MAKING POVERTY HISTORY?

THE 2005 AGENDA EXPLORED

- IPPR
- GORDON BROWN
- DAVID GORDON
- ANNUAL CONFERENCE DETAILS
The Social Policy Digest is an online resource available to all SPA members and Journal of Social Policy subscribers. It is an invaluable, fully-searchable and regularly updated source of information about current events across the whole social policy field.

The Digest provides a commentary on changes in social welfare legislation and a review of the major reports and surveys published by government departments, leading think tanks and voluntary bodies. Access to the Digest is via subscription only. If you are using a PC at a university that holds a current subscription to the Journal of Social Policy then you can access the Digest directly at: http://journals.cambridge.org/jid_JSP

SPA members who wish to access the Digest from a home PC, or whose institution does not have a subscription to the Journal of Social Policy, will need to create a personal log-in ID. If this is the case you may find it helpful to download the Social Policy Digest User Guide from the SPA’s web site at: http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/spsw/spa/digest.htm
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Policy World is published three times each academic year. 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 jrh10@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:
Autumn 2005 25/10/05
JSP Editorial Board Vacancies

There are three vacancies arising on the editorial board of the Journal of Social Policy.

The editorial board meets twice a year, and members are expected to be involved in refereeing papers submitted to the Journal. Elections will be held at the AGM at the University of Bath in June. If you are interested in becoming a member of the board, in the first instance please contact the editors, Jan Pahl (j.m.pahl@kent.ac.uk) or Emma Wincup (E.L.Wincup@leeds.ac.uk), to discuss the role of editorial board members. Nominations should be emailed to the SPA Hon. Secretary, Catherine Bochel (cbochel@lincoln.ac.uk). Please provide brief details of interests and experience, which will form the basis of a short summary on the ballot form, and the names of a proposer and a seconder (both of whom must also be SPA members), by June 20th 2005.

Upcoming Conferences and Seminars

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

Ethics And Integrity Of Governance: A Transatlantic Dialogue, Organised by: the Study Group on Ethics and Integrity of Governance of the European Group of Public Administration (EGPA) and the Section on Ethics of the American Society of Public Administration (ASPA), will take place in Leuven (Belgium), June 2-5 2005. Further details: www.soc.kuleuven.ac.be/io/ethics/

The Foundation for International Studies of Social Security is running its twelfth annual International Research Seminar on Issues in Social Security the Sigtunahöjden Conference Centre in Sigtuna, near Stockholm, Sweden, from 11-13 June 2005. The theme of the seminar will be ‘Social Security and the Labour Market in an Ageing Society’. Key note speakers include Professor Jonathan Bradshaw, University of York, Guy Standing, International Labour Office, Dr Peter Whiteford, OECD, Professor Peter Zweifel, University of Zurich and Professor Edward Palmer, University of Uppsala. Further details at: web.inter.nl.net/users/fiss/

The 2005 Social Policy Association Annual Conference will take place at the University of Bath, 27th-29th June. Further details in the middle pages of this issue and online at www.bath.ac.uk/sospol/spa2005/index.htm

The 2005 British Society of Criminology Conference –“Re-Awakening the Criminological Imagination”- will take place at the University of Leeds 12th-14th July 2005. Plenary speakers will be Richard Ericson, Mike Levi, Tim Newburn and Lucia Zedner. Special Sessions will include Zygmunt Bauman and Carol Smart. Details: www.leeds.ac.uk/law/bsc2005/


ESRC Family, Community and Social Change Seminar: Learning about what changes and what stays the same. London South Bank University, July 2005. Further information: williajv@lbsu.ac.uk

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:www.iiasisa.be/egpa/agacc.htm

NEW POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED

Janine Arnott (University of Manchester) and Adam Whitworth (Oxford University) have joined the SPA Executive as its new Postgraduate Representatives.

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SPA News

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Nominations for the Social Policy Association Executive Committee required

There are a variety of vacancies arising on the SPA Executive Committee, with elections to be held at the AGM at the University of Bath in June.

The vacancies are as follows:

- Two vacancies for ordinary elected members
- Two vacancies for post-graduate representatives

In addition a Secretary and Treasurer are required. Those elected will ‘shadow’ the current post holders for a year and take over the roles in July 2006.

The Committee meets five times a year to progress the work of the Association and also undertakes a range of work within working-groups and on an individual basis during the intervening periods. If you are interested in taking on the role of Secretary or Treasurer, or alternatively are willing to join the Executive Committee and take on responsibility for one or more of the Executive’s areas of work, such as post-graduate representative, or being involved in one or more of its working groups (Publications, Research, Teaching, Learning and Recruitment) or in activities such as external relations, membership services or regional initiatives, please contact the SPA Hon. Secretary, Catherine Bochel (cbochel@lincoln.ac.uk), with the names of a proposer and a seconder (both of whom must also be SPA members) and with details of which areas you might be interested in/able to contribute to, by June 20th.

NEW EDITORS OF SOCIAL POLICY & SOCIETY

Dr Sharon Wright, Stirling University, and Dr Peter Dwyer, University of Leeds, have been appointed as the new joint co-editors of Social Policy & Society. They will begin their term of office when the Founding Editor, Tony Maltby, retires from the post at the end of 2005.

