests of their own and will attempt to use evidence in particular ways – it is important that the research community thinks outside the box and rejects the naive belief that the evidence it provides can be value-neutral. To preserve the autonomy (indeed the dignity) of the discipline it is important to re-recognise this fact of existence and pay attention to the organisation of research evidence in ways that engage critically not just with specific policy initiatives but with the general ideological assumptions and prevailing socio-political and economic context that underpin them. There is a need, in other words, to ensure that, ‘beyond the Third Way’, social policy scholarship and research does more than service the narrow ends of government.

Nick Ellison
University of Durham.
Bringing political science back in

What is wrong with Social Policy that it should be treated as though it does not exist or worse still is irrelevant?

In October last year the British Journal of Sociology hosted a debate at the LSE under the title Public Sociology: sociology and the democratic debate. The event lead to the publication of a number of papers in the BJS with a very direct bearing on ‘our own’ debates about the contemporary significance of Social Policy. The key paper by Lauder, Brown and Halsey espouses the idea of developing a new ‘policy-oriented sociology’ with the aim of developing a ‘new policy science’. In their paper there is no mention of political science, which is the disciplinary source of an already existing policy science with a huge and growing literature behind it. Nor is proper reference made to the interdisciplinary field of Social Policy, which seems most extraordinary given the pedigree of these authors. The upshot of all this is that unfortunately our sociologist colleagues are about to reinvent the wheel. A very large part of what they talk about and the requirements of their new policy science already exists, particularly in the form a branch of political science called ‘policy analysis’.

Apart from arguing the justification for this statement (which cannot be done here) the paper by LBH raises the question about why they chose to reference neither the policy analysis approach or the wider subject of Social Policy? This in turn raises another layer of questions about Social Policy itself, particularly why such distinguished colleagues should feel the need to invent a new subject that is largely Social Policy’s existing domain. What is wrong with Social Policy that it should be treated as though it does not exist or worse still is irrelevant? The answer to this suggests a rather salutary lesson for our subject and necessitates going back to some basics, notably about the social science disciplines.

The disciplinary foundations
Each of the disciplines has an epistemological foundation, a knowledge base and literature that in theory should stop the wheel from forever being re-invented. They came into existence largely as the result of power struggles in universities, are not theoretically pure and their boundaries do and should overlap with each other. Political science abstracts out the nature and distribution of power and political institutional structures. It is this knowledge base that brings in understanding of how social problems come onto the policy agenda, how political institutional structures mediate and filter macro-level forces and what happens at the moment of policy delivery. Historical institutionalists have made some of the most important conceptual advances in the social sciences in recent years with their insights into the path dependency of policy and the stickiness exerted by institutional structures on the policy process. A very large part of what LBH seem to want to invent already exists inside this knowledge base, particularly the general field known as ‘policy analysis’.

In the conclusion to our recent book John Hudson and I write about the problem caused by the over-dominance of sociologists in the field of Social Policy. The subject is often taught in joint departments and the focus on issues of social divisions have to a considerable extent taken over the more policy-oriented agenda, which is where the roots of the subject are to be found – the defence of and understanding about the core welfare state.

Social Policy does itself no favours here. As an interdisciplinary subject it is vulnerable to being marginalized in the social sciences precisely because it is not a discipline. If anything what gives Social Policy its identity is its expertise in empirical research methodology. The danger with this is that the findings of its extensive research programme never gets properly evaluated in general discourse, especially in the wider social sciences. Maybe this is why LBH have devised the idea of a ‘policy-relevant sociology’. Social Policy has become an almost invisible entity, publishing overwhelmingly empirical, atheoretical papers in its own small circulation journals, unconnected to the wider social sciences.

John Hudson and I argue strongly in Understanding the Policy Process: Analysing welfare policy and practice that there is a need for Social Policy to re-engage with the disciplines, meaning the production of more conceptually aware work that poses the question why? as well as documenting social problems. In this there is a burning need for the ‘policy’ part of Social Policy to be given much greater prominence in the teaching and the research agenda of the subject. Knowledge of how institutional structures filter social and economic processes is a key issue here and a core life skill for students, many of whom eventually work for ‘state’ agencies (in the broadest sense of the word). It is time to bring the knowledge base of political science back to the heart of Social Policy, so that it can become a much more balanced, truly interdisciplinary field rather than having its agenda skewed both by theoretically innocent empirical research and especially by the dominance of sociology. Of course sociology has a special theoretically attuned status – that is one of its main identities as a discipline and empirical research is bound to figure prominently at the heart of the subject. But there is a ‘disciplinary’ failure taking place if LBH consider it necessary to invent a new ‘policy science’. Colleagues, it already exists. The moral of this for Social Policy is 1) to bring political science back in and 2) to engage more with the wider social sciences with more conceptually aware studies even if only as a matter of survival!

Stuart Lowe
Department of Social Policy and Social Work
University of York.


Celebrating Social Policy

In the summer of 2004 what was once the Department of Social Administration, later the Department of Social Policy and Social Work and most recently the Department of Applied Social Science ceased to exist. Staff were dispersed to a number of safe havens in the University - the surviving fragments of Social Policy to the Government, International Politics and Philosophy “discipline area” within the new School of Social Sciences, Criminology to the School of Law, and Social Work to the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work. Some past and current members felt that the Department should not be allowed to disappear without an attempt to celebrate some of its achievements over more than half a century.

Dover Street Building, photograph courtesy of The University of Manchester

1. History

For many generations of students the Department of Social Administration will be for ever associated with the gloom of the ground floor of the Dover Street building with its famous - and seemingly eternal - brown lino, its high windows designed very effectively to exclude almost all sunlight and the very clear surviving evidence of its days as a girls’ school which ended in the 1930s. As one former pupil said when she paid a return visit to the building 50 years later in the late 1980s ‘You know, it hasn’t changed much’. Kay Jones’s 1963 survey showed that Manchester was not unusual when it depicted the typical Social Studies department accommodation as ‘characterised by dark brown paint and dark green linoleum, inadequate plumbing and dirty windows’.

Although the Department of Social Administration only emerged from the Department of Government in the 1950s there was a Social Administration degree - the BA (Admin) - from 1936 run by Frances Collier. Barbara Rodgers’ ‘Register of Social Administration Students 1940-1960’ lists a class of six women students in 1937. A lone male appears in 1942 but it is after the Second World War before a second man is recorded.

This was the first or second such University degree course in Britain - predictably there is some argument about who led the way! The Register indicates that the degree course led to a wide range of welfare-related occupations. The class of ’37 going on to posts as almoner, Assistant Milk Officer, W.V.S. Welfare Officer at Hawker Siddleley and an Educational Settlement.

Perhaps the most important feature of the early ‘pre-department’ period was the umbilical link with the then Manchester and Salford Council of Social Service. Barbara Rodgers and a research assistant/tutor, Margaret Haigh, were both appointed in 1939-40 to joint C.S.S. / University posts. These joint appointments were part of a well established tradition in the Faculty; there are references to a member of the University Settlement staff simultaneously being a Lecturer in Social Science (1913-17), and a Director of ‘practical training’ on the Diploma in Social Science (1933 onwards). The incumbent of the latter post became Secretary of a Carnegie Trust supported re-housing survey (1936-8) which coincided with the very first social administration students. Early research reports also reflected the empirical-practical focus of the embryonic Social Administration presence eg ‘The Income of Charities in Manchester and Salford’ (1941) and ‘Absenteeism at the Manchester Docks’ (1942). Barbara Rodgers was eventually appointed Lecturer in 1945.

The Department of Social Administration loosed its ties to the Department of Government in the 1950s. By then Departmental staff included many figures who, over the years, would play a prominent part in the development of the subject - Barbara Rodgers, David Donnison, Kay Jones. Others joined shortly afterwards - T.E. Chester as the first Professor of Social Administration in 1955, Gordon Forsyth, Gordon Rose and Barry Cullingworth.

David Donnison had this to say about his time in Manchester “I was appointed straight from an Oxford PPE degree to an Assistant Lectureship in Social Administration in 1950. We joined the Social Science Faculty, not just Bill Mackenzie’s Department of Government. The professors - Bill Mackenzie (politics), Arthur Lewis and Eli Devors (Economics), Max Gluckman (Anthropology), Michael Polanyi (whatever he was doing this week)… were world-class, every one of them. We went to each other’s seminars. Colleagues from other Faculties sometimes came too: philosophers, physicists, public health people… We spent little time in academic committees: Bill as Dean was a benevolent dictator. Teaching was light enough to get to know your students, too; and to write your first book within three years… Then you were expected to go abroad. The University would keep your job open for three years, and expected you to come back with another book written… In my innocence I assumed this was how all universities worked.”

Students could take a practice-oriented degree programme with a substantial amount of compulsory field work both in term time and in vacations, leading to the B.A.(Admin). This attracted many students as a pre-social work degree programme, because, for a time, a requisite number of placement weeks ‘bought’ access to a one rather than a two year social work training course. By 1960, around twenty students a year were graduating from the BA (Admin).
programme. It was clearly a strong, lively department.

In 1981, the Department launched a specialist undergraduate degree - the Bachelor of Social Science in Social Policy. Student demand was very strong but numbers were tightly controlled by the Faculty and for many years limited to an intake of 10 student per year - a constraint which was ultimately very damaging to the Department. No significant expansion in this programme was permitted until the mid 1990s by which time the tide of applicants for social policy degrees was beginning to turn.

From the mid-1990s, three factors - local and wider - undermined the Department's position. First, there were increasing problems in recruiting to the specialist Social Policy degree. To combat the emerging shortfall in student numbers a new and very popular joint degree in Criminology and Social Policy was launched. Another factor which weakened the Department was the failure of the Faculty/University to fill vacant posts. Between 1995 and 2000 three professors moved, retired or died. Only one of these three vacant posts was filled. Though the Department was graded 5 in the Research Assessment Exercise in 2001 this achievement was not enough to ensure survival. A third factor which hit all social policy departments in the 1990s was the expansion of social policy oriented research in a broad range of other social science departments, for example politics, sociology and geography.

2. Teaching (and the Taught)
The Department has made significant contributions to the teaching of social policy on a number of fronts. There have been the overall programmes of study and there have been specific courses or modules where the Department has pioneered some important developments.

Programmes
From the 1950s students had the chance to do a recognisably specialist degree in Social Policy though with the disincentive (for some!) of compulsory first year courses in quantitative methods and economics and with the constraint of the rather limited social policy literature then available.

The small, intimate, heavily taught B.Soc.Sci programme removed these unpopular course requirements and was able to build on the explosion of relevant research and writing in the field. It was an important influence on many undergraduate students - particularly mature students - through the 1980s and 1990s.

One of those B.Soc.Sci students writes “I have genuinely fond memories of being an undergraduate social policy student at Manchester. I had been shamefully attracted to Manchester for its night life rather than the academic credentials of the University, but it was the political nature of the discipline and its critical edge which prompted me to switch disciplines in the first month and to specialise in social policy. I found the course enormously stimulating and it engaged an intellectual interest in the discipline which persists to this day, albeit that I have somewhat side stepped social policy in favour of criminology...

“In addition to finding the course thought-provoking in a way that many of my friends also studying other degrees at Manchester did not, the Department stood out in the quality of the learning experience. With few exceptions the teaching was of the highest standard and most staff were easily accessible to students, even pesky undergraduates!”

Another mature student has this to say “For me it was the right course, in the right department, in the right place, at the right time. Back then (1989) there were just a dozen or so B.Soc.Sci. students enrolled each year. Our small numbers meant we had the opportunity to get to know our social policy lecturers on a much more personal level and presumably vice versa, so that our individual quirks, characters, needs and circumstances were better known.

“I stayed on in the Department as a postgraduate... The high point of those post-grad years for me was the three months spent in Finland at the University of Tampere, made possible through the University and Department’s links with European universities where exchange student placements were encouraged through the Erasmus programme. This placement provided me with the peace and quiet to write up some of my PhD field work.”

From as early as 1951 the postgraduate Diploma in Social Administration was a route into the subject for those who had done first degrees in other fields - something which was very valuable when there were few undergraduate programmes and the subject was poorly known. A few years later the Department was involved in providing Diploma and MA programmes in Health Services management. From the late 1960s there was also the Diploma / MA in Social and Pastoral Theology, taught jointly with the Department of Theology, a course which brought into the Department a range of very lively and stimulating part time students. These programmes connected the Department to a wide range of professionals working in the city and the region.

In the 1980s and early 1990s the part time MA in Social Policy and the Organisation of Welfare gave middle managers in the region an opportunity to relate practice to research and theory and to pool a fund of rich and fruitful experience. In the mid 1990s the Department launched a joint MA programme, the first ever formal joint programme in the University, with the Manchester Metropolitan University.

And, of course, there are the Ph D. students in criminology and in mainstream social policy. Two have this to say of their years in the Department.

“The Department was like a family, with quite a number of strong personalities, who had been there together for many years. We were a handful of Ph. D. students from home and abroad, with various backgrounds and very diverse ideas and approaches to our work. It was nice to see that we all felt welcome and appreciated in the same way. Just like in a good family, there was freedom but also a texture of care”

“I never thought that I would be in Manchester one day. It was too far away. However I finally arrived in Manchester in 1991 studying social policy. A lot of friends in my country warned me with a sad look of the criminal problems there and always commented that ‘Englishmen were cold
and difficult! Well, they were terribly wrong. So many people showed me the warmest welcome even though I spoke very poor English. My first son was born in Manchester just before my Ph.D. viva. I am really happy to call him a Mancunian in memory of the wonderful old days”

Courses
Around 1960, Barbara Rodgers began the teaching of Comparative Social Policy at Manchester in what was among the very first such courses. Comparative Social Policy has been taught ever since. The literature in the early days was limited and there was a strong emphasis on what Barbara styled ‘constructive description’ partly because there was a shortage of material to do anything more ambitious. The great gain was that students were forced to explore systems very different from what existed in the UK. The subject’s strong occupational risks of ethnocentricity were challenged by the introduction of comparative study and again in the early 1970s when the Department began to teach a course on social policy and race relations - an early venture in this field.

Throughout its history the Department has had a strong tradition of Criminology teaching, pioneered by Gordon Rose and broadened and expanded in the 1980s and 1990s to take account of the explosion of knowledge and theory and culminating in the joint degree programme.