Conferences

The 11th Researching the Voluntary Sector Conference, organised by NCVO and VSSN, will take place at the University of Warwick 31st August and 1st September 2005. Further details: research@ncvo-vol.org.uk

A World for All? the ethics of global civil society an international, interdisciplinary conference will take place at the University of Edinburgh, 4 - 7 September 2005. Further details at: www.div.ed.ac.uk/aworld-forall.html

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: www.valt.helsinki.fi/esa/conferences.htm

The 2005 ESPAnet 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. SPA members are entitled to reduced rate membership of APPAM which in turn brings a reduced rate conference fee (see: www.york.ac.uk/depts/spsw/spa/news.htm #appam). Further conference details at www.appam.org/conferences/fall/

‘Race’ and social research: issues of methodology, ethics and practice, a national day conference organised by the Centre for Social Inclusion and Social Justice in conjunction with the Institute for Applied Ethics, University of Hull, will take place in York on November 8 2005. There are a limited number of bursaries valued up to £50 each to contribute towards the costs of post-graduate students or low income organisations attending this event. Further details: www.hull.ac.uk/iae/workshop2

ESRC Family, Community and Social Change Seminar: Learning from 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 2006 Social Policy Association Annual Conference will take place at the University of Birmingham, 18th-20th July, 2006. Further details: www.social-policy.com

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: www.ucm.es/info/isa/congress2006

The 2007 Social Policy Association Annual Conference will take place at the University of Birmingham, 17th-19th July, 2006. Further details: www.social-policy.com

www.social-policy.com
Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences

**Call for nominations for new Academicians**

The SPA is a member of the Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences. In recent years we have successfully nominated a number of SPA members to become Academicians. This is a mark of distinction and denotes an outstanding contribution to the study and/or practice of social policy.

We have been invited to submit nominations for the next round of selection for new Academicians. Existing Academicians are entitled to make one nomination each per year, and ‘learned societies’ – such as the SPA - can make up to six nominations.

Nominations need to include the reasons for making the nomination – details of the nominee’s contribution to the study and/or practice of social science; evidence of her/his contribution to the aims of the Academy; an up-to-date CV; and the agreement of the person being nominated. A copy of the form on which the nomination has to be submitted can be downloaded from the Academy’s website – www.the-academy.org.uk. If you would like to propose someone to be nominated by the SPA, please complete the form from the Academy’s website and send it to the SPA Hon. Secretary, Catherine Bochel (cbochel@lincoln.ac.uk), by 20th June 2005. All nominations will be considered by the SPA Executive before being ratified and forwarded to the Academy.

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**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.

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**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
New Funded Projects 2005

SWAP is funding a new wave of projects to promote and disseminate effective research and development work in learning, teaching and assessment activities in social policy and social work. Details are available from the SWAP website and decisions about which proposals are successful will be made in May. SWAP aims to fund activity primarily within higher education but also from colleagues delivering higher education courses in further education colleges.

Projects will be funded for a maximum of twelve months and funds of up to £8000 are being awarded. Proposals will be funded for either Pedagogic research or Development projects. These projects will lead to a range of dissemination activities that will benefit the subject community and information on these will be available via our website and through our e-bulletins and other promotional work.

74 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) to be created

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has announced the creation of 74 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) to promote excellence across all subjects and aspects of teaching and learning in higher education in England. Funding of £315 million over five years from 2005-06 will be used to recognise and reward excellent teachers and enable institutions to invest in staff, buildings and equipment to support and enhance successful learning in new and challenging ways. A full list of CETLs and further details are available on the HEFCE web-site www.hefce.ac.uk.

SWAP welcomes this initiative and is looking forward to working with centres with a link to Social Policy and/or Social Work.

E-Learning Activities funded by JISC Distributed E-learning Programme

SWAP has been given £41000 from JISC’s Distributed E-learning programme, through the Higher Education Academy, to support development activities up to March 2006. The funds will support three strands of exciting e-learning work including:

- Virtual seminar series
- Work on development of Question banks
- Establishment of an e-learning interest group through two 24-hour Think Tanks

These activities will be underpinned by consultation and joint working with social policy and social work academics. Invitations to be part of the development of ideas, planning and delivery of activities will be distributed via our website and email. Financial support will be available for some aspects of joint-working. For further information contact Julia Waldman at SWAP or see details on the SWAP website.

SWAP Events

Watch out for news on web site development and/or workshops on:

- Personal Development Planning
- Social Policy Programme External Examiners

For more information on all the above visit the SWAP website at http://www.swap.ac.uk, email swap@swap.ac.uk or telephone 023 80597782
A New Marshall Plan?

Alex English examines the report of the Commission for Africa

With the advent of the Presidency of both the EU and G8, the Prime Minister had been presented with a unique opportunity to set the global agenda; he could have hardly been more ambitious. With the launch of the global agenda; he could have hardly presented with a unique opportunity to set the EU and G8, the Prime Minister had been with the advent of the Presidency of both the EU and G8, the Prime Minister had been...
development works would go to specific western contractors, more a bastardised form of Roosevelt’s ‘New Deal’, than a Marshall plan.

This, the Commission feels, is an unsustainable approach that fails to ensure Africa’s best interests. It argues that aid has been seen as being as much a way of extending a measure of political and social control, whilst ensuring the self-interest of the developed word, as dealing with the inherent problems at hand. Many development projects fail because they have, by necessity, to focus on satisfying donor agendas rather than the actual problems of the area. Conditionality also makes nigh on impossible the concept of a pan-African approach. With the diverse regimes, political alliances and economies within the continent, it’s almost impossible to expect all countries to agree to, or be expected to meet, one set of criteria. This would inevitably reduce the provision of aid once again to a case-by-case approach; something the Commission’s report stresses is neither effective nor desirable.

Proponents of conditionality point to the growth of democracy in Africa as a measure of the success of the policy. There are after all thirty democratic states in Africa today, compared to only three thirty years ago, surely evidence of the success of the approach, they would argue. Whilst recognising the success of democracy as a tool for socio-economic reform in the long run, the commission argues that many of the conditions imposed for aid, particularly the enforced liberalisation of individual economies, a common pre-requisite for aid, is at the heart of many of Africa’s ongoing development problems.

Many observers of African development including the commission itself, believe that conditional liberalisation has been a disaster for emerging African economies, weakening already brittle financial structures, and leaving newly privatised industries often at the mercy of the global market and international corporations. Persuading the G8 and EU nations to relinquish their grip on this element of control will be a tough sell for a British government which has itself, up till now, been one of the staunchest proponents of liberalisation. Furthermore, given that one of the key inducements for American involvement is likely to be the notion of reducing an emergent terrorist threat in Africa, the idea of moving entirely away from pre-conditions seems likely to be a tough needle to thread.