Ken Pease has this to say about criminology at Manchester “It has to be said that criminology within Social Policy at Manchester was never totally ‘within’. Michael Chatterton was certainly among the first UK academics to study the police, and the ambivalent relations between policing and social policy were mirrored within the Department… Between bouts of paranoia, we criminologists did some good work. Mike set up the Henry Fielding Centre, which pioneered training for police analysts. Pete Ainsworth carried on the good work. The Kirkholt project remains one of the most cited burglary reduction project ever carried out. However, the real achievement of criminology at Manchester was the doctoral training of scholars who have spread Triffid like through academe and seeded the wholesome mixture of respect for quantitative data and awareness of how they need to be complemented in foreign and domestic parts. I suppose mother Triffids die. RIP Social Policy at Manchester. You were a schizophrenic mother to us criminologists, but you nurtured and strengthened us”

Ian Gough’s course on the Political Economy of the Welfare State both reflected and pioneered a new approach to understanding the increasingly complex and contradictory phenomenon of the welfare state. This course came to be complemented by a compulsory third year course on Social Values which wrestled - or tried to make students wrestle - with the conflicting political value systems at issue in welfare state policies. Generations of students complained of what they saw - not unreasonably - as a huge jump from year two courses to this more philosophical and often rather alien ideas-based approach.

In the mid 1980s the Department began teaching a course on Women and the Welfare State as a response to the enriching explosion of feminist research and theorisation. Dale and Foster’s home grown Feminists and State Welfare was a key text. In a subject always dominated at undergraduate level by women students this course was a richly liberating experience for many.

Changes were also taking place in the Department’s long established approach to using placements. For example, in the 1950s the Department’s BA (Admin) programme required students to do a substantial amount of field work and to write reports about their experience. In the 1970s, efforts were made to link this experience more formally to the academic programme. A second year course was launched - Field Research in Social Welfare - which aimed to get students to connect their own experience to the relevant literature on social research, policy and practice. It was, in a very real sense, an initiative in a different form of learning which has now, of course, become part of a new educational orthodoxy.

3. Research
To review or evaluate the Department’s contribution in research and writing would clearly be impossible in the space available but a mention of some of the work produced by members of the Department over its 50 year history can indicate the scale and range of Departmental ‘outputs’ some of it now for ever lost in dusty library stacks but influential in its time.

In addition there is a rich output of important journal articles and research reports. Most notably there was Ken Pease’s Home Office funded work on crime prevention and repeat victimisation and Howard Parker’s work on drug and alcohol use and abuse. Howard’s research centre has produced work of national importance particularly in relation to young people. Here criminological concerns were clearly integrated with broader social policy issues such as leisure patterns, health and social exclusion. Whereas Ken Pease talked of ambivalent and schizophrenic relations between social policy and criminology, Howard eased these problems by the creation of a specialist research unit.

4.Beyond the local
The close links between the department and local policy/practice institutions continued throughout the first generation of the welfare state. For example, we are told that in the mid 1950s both staff and students maintained close contact with the University Settlement, in what was described as ‘a natural relationship’\(^4\). But, it was not long before a number of academic and social changes began to erode the relationship. Firstly, the expansion and growing professionalisation of Social Administration/Social Policy as a field of academic study encouraged a move away from this close relationship with the ‘field’ and towards greater emphasis on theory. Secondly, but more subtly, growing suburbanisation and the increasingly national labour market for academics weakened the personal links between local academic elites and traditional local, city based policy-rich issues. Whereas a vice-chancellor of the late 1950s (Mansfield- Cooper) could point to the formative influence of his inner Manchester elementary school, his successors (and academics in general) were more nationally mobile and less locally rooted. From the 1970s onwards sponsors of Social Policy research have been predominantly national, whether government department or larger charitable foundation. Parallel developments emerged within the academic and professional associations, and were reflected in the proliferation of national and international journals and conference attendance, particularly outside the UK. When Barbara Rodgers sailed to Canada in the late 1940s, she sent back a series of letters chronicling the novelty and excitement of it all. Now colleagues are routinely expected to visit distant places on a regular basis.

5.Things fall apart- almost
Perhaps the centrifugal tendencies of Social Policy are inherent in its interdisciplinary DNA, but wider explanations are surely needed for the demise of the Department. They must embrace the impact of changes in Higher education, Faculty politics in the shadow of the RAE, the decline of student applications as well as more \textit{ad hoc} factors. For example, over the last decade significant numbers of junior and senior appointments in the Department went to academics from North America. They brought a freshness of approach and a wealth of ideas and connections, but their lack of experience of the more ethnocentric traditions in Social Policy reinforced a diffusion of identity, which was partly reflected in the change of departmental title – from Social Policy to Applied Social Science.

Over the same period, there were six heads of department in 9 years. Even as Faculty politics responded to the cynical cliché ‘If you want to stay alive, get a five’, Social Policy eventually got its ‘5’ in 2001, but the academic and social cement which binds departments together had already been loosened by the changes in personnel and character. When the unification of the University of Manchester and UMIST got under way, the traditional fissiparous tendencies (Social Work/Probation, at least two strands of criminological work, and a run-down Social Policy) proved an attractive target for the rationalisers.

The Department’s tripartite ending does, however, make a degree of sense, and there are grounds for optimism about a small Social Policy presence within the strong Government, International Politics and Philosophy “discipline area”. Strong academic leadership can ensure creative links with colleagues interested in public policy and governance. Professor Gerry Stoker, for example, who heads a specialist unit on the latter topic, did his Ph.D. in Manchester’s old Social Administration department. Professor Steve Harrison has unique links with both health and public policy, whilst other staff are determined to maintain joint projects with criminologists in the School of Law.

At the end of the day the pressing demands for the new, mega-university, (which began from October 2004) to earn research contracts, publish high quality articles in a limited range of internationally rated journals, attract overseas income and so on, may prove too hostile an environment for a fledgling Social Policy presence to do more than exist in the form of paired work and loose networks. We seem to have come a long way from David Donnison’s experience of benevolent dictators, light teaching and getting to know students, but some surprising continuities allow a modest hope. So too does his argument that almost all the social science overlap in subject matter and ‘With the exception of Economics, any of them could be partitioned among its neighbours and leave scant residue. That is as it should be; when social scientists are tempted to create private corners of specialist expertise, the outcome is seldom happy.’\(^5\)

Duncan Scott and Paul Wilding\(^1\)

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1. With advice, help, comments, criticism and contributions from a mighty army! Apologies to any not mentioned who think they should have been and for any errors and misinterpretations. Corrections and comments very welcome.

2. K.Jones The Teaching of Social Studies in British Universities’ Bell, 1964, p.59

3. M. Stocks (1956) Fifty Years in Every Street, Manchester, Manchester University Press, p.45, p.94

4. Brian Rodgers, in Stocks op cit, p.131

5. Quoted in K.Jones, op cit

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Dover Street Building, photograph courtesy of The University of Manchester
Eradicating child poverty?
A view from the lobby

Paul Dornan, Child Poverty Action Group

Heading into a presumed May 2005 general election and a little over five years after Tony Blair’s promise to eradicate child poverty finds the policy field at a critical juncture. Here I will to take the opportunity to briefly detail some of the key issues the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), as a group lobbying to end child poverty, sees as critical to develop the debate. Research has always been critical to CPAG’s work, we work at our best when we are positioned at the nexus between various communities: academic, welfare rights, political and policy. As a lobbyist I’m also not going to let the opportunity pass to mention some of the areas we’d like to see more research on, helping to push forward to the goal of ending child poverty.

Reviewing progress since 1997 gives a mixed picture, very encouraging with a change in the tenor of debate and significant investment in extra resources for children but with questions remaining about both the thrust of policy and its delivery. Massively high child income poverty has been falling, as has material deprivation – both remain too high. We have a new Public Service Agreement (PSA) target on child poverty, coming out of the 2004 spending review, and another to sit alongside promised for the next review. The renewed target, based on relative incomes involved a methodological change which ‘removed’ 700,000 children from the headline figure, a move criticised by CPAG and many others, and one which will only be vindicated if those children lost from the top-line measure are caught by the proposed second, more material based, PSA. Accompanying the spending review was the Child Poverty Review, which very usefully draws together existing strategy but which neither fully accepts the threats to sustainability of progress nor the difficulty of building on this. Delivery problems persist and, in some ways, have worsened both, with the increased importance of the means test and annual assessment of tax credits. Job cuts in the Department for Work and Pensions and Inland Revenue do not augur well for improvements in administration.

Looking forward – to the election and beyond – there are five key areas of critical importance in making and sustaining progress on child poverty. Research in these areas has been extremely useful and we would like to see more!

First, policy has not engaged in the level of income – and benefit rates - required for social inclusion. Official pronouncements have been rather discouraging on the use government sees for budget standards research. Yet without the research we don’t know if the relative poverty line is set high enough, or the benefit rates (actually below the poverty line). Concerns on adequacy also include future changes in rate - the lack of a legislative basis for the uprating of tax credits could allow a future government less enamoured with tax credits to reduce their value much more quickly than the Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s managed to do with child benefit. Neglect of income support adult scale rates – linked to prices and falling in real value also – stands out as an area of concern, not only for childless adults but for those who become pregnant on IS and for the relative contribution it provides for families in receipt of the benefit.

Second, the contribution of paid work. Though paid work plays centre stage in official ambitions on child poverty, for too many it does not provide the rewards it should. Maximising the employment rate, if that means people trapped in low wage work, or work that may not be sustained is not an effective anti-poverty strategy. What we would like to see here is higher wages and more investment in support to develop skills.

Third, delivery issues come frequently to CPAG’s attention through its welfare rights focus. The effect of claw-back of overpaid tax credits have had the highest profile, with overpayments being deducted out of the current income awards, leaving affected families with little on which to live. After the roll out of tax credits, the administration has to be got right if they are to add the maximum to the eradication of child poverty.

Four, both delivery issues and real returns from paid work raise traditional concerns over the limits to the means test. Child benefit was increased substantially in level in 1999 but has since fallen again in real value. Universal benefits are the best means to overcome the problems associated with the tax credits, and though this ought not to be at the expense of income increases to the poorest, CPAG would certainly argue that child benefit needs to be increased in rate as the core of the anti-child poverty strategy.

Five, though the income poverty rate has been coming down it has not come down equally for all and the risk of being poor is sharply patterned. Some groups – most notably the children of asylum seekers – are very poorly covered by official figures and it is very likely that they are extremely poor. Policy needs to develop to address more clearly why it is that different groups – lone parents, those with disabilities, those without paid work and certain ethnic groups – have such low levels of income, research which analyses such experiences is tremendously useful.

Three points to end with. For CPAG, research on poverty continues to be critical in shaping policy and critical in shaping our messages – so thank you! I have outlined some of the key areas in which research is particularly useful to developing lobbying messages. Second research is most useful to us when it challenges official preconceptions, and CPAG would be keen, for example, to see research continue to be done using after as well as before housing costs data, even though the child poverty target has been firmly linked to the latter – it provides more ‘headroom’ to argue for alternatives. Finally, to end on a shameless plug I would like to ask you to let us know about relevant research you are doing and to consider submitting poverty related articles to our own journal Poverty.

Dr Paul Dornan
Head of Policy and Research
pdornan@cpag.org.uk
www.cpag.org.uk

www.social-policy.com
Call for papers

CPAG calls for submissions for consideration for publication in Poverty.

Poverty is the journal of the Child Poverty Action Group. Poverty publishes policy-orientated articles primarily focused on child and family poverty. Our readership encompasses both specialists and non-specialists with an interest in poverty. We aim to inform and to influence debate and policy on poverty.

We would welcome articles related to poverty. Articles should be around 2,700 words long and should be sent for consideration to the commissioning editor, Pauline Phillips, at pphilips@cpag.org.uk.

New from the Child Poverty Action Group

Tax Credits: one year on

Marilyn Howard

Introduced in April 2003, the new tax credits – child tax credit and working tax credit – represent a major change in government policy on making work pay for low-income families and are critical to the success of the Government’s pledge to end child poverty by 2020.

Tax Credits: one year on reviews the first year of the new system and makes policy recommendations for the future. Drawing on case studies provided to CPAG by welfare rights advisers across the UK, the book looks beyond the well-documented implementation problems and examines broader issues of concern, including childcare, income assessments, overpayments and the relationship with other benefits. The problems experienced by some families in the scheme’s initial 12 months highlight the need for further reform if tax credits are to be truly successful in eradicating child poverty.

June 2004 96 pages £9.00

Poverty: the facts

5th edition

Jan Flaherty, John Veit-Wilson and Paul Dornan

Poverty: the facts (5th edition) is published by leading national charity the Child Poverty Action Group. It is the most authoritative and up to date analysis of poverty in Britain. It claims that although some regions and countries in the UK are poorer than others, each contains diverse areas and cities with different poverty levels. It also considers recent government initiatives and reports on their ‘limited’ success.

Poverty: the facts now includes an index for easy reference. It is an essential resource for campaigners, policymakers, journalists, students and academics.

‘Presents a clear picture of the growth of poverty in Britain and the divide between rich and poor’ - Community Care

March 2004 296 pages £10.95

A full list of CPAG publications and an order form are available online at http://www.cpag.org.uk/publications/policyorderform.htm
The Centre for Research in Social Policy (CRSP), in the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough University, has been celebrating its 21st birthday. A special conference held at Loughborough University on September 17th, brought together over 80 colleagues in the social policy research and academic community as well as those involved in policy making to consider and debate the role of research in shaping social policy.

Keynote speakers were: the Rt Hon Dawn Primarolo MP (Paymaster General); Sue Duncan (Chief Government Social Researcher); and Professor Ruth Lister (Professor of Social Policy at Loughborough University). CRSP was also very pleased to welcome back its founder, Professor Sir Adrian Webb (now Vice Chancellor at the University of Glamorgan), and its former Director, Professor Robert Walker (now at the University of Nottingham).

In the morning plenary session, the Rt Hon Dawn Primarolo discussed the vital contribution that research makes to effective government and recognised that “in constructing evidence-based policies, the Government owes a great deal to social researchers and academics around the country”. She emphasised the Government’s determination to ensure that policy makers’ decisions are rooted in a “bedrock” of sound evidence. The importance of longitudinal evidence was also highlighted by the Minister, particularly in helping to understand the causes of child poverty and its effects on people’s life chances.

Sue Duncan focused on the challenge of getting the policy-research relationship right. This includes demystifying the policy process for those working outside of government, as well as recognising within government the complexities of the research process. Without good research information, “policies can be poorly targeted, can have unintended consequences or they can simply not work”. Current approaches to policy making prioritise inclusiveness, performance measurement and delivery, joined-up government, strategic thinking and identifying “what works”. In each of these key areas, Ms Duncan emphasised the important role that research plays in providing evidence to those working in government, whilst recognising that there remain inherent frustrations and challenges in the research/policy relationship.

Professor Lister reflected on the relevance and value of social policy research both for government and non-government actors. She considered the influence and limits of research on social policy makers, mediating factors and who decides what is relevant. She emphasised the need to give more thought to how we can make research accessible to its ‘beneficiaries’. In conclusion, she argued that we cannot allow government to be the sole arbiter of research relevance, for we also have wider responsibilities, in particular to those whose voices are least heard in policy-making debates.

In the afternoon parallel sessions, participants discussed the role of research in shaping social policy around CRSP’s four research themes: work, poverty and social exclusion; welfare and life transitions; comparative welfare; and progress towards social inclusion. The panels included speakers from CRSP and other UK and international academics and researchers, as well as representatives from government and the research funding community.