Whilst the Commission has called for an increased emphasis on infrastructure reform and good governance, it maintains that trade is still an area of key concern. The commission has emphasised the importance of increasing Africa’s ability to trade, removing trade barriers and tariffs and recognising the importance of transitional support to develop emerging economies.

There is an argument that the report doesn’t go far enough, however, in terms of protecting the needs of developing countries. The economies of many sub-Saharan nations are still almost entirely dependent on the commodities markets and, in some cases, these markets are dominated by a handful of multi-national corporations and, as such, dependent upon the whim of market forces and the potential for profiteering. The free-market model upon which the report remains based leaves no protection against such activities and says little or nothing about regulation of multi-national corporations operating in the African market – believing, presumably, that self-regulation will be sufficient to protect the developing world’s interests. Whilst it calls upon multi-nationals to recognise their responsibility in setting a ‘good example’, it also recognises that the corruption so prevalent in Africa to date has been exploited by these same institutions. It could well be said that this dedication to the free-market model is in itself a pre-condition that could have a far reaching effect on the potential success or failure of the African initiative. Furthermore, the reluctance to deal with the influence of the multi-nationals could severely inhibit the ability of fledgling economies to flourish and has come as a grave disappointment to groups such as Make Poverty History and the Third World Africa Network.

What is perhaps most ironic is that whilst the imposition of the free-market model upon Africa has long been a cornerstone of aid policy, protectionism and subsidy is rife within EU and G8 nations. The report clearly calls for an end to this double-standard, mainly because of its unbalancing effect on the global commodities market and the direct impacts upon African economies that flow from this. It is difficult to see this being popular with countries such as France, which has a large agricultural economy dependent to no small extent upon the Common Agricultural Policy, and the emerging European nations. America also heavily subsidises many of its agricultural sectors. Of key importance here are its cotton and sugar producers, both key crops in terms of African production. Last year America spent $4 billion subsidising its cotton growers - subsidies now ruled illegal by the UN - dragging the global price of cotton down by 20%. Whether the US abides by the ruling remains to be seen, but in any case is only the tip of the iceberg: the developed world spent $250 billion on farming subsidies last year. Whilst initiatives such as the Doha Round are set to review global trade agreements, change is unlikely to come quickly enough to bring relief to emerging African markets in the short term.

The chances of success may yet be made more difficult by the appointment of Paul Wolfowitz as the new head of the World Bank. A confirmed unilateralist, Wolfowitz is unlikely to sign off on any legislation he feels harms American interests abroad. It might also be argued that another important thrust of the Commission’s attack on corruption - the repatriation of assets seized illegally by dictators, institutions or companies – is also unlikely to find favour with a man who actively supported the corrupt Suharto regime whilst he was ambassador to Indonesia. His heavy-handed approach to the regeneration process in Iraq has also raised concerns that he will be an unlikely supporter of the multi-lateral, philanthropic approach favoured by the committees report. There is no doubt, however, that largely he would follow where the President leads. Much will then depend on Blair’s ability to persuade Bush of the importance of the Commission’s recommendations. Blair’s much vaunted ‘special relationship’, may well have been tested to the limit at the end of Britain’s tenure as President of the G8.

There can be little doubt that the successful prosecution of the African agenda is an enormous political and strategic challenge. Optimistic parallels with the Marshall Plan and Japanese initiatives in South-East Asian development bear little comparison with the scale and scope of planned initiatives in Africa. The coming months will have to involve an almost unheard of level of multi-national co-operation and compromise if the ideals of the Commission for Africa are to be turned into a reality. The blueprint has been delivered, now what is needed is the political will to make it happen.

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The Commission for Africa’s report can be downloaded at http://www.commissionforallafrica.org/
The Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP

Indeed, far from there being compassion fatigue, perhaps for the first time millions more people are understanding just how closely and irrevocably bound together are the fortunes of the richest persons in the richest country to the fate of the poorest persons in the poorest country of the world. Events which bind the world together are drawing them to the conclusion that even strangers who may never meet and may never know each other at first hand are neighbours brought together by shared needs, mutual interests, common purposes and our linked destinies. As Martin Luther King put it, increasingly we can see ourselves as each strands in an inescapable network of mutuality, together woven into a single garment of destiny.

But it is not just enlightened self interest that is encouraging people to be concerned about the needs of the needy and the suffering of the sick, but a moral sense that we all share that leads us to conclude that when some are poor all are impoverished, when some are deprived our whole society is diminished, when some are hurt the whole society shares that suffering. That we are part of one moral universe and wherever and whenever there is poverty, deprivation and need it is our duty to act.

I am convinced that millions of people in Britain and in every continent who have given more generously than ever before in the aftermath of the tsunami now yearn for that unprecedented demonstration of generosity to be given enduring purpose - as Make Poverty History argues - with a new deal for all developing countries that will address the underlying causes of their poverty, their illiteracy and their disease.

No statistics however depressing can prepare you for the hopelessness and human loss that lies behind the numbers but on my recent trip to Africa I saw too, amidst terrible suffering hope, optimism and a determination especially among mothers to see things change. From the suffering in Africa I witnessed and the potential in Africa I could glimpse it is our duty to act and to act urgently. In Tanzania I saw 8, 9, 10, 11 year old children begging to continue in school - but denied the chance because their parents could not pay the fees. In Mozambique I saw young mothers desperate for their children to go to school waving their pay cheques of £5 a week - and raising their hands as one to complain angrily that they cannot even begin to afford the fees. In Kenya I saw children chanting free education - but secondary education forever beyond their grasp.

Yet surely it is our belief that every child is precious, every child matters and every child counts. You cannot blame a child for her poverty. You cannot consider a child, however sick, as of no consequence and dismiss her as unproductive or uneconomic. But that is what we allow to happen. It is because every child counts that the potential of every child should be the foundation of our policies internationally and nationally.

Just like the Commission for Africa, our agenda for the G7 is founded on the realisation that despite the promise of every world leader, every government, every international authority that by 2015 we would achieve primary education for all, a two thirds fall in infant mortality and a halving of global poverty, at best on present progress in sub Saharan Africa: primary education for all, a two thirds fall in infant mortality and a halving of global poverty not as the richest nations promised in 2015 but 2130 - that is 115 years late; the halving of poverty not as the richest countries promised by 2015 but by 2150 - 135 years late; and the elimination of avoidable infant deaths not as the richest nations promised by 2015 but by 2165 - 150 years late.

Africans know that it is often necessary to be patient but the whole world should now know that 150 years is too long to ask peoples to wait for justice. Justice promised will forever be justice denied until we remove from this generation the burden of debts incurred by past generations, unless we remove trade barriers that undermined economic empowerment and unless there is a plan for Africa and all poorest countries as bold as the Marshall Plan of the 1940s, releasing the resources we need to match reform with finance to tackle illiteracy, dis-
ease and poverty.

So the first essential element of a 2005 development plan for a new deal is that we take the final historic step in delivering full debt relief for the debt burdened countries with a new agreement on multilateral debt relief that will enable billions to be reallocated to education and health in the poorest countries.

Alongside more debt relief, 2005 is the opportunity that may not easily return if missed to agree a progressive approach to trade. We all know the damage that the protectionism of rich countries has done to the poorest. Europe and the richest countries must agree to open their markets, remove trade-distorting subsidies and in particular, do more to urgently tackle the scandal and waste of the Common Agricultural Policy. We must also amend the Rules of Origin requirements - requirements which instead of promoting fair trade have become a barrier to fair trade - and agree new simple Rules of Origin coordinated across continents. And the EU, in its work on Economic Partnership Agreements, needs to take a non-mercantilist approach and put development first so that poor countries are able to sequence their trade reform within their poverty reduction strategies and participate on equal terms in the international economy.

But as I have heard from every African President, Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Trade Minister I have met - although trade justice matters so too does making sure developing countries have the additional resources they need to take advantage of trading and investment opportunities and to prevent their most vulnerable people from falling further into poverty as they become integrated into the global economy.

It is not enough to say 'you're on your own, simply compete' - we have to say 'we will help you build the capacity you need to trade'. Infrastructure is key. Even today for 12 African countries less than 10 per cent of their roads are paved. Telecommunication costs are such that calls from the poorest countries to the USA are five times the costs of calls from a developed country. While water and sanitation underpin health and development, even today 40 billion working hours in Africa each year are used up to collect water. And while tariff costs are often highlighted, it is actually transport costs that often constitute a bigger burden of the cost of exporting. With freight and insurance costs representing 15 per cent of the total value of African exports it is difficult for them to be competitive.

So we must also provide developing countries with the additional resources they need to build physical infrastructure - road, rail, electricity, telecommunications - institution capacity - from legal and financial systems to basic property rights - and, of course, investment in human capital to enable growth, investment, trade and therefore poverty reduction.

But to progress what voices all over Africa demand on debt and trade cannot happen unless there we take a third step - a substantial increase in resources for development, to tackle illiteracy, disease and deprivation.

Making better use of existing aid - reordering priorities, untying aid and pooling funds internationally to release additional funds for the poorest countries - is essential to achieve both value for money and the improved outcomes we seek. But we must recognise that while ten years ago aid to Africa was $38 per person, today it has not risen but fallen to just $27 so we are in a long way short of the predictable, regular financing necessary to make the difference that is needed.

While the Marshall Plan transferred 1 per cent of richest country's national income to the poorest, our proposal is for each of the richest countries to reach 0.7 per cent of national income in long-term and predictable aid for investment. But I believe that even as we do so we should also agree to create now, this year, on the road to 0.7 per cent, an International Finance Facility (IFF) that each year from 2005 to 2015 generates $50 billion a year more of resources - the quickest, most effective way of guaranteeing long-term, stable, predictable funding. With one bold stroke: doubling development aid to halve poverty. $50 billion more in aid a year each year for the poorest countries.

Our fourth objective made possible by the International Finance Facility is to provide the $6 billion a year needed to fund primary education free of charge - ensuring the 105 million children today and every day denied schooling can learn with classrooms, teachers and books. And with the IFF we can ensure all developing countries have the increased, predictable, up front funding they need to abolish user fees and enable more effective teacher recruitment and training, greater provision of teaching and learning materials, improvements to school buildings and sanitation facilities, and special help to get girls into education.

Our fifth objective is that the IFF provide the proper funds that would allow us to build health care systems, match the medical breakthroughs now being achieved in developing a preventive vaccine for malaria by the foresightness of an advance purchase scheme that could prevent the loss of more than 1 million lives a year because of this dread disease, and tackle HIV/AIDS with the first comprehensive plan from prevention to cure and care.

So the aim of the International Finance Facility is to bridge the gap between promises and reality. Between hopes raised and hopes dashed. Between an opportunity seized and an opportunity squandered. It is about action to right wrongs this year, now, urgently. No longer evading, no longer procrastinating, no more excuses, not an idea that will take years to implement but one which can move forward immediately.

What I want for my child, I want for all children and there is a strong case for children and families not just in some developing countries but in all developing countries enjoying basic health care services free at the point of need based on need not ability to pay. And there is a strong case for recognising that to develop the potential of not just some of our children but all our children, education should be universal and free and so send a message that the best way you can defeat poverty is through free education and free health care available to all.

Indeed I believe that the response to the tsunami showed what the debate this year on a new deal for developing countries will show: that, as Rabbi Jonathan Sacks has written, we cannot hear while other starve, we cannot be well while other languish in sickness or disease, we are not truly free when others are in servitude. More than that, as he writes, societies achieve true and enduring greatness not because of the way they help the strong but because of the way they come to the aid of the weak, not by how they acclaim those who have power but by their concern for the powerless - and not by how they reward the wealthy but by the care they show for the poor, and the compassion they show to the vulnerable.

A few months ago I quoted a century old phrase saying 'the arc of the moral universe is long but it does bend towards justice'. This was not an appeal to some iron law of history but to remind people in the words of a US President that 'the history of free peoples is never written by chance, but by choice' - that it is by our own actions that people of compassion and goodwill can and do change the world for good.