The day was a great success and concluded with a round table discussion about the future direction of social policy research. Full conference proceedings will be available via CRSP’s website in early 2005.

More information about CRSP’s work can be accessed via http://www.crsp.ac.uk or from Clare Lawson at CRSP (e.c.lawson@lboro.ac.uk).

Simon Roberts and Karen Kellard
The Centre for Research in Social Policy (CRSP)
Loughborough University
Call for papers

The 2005 Social Policy Association Conference will be held at the University of Bath, 27th – 29th June 2005

Conference Theme:
Well-being and Social Justice

Papers are invited which address the overall theme ‘Well-being and Social Justice’ and the following sub-themes:

1. Childhood and the life course
2. Crime and criminal justice processes
3. Economic security: poverty and social inequalities
4. Education and learning
5. Environment/ housing/community
6. Family and family policy
7. Health and social care
8. Labour market/ work as welfare/corporate citizenship
9. Theorising well-being: defining, measuring and understanding
10. Understanding agency and promoting voice

Papers presenting a comparative, European or international dimension are strongly encouraged. We also welcome papers from outside of the traditional social policy disciplines.

Abstract submission
Abstracts of no more than 150 words should be submitted either, on paper with a floppy disc, or by email in rich text format.

Information enclosed with your abstract should include:
Title of paper, your name, affiliation, postal address (including post code), contact number (including country and area dialling code) and email address. Please indicate the relevant theme/sub-theme for your paper.

Abstracts should be sent by 18th February 2005, to:
SPA 2005 Conference Office
Department of Social and Policy Sciences
University of Bath
Bath BA2 7AY

Enquiries can be made by email to Spa2005@bath.ac.uk, telephone + 44 (0) 1225 383529 or fax + 44 (0) 1225 826381

Once your abstract has been processed you will receive a standard email of confirmation. If you do not receive confirmation of receipt of your abstract by the end of February, please contact the SPA Conference Office.
'Lowe has that rare gift of being able to overfly an immensely complicated landscape and to make sense of it with clarity, precision and detachment. His assessment of New Labour brings much-needed perspective and light.‘
- Peter Hennessy, Queen Mary, University of London

'This new edition provides an authoritative and clear assessment of the Thatcher years and a valuable assessment of New Labour’s policies in relation to the preceding Conservative record.’
- Jane Lewis, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Oxford

This is the third edition of a book which has established itself as a standard work on the British welfare state. Rodney Lowe incorporates recent developments and the latest research, providing a clear guide to the evidence on which to base informed judgements on the past record, and future prospects, of the welfare state in Britain.
For some members of the Association, this year’s annual conference was a return to its roots, Nottingham having been the regular home of the conference in the days of the old Social Administration Association. Perhaps this played a role in producing a reflective conference in which members debated with some intensity the direction that social policy should take in the future - both as an academic subject and a field of government action - and asked too what we might learn from its past.

The conference began with a plenary session in which Jane Lewis (LSE), Stuart White (Oxford University) and Hilary Wainwright (Editor of Red Pepper) debated ‘Which Way for UK Politics?’ Lewis argued that New Labour (NL) were producing a new mix of services but have found it difficult to square the circle of a competitive economy and high quality services. While social policy has been viewed in a much more positive light since NL came to power, she felt that too often we have seen flawed reforms struggle to reach laudable goals - the politics of good intentions as she dubbed it. White, meanwhile, argued that NL’s failure to tackle inequalities in wealth and the democratic deficit had weakened their ability to deliver meaningful social change. He suggested a vicious cycle exists: inequalities in power and wealth feed into political disengagement and distrust, in turn making it more difficult to pass and implement policies that might tackle these inequalities. Finally, Wainwright provided the sterner critique of NL. She argued that Blair and Brown are captivated by the sternest critique of NL. She argued that the social policy agenda needs to respond to this in a way that revalues the collective elements of society, in part by connecting public services with citizenship rather than consumerism and by casting a critical eye on the idea of work as 'citizen-worker of the future' implicit in the notion of the 'responsibility discernable in NL discourse. Firstly, she highlighted the notion of the ‘responsibility citizen’ as seen in their emphasis on work and the clamp down on ‘anti-social behaviour’. Secondly, she talked of the ‘citizen-worker of the future’ implicit in the idea of a social investment state. Finally, she pointed to the ‘consumer citizen’ where choice is the watchword. Lister concluded that welfare citizenship was becoming increasingly instrumental, consumerist and conditional, which she suggested was far from an inspiring vision for the future. Finally, Willetts argued that, with their emphasis on matching rights and responsibilities, it was surprising that NL had a blind spot on the contributory principle. The increased use of tax credits and means tests had, he argued, produced an overly fragmented and complex system. Moreover, he suggested too that NL’s emphasis on investment in human capital had failed to produce significant social gains.

The second plenary session - at which Bill Jordan (Exeter University), Ruth Lister (Loughborough University) and David Willetts (Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions) spoke - was titled ‘Where Next for Welfare?’ Jordan began the debate by arguing that NL had pursued two worthy aims of (i) including the low skilled and marginalised and (ii) including citizens in services through choice. He suggested, however, that some unintended consequences had emerged from these policies that needed to be addressed. In particular, he pointed to the increasingly instrumental behaviour of individuals concerned with their personal - as opposed to community - development and a related decline in satisfaction with neighbourhoods and civic organisations. He suggested that the social policy agenda needed to respond to this in a way that revalues the collective elements of society, in part by connecting public services with citizenship rather than consumerism and by casting a critical eye on the idea of work as the source of well being. Lister, meanwhile, focused her analysis on the models of citizenship discernable in NL discourse. Firstly, she highlighted the notion of the ‘responsibility citizen’ as seen in their emphasis on work and the clamp down on ‘anti-social behaviour’. Secondly, she talked of the ‘citizen-worker of the future’ implicit in the idea of a social investment state. Finally, she pointed to the ‘consumer citizen’ where choice is the watchword. Lister concluded that welfare citizenship was becoming increasingly instrumental, consumerist and conditional, which she suggested was far from an inspiring vision for the future. Finally, Willetts argued that, with their emphasis on matching rights and responsibilities, it was surprising that NL had a blind spot on the contributory principle. The increased use of tax credits and means tests had, he argued, produced an overly fragmented and complex system. Moreover, he suggested too that NL’s emphasis on investment in human capital had failed to produce significant social gains.

The final plenary session debated ‘Where next for social policy as a discipline?’ - the key papers from this session appearing earlier in this issue of PolicyWorld. This was, perhaps, the most hotly debated theme of the conference as a whole, though the mood was lightened by Paul Spicker’s fabulous use of verse to deliver his critique of the subject’s shift from social administration to social policy.

Aside from the plenaries, there were, of course, many noteworthy papers delivered within the paper streams. Delegates were well fed, both on campus and, for the Conference Dinner, at the wonderful Mr Mans restaurant. And, in a most considerate gesture, the conference organisers placed a very large hill between the dining room and lecture halls to ensure our excess calorie intakes could be burned off before we returned home.
Family, Community and Social Change: Looking Back and Moving Forward

You are warmly invited to participate in an ESRC seminar series organised by the Families & Social Capital ESRC Research Group at London South Bank University, in conjunction with the Academy of Social Sciences.

Recent years have seen both academic and political concern with the nature of transformations in contemporary family and community relationships, including how these have been affected by social and economic developments.