I believe that the arc of the moral universe while indeed long will bend towards justice in the months and years to come. To remind you of Seamus Heaney's poetry about Nelson Mandela's release:

'A further shore is reachable from here... Once in a lifetime justice can rise up And hope and history rhyme'

That is our task, our challenge, our opportunity.

This article has been modified by the editor of Policy World from a speech delivered by Gordon Brown to a UNDP/DFID seminar earlier this year.
The Challenges Ahead

The IPPR’s James Lorge examines the challenges that lie ahead and the obstacles that need to be overcome if the 2005 agenda is to be a success.

2005 has been heralded as a critical year for Africa. This year the UK Government has the presidencies of the EU and the G8, and has already stated that Africa will be a top priority for international action. Tony Blair has pushed Africa up the international political agenda through the Commission for Africa, which published its report in March this year. And in September the UN Review Conference of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals will ensure that development issues and the needs of Africa will remain a central focus of international political attention.

The report of the Commission for Africa puts forward many recommendations of ways to help Africa move forward. But while this is important, there is often a tendency to view Africa’s development plight as a uniquely internal phenomenon in need of an external remedy. If 2005 is to be a year of real change for the continent, developed countries need to start by taking action on those of their policies that currently damage and disadvantage the continent. This is an area where rich countries have least excuse for inaction and where the benefits of better policy could be most far-reaching. But tackling these issues will mean overcoming political obstacles and vested interests within developed countries. And if the UK is serious in its international leadership on these issues, it will mean pursing difficult negotiations with G8 and other developed country partners.

Damaging policies

There are five key areas that need to be addressed in 2005. First, while Africa needs significantly more aid, not least to tackle the HIV/AIDS pandemic, donor aid has sometimes served to strengthen local elites and done too little to improve the lives of ordinary Africans. Aid has also been used to promote the commercial objectives of G8 donors through tied aid, or to leverage policy reforms through inappropriate conditionality that have had adverse effects on Africa’s poor. And the way in which aid is delivered often imposes significant transaction costs on African societies.

Donor countries should untie all their aid to the continent, coordinate better with other donors and simplify reporting requirements. They should also promote a new approach to conditionality linked to African governments’ own development goals and their poverty reduction strategies, and press the International financial institutions to do the same.

Second, existing international trade rules are heavily stacked against Africa’s interests. EU and US agricultural subsidies and the dumping of surplus agricultural produce is destroying the livelihoods of large numbers of African farmers. Many African countries suffer the effects of tariff escalation, with countries like Ghana facing much higher tariffs on processed chocolate than on unprocessed cocoa beans when they try and export into developed country markets. African exporters are also hampered by “rules of origin”. These are intended to ensure that the goods imported under a particular trade agreement are genuinely produced in the country in question. However, when these rules are applied too restrictively they damage Africa’s trading opportunities. For example, Lesotho now exports twenty times less to the EU than to the US because rules of origin in the former are so much more onerous than in the latter. Another trade agreement, the agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS), has the effect of pushing up the cost of technology and other essential goods. Developed countries should phase out all agricultural export subsidies, end tariff escalation and introduce liberal “rules of origin”. And they should reform existing intellectual property rules to enable African countries to get access to the drugs they need for treating HIV and other diseases.

Third, G8 and other developed countries are significant suppliers of military equipment to Africa, particularly Russia and the US. Some of these arms are fuelling and exacerbating armed conflicts or strengthening repressive regimes or rebel groups. Russia has been a major supplier to the government of Sudan, for example. Weapons and ammunition are also transferred to Africa by arms brokers, traffickers and transport agents from G8 countries.

Developed countries should establish an international arms trade treaty, setting high common standards governing arms transfers to conflict-affected regions in Africa and elsewhere. They should also agree common extra territorial controls over arms brokers, traffickers and transport agents.

Fourth, while international investment can bring real benefits to Africa, poor governance of the international corporate sector can also distort Africa’s development prospects. Despite widespread bribery in Africa involving western companies, western governments have done far too little to implement their commitments under the OECD convention on combating the bribery of foreign public officials. Nor has enough been done to tackle the role of G8 governments and companies in financing conflict in Africa through the purchase of commodities like oil, diamonds or timber.

Developed countries should close loopholes in the OECD convention, ratify the UN Convention against Corruption and provide additional resources to investigate and prosecute G8 companies that engage in corruption in Africa. They should also strengthen the extractive industries transparency initiative and the Kimberley process on conflict diamonds.
Fifth, G8 countries alone account for around 50 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, with the US the worst offender, and yet climate variability in the future will disproportionately impact upon Africa. This will be enormously damaging to the continent’s prospects for development.

G8 and other developed countries should commit to global emission reductions of 15 per cent below 2000 levels or 10 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, and build support for international action that will keep temperature increases to no more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. They should also provide increased funding for African countries to adapt to current levels of climate change.

On all these issues – aid and conditionality, trade, arms exports, corruption and conflict financing, and climate change – developed countries need to “put their own house in order”. Encouragingly, the report of the Commission for Africa does stress the need to take action on these issues. But while this is welcome, the real obstacles to better policy towards Africa are not technical but political. Writing a report was the easy bit; now the UK has to turn the report into action. To do this, Blair has to overcome three serious obstacles.

**Political obstacles**

First, there will inevitably be resistance to some of the recommendations from vested interests within the UK itself, including within some government departments. For example, to tackle the problem of corruption in Africa, the report recommends tougher action against UK companies that directly – or indirectly through the use of agents – pay bribes in Africa. Tighter rules to combat corruption have already been opposed by business groups, and pressure from this sector has forced the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to water down its proposals in this area. Being serious about corruption involves Blair overruling the DTI and business objections. Similarly, to tackle arms proliferation effectively in Africa will require tighter controls over arms brokers and traffickers – something consistently opposed by the UK defence industry. A key test of Blair’s commitment will be the vigour with which he takes on these vested interests at home.

A second major challenge is to get other G8 countries to sign up to the reform agenda proposed by the report. Many of the initiatives in the report are dependent on a significant increase in aid. But none of the G8 countries currently meet the UN 0.7% target and only two – Britain and France – have set timetables to do so. The International Finance Facility (IFF) proposed by Gordon Brown to raise the necessary funds for its recommendations is likely to be opposed by the US and Canada (both critical to such an initiative). This therefore leaves the unanswered question of where these extra resources are going to come from. And to achieve fairer trade for Africa will involve significant reform of the Common Agricultural Policy in the EU. Any such reform will face stiff opposition from key European countries such as France and Germany. Blair will have his renowned powers of persuasion severely tested to get his G8 partners on side with the report’s findings.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, a means needs to be found to sustain political engagement with Africa over the long term and to hold G8 and other developed countries accountable for their policies towards the continent.

Africa’s interests, and the harmful impacts of developed country policy on Africa, need to be pushed higher up the international political agenda. But this is more likely to occur if there is sustained public pressure on G8 governments and if G8 governments are held properly to account for their policies towards Africa.

The Commission’s report stresses and encourages African countries to subject their policies to external evaluation, for example through the NEPAD Peer Review Mechanism. But no effective mechanism currently exists to hold G8 and other developed countries to account for their policies towards Africa.

One way to help achieve this would be through the establishment of a new G8/Africa Forum. This would replace the current unstructured dialogue between G8 and African leaders and become a formal and permanent part of the annual G8 Summit. This Forum would bring together political leaders from the G8 and Africa, as well as the UN Secretary General, and the heads of international and regional financial institutions. To ensure that these issues are taken seriously at the very highest levels within Africa and the G8, a report should be presented by the UN Secretary General. This should be a detailed checklist that looks at the implementation of existing commitments, particularly at ‘coherence’ issues. G8 countries should be required to respond in detail to the report at the following Summit.

It would be foolish to think that the deep-seated problems of the African continent can be significantly ameliorated in a single year, by a single report or by the efforts of a single government. The report of the Commission for Africa is not a solution in and of itself. But it does provide a compelling and practical agenda for reform. Blair can and should use it to put pressure on the world’s richer countries to make substantive progress on the many issues that are important to Africa. The G8 and other developed countries must now rise to this challenge: to end those policies that currently stymie Africa’s development prospects and to build a deeper and more equitable partnership with the continent.

James Lorge is a Research Fellow in the IPPR’s International Team. j.lorge@ippr.org

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The SPA has an electronic mailing list social-policy@jiscmail.ac.uk that acts as a virtual forum for the distribution of conference announcements and upcoming events and for the discussion of matters of importance to the social policy community.

Anyone can join the list and it is free to join. You can sign up at: http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/social-policy.html
International Poverty: can we make poverty history?

David Gordon of Bristol University’s Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research considers the prospects for change.

The possibility of ending world poverty during the 21st Century has gained increasing public support over the past decade. In 1985, Live Aid demonstrated the strength of public concern in the face of an inadequate and hostile response from Margaret Thatcher’s government to poverty and starvation in Africa. In 1995, the World Social Summit in Copenhagen (followed by the 1997 launch of the United Nations First Decade for the Eradication of Poverty) helped to raise international public awareness and lend political legitimacy and credibility to the anti-poverty campaigns of many NGOs.

In the UK, there appears to be growing electoral support for increased aid to help achieve the Millennium Development Goal targets to halve extreme poverty by 2015. Many hope for a significant breakthrough this summer at the G8 Summit to deliver a new ‘Marshall Plan’ of a doubling of aid (to £55bn a year), debt reduction for the poorest countries and fairer trade.

Unfortunately, the US government at present does not seem willing to support such a plan and George W Bush has recently made a number of successful ‘nominations’ of ‘neo-liberal’ politicians to crucial UN positions. They seem unlikely to vigorously pursue an international anti-poverty agenda. In particular, the appointment of US Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman to head UNICEF and US Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz to head the World Bank do not inspire confidence that anti-poverty goals will be met.

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However, even if all the member of the G8 were to sign up to and deliver on this new ‘Marshall Plan’, there would still be considerable grounds for concern that the Millennium Development Goals would not be met. A major problem is that the World Bank has effectively been pursuing the same broad set of anti-poverty policies for the past 40 years – despite a long history of failure. These policies have three main elements:

- Broad based economic growth
- Development of human capital through education and health interventions
- Minimum social safety nets for the poor

The way the World Bank implements these policies is by adhering to neo-liberal economic orthodoxy which Joseph Stiglitz [1], who used to be Chief Economist of the World Bank, has described as:

- Privatisation, which tends to rise prices for the poor
- Capital market liberalization, which can allow speculators to destabilise countries’ economies
- Market based pricing, which is a way of cutting subsidies for basic food stuffs and fuel and has sometimes resulted in rioting, particularly in South America, eg Bolivia, Ecuador and, recently, Argentina (economists should not be provoking riots around the world)
- Free trade, which sometimes helps countries economies but does not always help the poor

Growth is Good for the Poor?
The World Bank took a lot of criticism [2], particularly in the run up to the year 2000, when it produced its decennial report on poverty. Just before the report was released, the Head Economist of the Bank, David Dollar, with one of his colleagues, Aart Kraay, released a paper which purported to prove that growth was good for the poor, that the World Bank’s policies worked and were the most effective ones [3]. They looked at data over 40 years from 118 countries and published their findings in the Journal of Economic Growth [4], a prestigious peer-refereed journal. Their report shows that, as average income increases, so does the income of the poorest 20% of the population. Their graph shows virtually a 45° line - it has a slope of 1 (see Figure 1 above from Dollar and Kraay). So, as average income increases so does the income of the poorest).

In Social Science, if you get a very high correlation and a 45° line, you have either discovered a new law of nature or you have made some sort of statistical error. Dollar and Kraay concluded from their analyses that:
The 2005 Social Policy Association conference will be held at the University of Bath from 27-29 June. Speakers in the first plenary are: John Hills, Polly Toynbee and Fiona Williams. Gösta Esping-Anderson will speak in the second plenary and the third plenary will include Ian Gough and Nic Marks.