Debate about change in family and community life in the past half century has become polarised between two main perspectives: one positing the breakdown of established social ties and cohesion; the other pointing to a flowering of diverse, new relations. The concept of change, in contrast to continuity, is thus central to the focus on family and community life. This has not, however, been accompanied by any comprehensive debate that is informed by the substance and methodologies of looking back in order to move forward, both theoretically and in terms of policy developments.

This seminar series thus focuses on topic and methods in assessing the nature of family and community in the past in order to address theoretical and policy assumptions about the present and to inform the future.

**Seminar 1: Learning about long term trends – 6 January 2005**

Focusing on social historical overviews of substantive, theoretical and policy trends in areas of contemporary concern about families and communities, covering a range of methodologies and reflexive perspectives on the process of assessing social change.

**Seminar 2: Learning about what changes and what stays the same – July 2005**

Focusing on studies that replicate or adapt the focus and methodology of past studies of family and community, in order to guide the focus and process of restudy of a locality or population, and to provide a benchmark for social change.

**Seminar 3: Learning about the past from the present – November 2005**

Focusing on secondary analysis of archived data from previous studies in order to reassess contemporary assumptions about and understanding of family and community in the past.

**Seminar 4: Learning from history in contemporary policy – June 2006**

Focusing on the issues and processes involved in applying and learning from social historical perspectives in the development of contemporary policies addressing families and communities.

The organisers of the series are Rosalind Edwards, London South Bank University, in association with Miriam David, University of Keele, and Dominic Abrams, University of Kent, on behalf of the Academy of Social Sciences. All the seminars will be held at London South Bank University.

If you are interested in attending the seminars, please contact Jane Williams: williajv@lsbu.ac.uk

Places are limited to 30 for each seminar. There is no registration fee. There are 5 travel bursaries available for each seminar for student/low income participants. If you wish to apply for a bursary, please supply a written piece stating your situation, institution affiliation and research interests.
SEMINAR Report

Bringing together those working in the field of social policy in Scotland.

Launch of the Scottish Social Policy Network

The Scottish Social Policy Network (SSPN) held its launch conference at the University of Stirling on Friday, 8 October 2004. Funded by the Social Policy Association, the University of Stirling, and The Open University it intends to bring together those working in the field of social policy in Scotland. The aim is to develop, promote and inform social policy practices and processes while seeking to encourage research and promote social policy as an academic discipline in Scotland. The network is based at the Department of Applied Social Science at the University of Stirling and jointly co-ordinated by Sharon Wright, University of Stirling, and Gerry Mooney, The Open University.

That there is a considerable interest in a forum for the sharing of ideas and cross-fertilisation of information across the (Scottish) social policy community was expressed by the fact that around 50 individuals both from Scotland and abroad working in the field of social policy as practitioners, policy-makers or academics attended the first meeting and that many more have joined the network.

The opening plenary session on “Scottish Social Policy Post-devolution” embraced three key note speakers. First, John Stewart (Oxford Brookes University) addressed post-devolution continuities and change in the Scottish welfare state. Whereas certain continuities, such as the fact that some crucial social insurance decisions have not moved to the Scottish Parliament, were seen as constraints of a genuine Scottish social policy, other continuous features, e.g. the general support for the British Labour Party and the small size of the Scottish population were perceived as opportunities to promote social solidarity. The reservation of social security to Westminster was also seen as a major constraint for a Scottish welfare state by the next presenter, Richard Parry (University of Edinburgh) who concentrated on various limits of Scottish social policy in his speech. However, overall he expressed cautious optimism about the future social policy development in Scotland. In contrast, Gerry Mooney, co-organizer of the conference, was rather critical about the dominating optimism and in particular the widespread assumption of the distinctiveness of Scottish social policy which was expressed by the other two speakers. Mooney instead viewed ideas of allegedly greater collectivism, more inclusiveness and a more social-democratic character of Scotland in comparison to England as long-held myths, particularly in light of widening inequalities between the rich and the poor. Also the ensuing discussion, involving discussant Gill Scott (Glasgow Caledonian University), mainly focussed on the question how distinctive Scottish social policy really is, in particular in comparison to its English sibling.

The issue of Scottish distinctiveness and, implicitly, superiority continued to be addressed during the afternoon round table discussion on “The Future of Social Policy in Scotland”. The first contributors, Philomena de Lima (UHI - Millennium Institute) and Peter Kelly (The Poverty Alliance, Glasgow) shed some light on this. Both shared Mooney’s earlier expressed pessimism with regard to the progress of Scottish social policy, but also observed potential for change. De Lima made clear that implicit notions of “Scottishness” were very narrow and overlook the existence of ethnic minorities. However, she appreciated that issues such as racism and inequalities are now discussed more openly and that anti-discrimination pressure is likely to intensify due to the increased representation of parties such as the Greens in Scottish Parliament. According to Kelly, the perceived lack of forward-motion of Scottish social policy can be contrasted with positive changes such as the institutionalization of free long-term care for the elderly, the absence of tuition fees and attempts at greater participation and local partnerships in Scotland. Finally, Prof Adrian Sinfield from the University of Edinburgh stressed in his analysis the importance of focusing on real problems such as the relatively low life expectancy in Scotland and on social policy needs caused by structural conditions. Research has tended to focus lower down the income distribution, however, it is necessary to move upstream and look at the distribution of wealth, e.g. according to geography. Referring to Tilmuss’ emphasis on the “need to look at who has power”, Sinfield recommended a shift away from the victim perspective to those who benefit from taxes, pensions, and so on.

In the concluding discussion particular Scottish differences such as the rural character and periphery status were summarized. It was generally agreed that the discussion was dominated by what Britain does, but that we should also learn form other European countries.

The Scottish Social Policy Network has now been firmly established and participants in the seminar seemed enthusiastic and optimistic about the development of the network. Future events include a seminar on ‘Teaching Social Policy’, organised in collaboration with SWAPtsn, to be held at the University of Stirling on 20th January 2005. All are welcome.

Membership in the SSPN is free and open to all. To join the network, please contact Jennifer.Gordon@stir.ac.uk. To join the electronic discussion list, go to www.jiscmail.ac.uk.

Elke Viebrock
University of Stirling
Across most developed societies, traditional assumptions about the respective roles and responsibilities of welfare states, families and individuals are being called into question. Responsibilities for welfare are becoming fragmented between public and private sectors; traditional relationships between welfare and paid work are being challenged. Families are also changing in response to demographic and economic pressures; and new ways of delivering individualised support are being sought.

Together, these trends generate important new questions about:

- Who is responsible for supporting ill or disabled children and young people, adults and older people
- The roles of services and cash payments in providing support
- The tensions between paid employment and care-giving, and the consequences for living standards, quality of life and social justice
- How to respond appropriately to differences of gender, ethnicity and other social divisions

New policy responses are required to tackle these developing social challenges; and these policies need to be underpinned by rigorous research evidence.

This conference will present leading edge research in these areas. In addition, a panel of eminent policy makers and practitioners will debate the contribution of research to policy and practice.

**Plenary speakers:**
- Professor Jane Lewis, London School of Economics
- Professor Peter Saunders, University of New South Wales, Sydney
- Professor Kari Waerness, University of Bergen, Norway.

**Keynote speakers include:**
- Saul Becker,
- Caroline Glendinning,
- Hilary Land,
- Jan Pahl,
- Jane Millar,
- Eithne McLaughlin
- Tricia Sloper
- Linda Ward.