The conference programme includes an evening wine reception at the floodlit Roman Baths and a Conference Dinner to be held in the Banqueting Rooms of the elegant Guildhall.
BOOKING FORM

First Name & Surname/Family Name: 

Department: Organisation: 

Address: 

Telephone: Fax: Email: 

Data Protection: 
I agree that my email details may be circulated on the list of delegates. 

PLEASE TICK HERE 

Special requirements: (e.g. accessible accommodation, dietary requirements, LOOP, etc) 
Please specify below (or contact Faith Howard on f.d.howard@bath.ac.uk) 

SECTION 1: REGISTRATION FEE

Important note

The regular membership registration fee for this year's conference has been increased to £90 (from £75 last year). The conference has been losing money for the past few years and this increase in fee should enable us to break even, or make a very small profit. The living costs (accommodation, meals, conference dinner) are however about the same level as last year, and so represent excellent value for money. Late bookings will attract a higher registration fee. Please book as soon as possible. This post-election conference is attracting a good turn-out. If you book late you may miss out!

Saul Becker, SPA Chair

<table>
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Subtotal: £

REGISTRATION FEE: £

TOTAL: £

*Join SPA and pay conference fee combined. Contact Faith Howard (f.d.howard@bath.ac.uk) for rates.
SECTION 2: ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All rooms are en-suite. The Civic Reception will be at the Roman Baths and the Conference Dinner at the Guildhall. Early booking for these is advised as places may be limited.

EITHER book the whole conference OR select individual items

Whole conference:
Accommodation and all meals, including conference reception and dinner (Mon 27th lunch – Wed 29th lunch): £195.50

Individual meals and rooms:

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Bed & breakfast extra nights: Note places are limited for these, so book early

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Car parking:
£3 charge for whole or part conference: £3.00

Subtotal:
Meals & accommodation & parking:
£ __________

SECTION 3: TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE

Total amount: (Section 1 plus Section 2)
£ __________

SECTION 4: PAYMENT METHODS

Please make cheques payable to ‘The University of Bath’.

Credit Card: (MasterCard/Visa only) …………………………………………………………………………………

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Expiry Date: ………………………

Signature: ………………………………………….. Date: ……………………………

Please complete & return this form with payment to:

SPA Conference 2005
Department of Social & Policy Sciences
University of Bath
BATH BA2 7AY

NOTE: Cancellation charges may apply
Plenary speakers

- Polly Toynbee is a former BBC social affairs editor and is a regular columnist in the Guardian writing on social issues. In 2003 she published the book ‘Hard Work: Life in Low-paid Britain’ based on her own experiences of working and living on the minimum wage. This is also her first year as President of the Social Policy Association.
- Before joining the Pompeu Fabra University, Gøsta Esping-Andersen held positions at Harvard, the European University of Florence, and the University of Trento. Gøsta has also worked for a number of international organisations, including the United Nations, the World Bank, and OECD, as well as for national governments of Portugal and Belgium (both in relation to the presidency of the European Union).
- Nic Marks is an associate of the new economic foundation (nef), an independent think-and-do tank that aims to improve quality of life by promoting innovative solutions that challenge mainstream thinking on economic, environment and social issues. At present he is involved in developing their well-being programme.

The other plenary speakers are all associated with ESRC research groups and centres for social policy analysis.

- John Hills is Director of the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) at the LSE.
- Fiona Williams was Director of the Care, Values and Future of Welfare Research Group (CAVA) at the University of Leeds.
- Ian Gough is Deputy Director of the University of Bath-based Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WED).

As well as showcasing some of the latest developments in social policy, the conference will also highlight the 40th anniversary of the Child Poverty Action Group, which has been campaigning to eradicate child poverty in Britain since 1965.

Theme and sub-themes

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

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

Papers presenting a comparative, European or international dimension have also been strongly encouraged as have papers from outside of the traditional social policy disciplines.

Social events at the conference

The Conference will make the most of its location in the spectacularly beautiful city of Bath. The ancient Celts, who first inhabited this area, believed that Bath’s hot springs were sacred, but it was the Romans who built the temple and the famous baths - now restored to their original grandeur. There will be a civic reception at the Roman Baths as part of the conference proceedings. This will be followed by the Conference dinner, to be held in the Banqueting Room at the Guildhall, a masterpiece of neo-classical decoration, decorated with elaborate gilding and sparkling chandeliers.

Bath is approximately one hour and a quarter from London by intercity train and about fifteen minutes away from Bristol. The city of Bath is surrounded by beautiful countryside, with the Cotswolds to the north, the Mendips to the south-west and - just across the Severn Bridge - the Wye Valley and the Forest of Dean.
International Poverty: can we make poverty history?

(cont)

In a large sample of countries spanning the past four decades, average incomes of the poorest fifth of a country on average rise and fall at the same rate as average incomes. This relation ship holds across regions and income levels and in normal times as well as during crises.

This supports the view that a basic policy package of private property, rights fiscal discipline, macroeconomic stability and openness to trade on average increases the income of the poor to the same extent that it increases the income of the other households in society.

On the other hand, we find little evidence that formal democratic institutions or a large degree of government spending aimed at the poor had no effect, democracy had no effect, neo-liberal economic growth was the answer [5].

Are Random Numbers Good for the Poor?
I do an exercise with Masters in Policy Research students learning Quantitative Methods at Bristol. Instead of using 418 data sets collected at great expense, we generate two sets of 418 random numbers. There is of course zero correlation between these two sets of random numbers (Figure 2).

We then apply the analysis method used by Dollar & Kraay to show that growth is good for the poor. Apparently, random numbers are also good for the poor.

Head Economists at the World Bank often win the Nobel Prize - they are not stupid. How on earth could they make this kind of mistake? Well, they were under a lot of pressure but they also are working in a milieu in economics at the moment which thinks it has found a universal solution.