**Panel members:**
- Andrew Cozens - Immediate Past President of Association of Directors of Social Services.
- Professor Ian Diamond - Chief Executive, Economic and Social Research Council.
- Sue Duncan - Government Chief Social Researcher, Cabinet Office.
- Malcolm Wicks MP - Minister of State for Work and Pensions

**Who should attend?**
- Researchers in higher education, central and local government and the voluntary sector.
- Policy-makers in central and local government
- Service planners and managers in the statutory and voluntary sector
- Newer researchers and service users are particularly welcome. A number of free places are available for service users and registered research students.

For further information and a registration form, please contact Lisa Goode lg11@york.ac.uk

This conference is being held in memory of Sally Baldwin and is sponsored by:
Last year in Copenhagen, where the first annual conference of the Network for European Social Policy Analysis (ESPAnet) took place, it seemed as if the network had tapped a hidden source of academic interest in the analysis of social policy and welfare state in a European context. As those who were there knew, the interest in this first conference was overwhelming, and Jon Kvist, the organizing host, had to make very difficult decisions regarding which papers to accept. At this year’s annual conference in Oxford things were not different. Again the interest in participation and presenting papers was overwhelming, giving the local organizers a hard time to choose from among the nearly 200 abstracts that had been sent in.

The large interest certainly had to do with the fact that Europe’s role in social policy had been set as the over arching conference theme by the local organizers. For the plenaries, they managed to get an impressive list of expert speakers on this topic, including Mary Daly, Maurizio Ferrera, Stephan Leibfried, Zsuzsa Ferge, Jos Berghman and Anton Hemerijck, and there were no less than 15 of the 28 sessions that had European social policy and intra-European comparisons as a primary objective. The discussions at the plenaries and workshops recognised the current wave of enlargement and the search for a new constitutional framework as the wider policy context, now the European Union is simultaneously becoming more internally differentiated and politically integrated than ever before. Its member states differ more than ever, in terms of the size and orientation of their social effort. At the same time, however, European states are both increasingly interdependent and they are confronted with important common challenges, such as population ageing, a restructuring of labour markets, a disruption of traditional work-life balances, an influx of immigrant labour and cultures, the emergence of new inequalities, and an ever more competitive international environment. The conference very much focused on the fundamental questions that are posed by this context and the new needs it implies. Specifics debates touched upon questions like:

- How well adapted are national and sub-national policies and policy-making frameworks to the necessary reconciliation of solidarity and competitiveness, and to the necessary balancing of security and adaptability?

- What instruments are needed at the supra-national level to solve collectively the problems that are related to social and economic interdependency and to the common pressures from a wider global scale?

- What feasible and legitimate EU-level instruments are there which could help countries to meet the old and the new needs of their citizens?

- What can member states learn from each other, and what role could or should the EU play here?

Different views were expressed about the European Project written large (and especially also about the Open Method of Coordination), but it was acknowledged that, in the longer run, if not already, it will have substantial consequences for the well-being and social and economic security of citizens of European countries. In future, there will be much academic and political debate about when, how and to what degree citizens may, will or should be affected by European measures and instruments, and it might turn out that EU policy makers are too optimistic about what they can establish. But the conference participants clearly saw that for academic analysts of social policy, the needs of a new Europe, and how to cope with them, will be on the research agenda’s for many years to come.

ESPAnet is deeply indebted to the local organizers, Jane Lewis and Theresa Smith from the Department of Social Policy and Social Work of Oxford University, and to the colleagues helping them with many aspects of the main and peripheral conference activities, Sharon Wright, Daniel Bell, Rebecca Surrender, and a number of PhD-students.

From the large interest in its first two annual conferences, it might be too early to conclude definitely that ESPAnet has found a hole in the market, so to speak, and that it is there to stay for many years. But thus far, all signs point in the right direction. Activities for the next three years are set in place now, and include Annual Conferences, Expert Seminars and Young Researchers’ Workshops. Details can be found on www.espanet.org. Those who would want to organise a session at next year’s conference in Fribourg (Switzerland) are invited to send an outline to the local organiser Giuliano Bonoli (giuliano.bonoli@unifr.ch) (see also the call for this on the ESPAnet website)

Wim van Oorschot
(co-chair of ESPAnet)
In this issue of Policy World, the first two of a series of four textbooks on the subject of ‘care’ are reviewed. The series is edited by Jean Carabine and published by Policy Press.


Milton Keynes: Policy Press in association with the Open University

Edited by Jean Carabine, this book is one of a series of four textbooks published by the Open University and the Policy Press. It is clear in Sexualities: Personal Lives and Social Policy that, although sexuality is an integral part of our private lives, it is also a significant public issue and is therefore relevant to social policy. The book provides a sound teaching resource to encourage and stimulate critical thinking.

The text offers a three dimensional approach to the issues surrounding the personal and the political domains in respect of sexuality. Firstly, sexuality is central to our understanding of gender roles and expectations within the concept of the family. In this respect, sexuality is both private and public. Secondly, sexuality is seen to be a marginalised issue with regard to certain groups in society, for example, disabled people. Here the topic is frequently rendered invisible with the consequence that disabled people are often sexually excluded. Thirdly, the mutual effects of sexuality and social policies are explored.

The book is divided into five chapters clearly delineating a progression through significant topic areas. Although these areas contain vast differences, what is striking and what binds them together as a coherent whole, is the use of theoretical perspectives throughout, namely Foucauldian post-structuralism and feminism. It could be argued that this is stressed to the point of repetition in the book. Such variant repetition, however, is a useful technique in encouraging deep learning.

Chapter 1 serves as an excellent introduction to the topic of sexuality. It emphasises the vital role of sexuality in our private lives and explains how social policy is interwoven in this role. The overall and essential message is that both sexuality and social policy are in fact mutually constitutive, with each informing and shaping the other in a dynamic relationship. Policy sets the boundaries of what is considered to be socially acceptable; it informs our expectations and identities and, by the same token, sexuality influences policy making. This chapter then brings together an understanding that while sexuality gives us a sense of our self, we are simultaneously influenced by what that ‘self’ actually is, by social policy. Assumptions are commonly made through stereotypes and ideas of what constitutes the ‘norm’ in terms of sexuality. In other words, sexuality is socially constructed and institutionalised. This is demonstrated by the use of historical sources, such as extracts from the Beveridge Report and contrasting statements made by the DfEE (p.11). While these reveal assumptions, it is interesting to note that social policy is identified as a regulatory agency. To exemplify this, certain forms of sexual behaviour are permitted, while other sexual activities are illegal. This illustrates the bridging of the divide between the public and private domains.

Chapter 2 follows with an historical account of the link between sexuality, marriage and parenthood, again elaborating on the theme of the public-private domains. A feminist analytical perspective constitutes the theoretical framework for this chapter. From an historical viewpoint it can be seen that sexuality is a gendered concept, resulting in inequalities. The focus is on marriage and parenthood, and includes the concomitant issues of sexuality, birth control and fertility. Viewed historically, it is clear that changes in societal behaviour have affected social policy. Furthermore, although reflecting these changes, social policy also voices concern over certain issues that can affect the nation. In particular, the well-being of children has been on the welfare agenda since the Liberal reforms in the early twentieth century, not solely for humanitarian reasons but also in the national interest. Similarly, population control was a concern of the eugenicists, reference to which thus again reinforces the theme of the public-private debate. A link is made between eugenics and the birth control pioneer, Marie Stopes. However, her role as an ardent eugenacist and proponent of legislation for sterilisation, is overlooked. As this particularly concerned people who had any type or level of disability, it would have been useful for cross-references to have been made in this chapter with the later chapter on disability.

Chapters 3 and 4 then focus attention to different aspects of sexuality. Chapter 3 examines the issue of young people and Chapter 4 involves the issue of disabled people. Continuing the theme of a constructed sexuality from Chapter 2, Chapter 3 moves from the notion of a gendered concept to one that is created through the media and social policy. This chapter continues with a feminist and a Foucauldian post-structuralist approach through its examination of the perceptions of childhood. Also continuing with an historical theme, this chapter highlights the transitional elements of, not just young people’s emerging sexuality, but of society’s perceptions of their sexuality. In many respects, the sexuality of young people has been denied or treated as a problem. This is a similar phenomenon in the lives of disabled people, although again the opportunity to make links or cross-references between chapters is lost.

Social policy, in the area of young people, is seen to be regulatory and paternalistic on the one hand, while being more permissive in terms of young people’s rights to self-determination, on the other. Policy areas that are discussed include: sex education, which involves the controver-
What shapes welfare policy? According to this book the two domains of personal lives and welfare policy and practice are each partially shaped and given meaning by the other. The book explores this process of ‘mutual constitution’ by analysing everyday practices of care in a range of settings.

Chapter 5 continues with a Foucauldian post-structuralist perspective and the theme that ‘normative sexuality’ is constructed. Disabled people are generally outwith the boundaries of this notion of ‘normative sexuality’. Subsequently, their sexuality is often couched in silence. The chapter highlights the protectionist role of social policy in respect of disabled people’s sexuality. This role is expressed in terms of surveillance and control. As a consequence, disabled people are frequently infantilised by society. The effects are far reaching because sexuality encompasses more than mere sexual activity: it also involves self-esteem and a sense of identity. By refusing to acknowledge their sexuality through social policy, disabled people are, in effect, diminished or negated as whole human beings. There is a responsibility for social policy to enhance disabled people’s lives through empowering measures, while retaining an element of their protection from sexual abuse.

The final chapter of the book serves as a pertinent conclusion, drawing together the theoretical perspectives and key concepts. It examines Foucauldian post-structuralism, feminism and heteronormativity, and the dilemma of reconciling the private with the public domains. A salient theme in this final chapter is also one that runs throughout the book: that our personal lives and social policy are mutually constitutive.

Overall, the book is a valuable contribution to the understanding of sexuality, and of the role of social policy in our personal lives. It is especially informative in the area of sexuality and disability, where there is a dearth of literature. It is commendable that the book presents the issues clearly, with a high level of critical analysis. Although there are references in the book to other factors, such as age and ‘race’, it is disappointing that there no entire chapters that focus entirely on these issues. Perhaps limited space prohibits this. Moreover, an exploration of political and more various ideological viewpoints in terms of the outcomes of social policy with regard to sexuality would have been a useful addition.

The book is presented as a user-friendly text book, with an imaginative use of colour, highlights, and variations in type. Furthermore, each chapter is subdivided into sections with activities, extracts from other sources which are followed by comments. At the end of each chapter there is a note of further resources and a full bibliography. Overall, it is a book that is very informative, has a wealth of stimulating ideas and one that could easily be adopted for use in a variety of courses in social or public policy.

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This book is one of a series of four which have been produced for a particular course. The book is divided into five chapters, which use elements of feminist, psychoanalytic and neo-Marxist theory to analyse peoples’ experiences. Chapter 1 provides the framework for the rest of the book by introducing the ways in which care, carers and caregiving can be conceptualised and to the different forms of intervention used in the domain of care. Chapter 2 explores the personal costs of care experienced by unmarried women in interwar Britain. It considers why care and paid work were so closely identified with one another and how this has subsequently influenced the way in which care is organised in today’s society. Holden’s accounts of how unmarried woman conformed to society’s pressure to sublimate their sexual energy by caring for other people’s children are illuminating. By adopting a historical perspective, this chapter helps us to trace and understand the early development of informal care for older people and children.

In exploring the concept of ‘child care’ in chapter 3, Goldson considers the blurred boundaries between caring for children perceived as ‘victims’ and controlling those perceived as ‘threats’. He draws attention to the conflicting and contradictory objectives of child welfare and juvenile justice policies, which on the one hand, talks of ‘tackling youth crime’ and on the other, ‘safeguarding children’. By using some very emotive and illuminating quotes from young people and staff in secure accommodation, he highlights how this institution is the location of ‘care’ for children where policies, practices and the law also subjects them to the power and control of adults and the state.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the racialised meanings of care and how this impacts upon the personal lives of health care professionals and service users. Where Goldson was concerned with issues of power within the context of overlapping boundaries of care and control, Gunaratnam is concerned with how questions of
power are played out in care relationships in hospices. She considers how the education and training needs of professionals produce meanings and identities of racialised care which, in turn, construct the lives of ethnic minority service users. She illustrates how cultural differences are afforded special significance and how this affects the delivery of appropriate care.

The book contains a number of cross-cutting themes such as identity, meanings and morality, which are pulled together in the last chapter to provide a conclusion. This final chapter explores how these themes illuminate the relationship between personal lives, welfare practices and policy. It concludes that care relationships are influential channels through which personal lives are shaped by welfare policy but which at the same time, challenge the assumptions of policy-makers.

On the whole, the book is well written in a clear concise and readable format but at times there is a lack of clarity. The most confused picture is drawn in chapter 4, which deals with issues of racial and ethnic identity. This chapter was a bit repetitive with a complex structure which I found confusing. Despite the repetition I had to read it several times to understand the salient points and I am still not convinced about the effectiveness of a ‘multi-site analysis’. The main points could have been put in a more succinct manner.

A strength of this text book is the interactive dimension which involves a series of questions and activities that encourage readers to relate the theories and concepts being discussed to their own lives and experiences. All chapters have clear subheadings and are easy to navigate with key concepts highlighted in bold. There is, arguably, one important omission from this book on social policy. With the increasing divergence in policy that devolution has brought about, it is disappointing to note that there is almost no mention of it except for one brief reference (page 34), which alludes to the division between health and social care being less clearly drawn in Scotland. The book focuses on policy development in England and Wales but only chapter three makes this explicit. An acknowledgement of the increasing diversity of policy in relation to care would be a potentially informative addition to this book. Overall, this is a useful and thought-provoking book that is likely to be of interest to health and social care students and those concerned with care in its multiple settings. It is an empirically grounded and theoretically informed book, which effectively illustrates the complexity and multi-faceted nature of care. However, for general social policy courses, it has limited value.

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LAUNCH OF THE SPAnorth REGIONAL NETWORK

We are pleased to announce the SPAnorth Regional Network launch event will take place at the University of York on Wednesday February 9th 2005.

SPAnorth is a newly established regional network of the Social Policy Association. Its broad aim is to bring together those working in the field of social policy in the North East and Yorkshire and Humber in order to develop, promote and inform social policy research, teaching and practice. A key role of the network is to promote social policy as an academic discipline in the north.

The SPAnorth launch event will begin with a buffet lunch at 12.00. Formal proceedings will begin at 13.00 and the event will end around 15.30. It is open to all SPA members in the region and is free to attend.

For further information – or to book a place at the event - please contact Lisa O’Malley (ljg104@york.ac.uk) or visit the conferences section of the SPA web site (http://www.social-policy.com/).
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Contributors: Tania Burchardt, Maria Evandrou, Jane Falkingham, Howard Glennerster, Paul Gregg, John Hills, Ruth Lupton, Abigail McKnight, Coretta Phillips, Anne Power, Liz Richardson, Franco Sassi, Tom Sefton, Holly Sutherland, Kitty Stewart, Jane Waldfogel, Elizabeth Washbrook and Helen Willmot.

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