Faith in the Market
Some critics have argued that there is a faith in neo-liberal economics that is almost religious [6]. Edward Luttwak [7] said:

“at present almost all elite Americans, with corporate chiefs and fashionable economists in the lead, are utterly convinced that they have discovered the winning formula for economic success – the only formula – good for every country, rich or poor, good for all individuals willing and able to heed the message, and of course, good for elite Americans

“Privatisation + Deregulation + Globalisation = Turbo-Capitalism = Prosperity”

George Gilder (Ronald Reagan’s favourite economist and the man he quoted the most in his speeches) wrote a very influential book in 1981, entitled Wealth and Poverty [8]. He argued that spending on poor people just made them dependent on benefits and that the problem with poverty was that:

“The world is plagued not so much by poverty but by a rampant “suspicion of wealth... everywhere these ideas prevail...poverty persists and spreads”


He also added later on:

“It is the entrepreneurs who know the rules of the world and the laws of God”


A recent editorial from the Economist [9] argues exactly the same message as Gilder made in the 1980s:

“towards the end of the century, many developing countries – China and India among them – finally threw off this victim’s mantle and began to embrace wicked
capitalism, both in the way they organised their domestic economies and in their approach to international trade. All of a sudden, they are a lot less poor, and it hasn’t cost the West a cent”

Apparently, the five year plan of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in China is a capitalist model of neo-liberal economics [10].

Faith is very good in religion but in Social Science you have to treat it with in the same way as Mark Twain advised, when he said:

“your faith is what you believe, not what you know”

Is Human Capital Development the answer to poverty?
If the first plank of the World Bank’s anti-poverty policies are based on sand what about the second plank? – Human Capital development through education and health interventions and school based food and nutrition programmes. Recent UNICEF and DFID funded research at the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research at Bristol University has produced the first scientific estimates on the extent and nature of absolute poverty and severe deprivation of basic human needs suffered by the world’s children. Over one billion children – about half the world’s children – suffer from severe deprivations of basic human need and 30% (650 million) suffer from absolute poverty (two or more severe deprivations).

Figure 4: Percent of the world’s children severely deprived of basic human needs

Severe shelter and severe sanitation deprivations are the problems affecting the greatest number of children in the world, with about 640 million children living in dwellings with more than five people per room or which have mud flooring. Over half a billion children (27%) have no toilet facilities whatsoever (see Figure 4).

This research shows that considerably more emphasis needs to be placed on improving basic infrastructure and social services for families with children, particularly with regards to shelter, sanitation and water in rural areas. The severe deprivations of basic human need which affect the greatest number of children are ‘physical capital’ problems - deprivation of shelter, water and sanitation. Fewer children suffer from deprivations of ‘human capital’ – health, education and nutrition. However, most of the World Bank’s and bilateral donors’ anti-poverty policies are aimed at improving human capital, particularly in urban areas.

There are very few policies at the moment which deal with the “Physical Capital” problems and virtually no large scale programmes to improve rural housing in developing countries. There is a real political problem here - politicians are much keener to open schools and hospitals than they are to open public toilet facilities or sewerage treatment plants or water plants or to build social housing in rural areas, yet we know from the history of Europe - and the reduction in death rates and improvement in living conditions - that getting these basics right - shelter, sanitation and water - are what have the big impact on peoples’ lives. What stops children from dying prematurely are improvements to water, sanitation and housing.

Minimum Social Safety nets for the Poor
I do not need to tell readers of this journal the problems which arise from the World Bank’s pursuit of minimum social safety nets for the poor (which is fortunate as I am running out of space!). Many European social scientists (and policy makers) believe that the World Bank and IMF would have had much greater successes at reducing poverty if they had required that countries seeking aid complied with the ILO’s (1952) convention on Minimum Standards of Social Security rather than pursuing the neo-liberal ‘Washington consensus’ policies already described above.

David Gordon is Director of the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research at the University of Bristol (www.bris.ac.uk/poverty)

REFERENCE / NOTES

2 In pursuit of economic growth the World Bank has been the main promoter of Structural Adjustment Programmes in developing countries. These usually consisted of reducing public spending, reducing inflation, opening local markets to global competition and following other ‘neo-liberal’ economic policies. These programmes were often met with antagonism in most of the countries they were supposed to help and resulted in considerable animosity against the Bank.

According to Professor Else Øyen (President of the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty) this was “partly due to the harshness of the programme implementation, the failure to obtain the promised results, and the wide spread view that the Bank was on the side of the non-poor, not the poor.”

3 The World Bank published a ‘preliminary’ paper by David Dollar and Aart Kraay called “Growth is Good for the Poor”. http://www.worldbank.org/research/growth/pdf/growthgoodforpoor.pdf. This paper marked ‘preliminary and incomplete’ was widely distributed and given a huge fanfare of publicity. For example; The Financial Times said that the paper “provides what appears to be incontestable evidence” that sustained growth raises the real incomes of the poor and that growth is “helped along by just the policies many of the demonstrators oppose: by macro-economic stability and openness to trade”. Even the Guardian joined in. Mark Atkinson wrote on the economic pages that the report illustrated “the harm that would be inflicted on the poor if governments were to listen too hard to the protesters at Seattle and retreat from open markets”.

4 A modified version of the original ‘Growth is good for the poor’ paper was eventually published two years later; Dollar, D. and Kraay, A. (2002) Growth id good for the poor. Journal of Economic Growth, 7, 195-225.

5 The Guardian reported that “the... remarkable conclusions have been greeted with glee by economic fundamentalists”.


9 Economist editorial, 11/3/2004

10 Strangely enough the Guardian (27th May 2004) http://www.guardian.co.uk/china/story/0,7369,1225686,00.html reported that James Wolfensohn (President of the World Bank), found himself in the unusual position of praising the Communist party’s five-year economic plans. "Shanghai is the obvious place to start in considering ways to reduce poverty. There is something here we need to learn about constancy and good management," he said. "This is not a conference for teaching the Washington consensus. The Washington consensus has been dead for years. Today there is no consensus. We are not here to teach doctrines but to exchange ideas."
A huge crowd - more than 22,000 people according to the organisers - turned out for this de facto launch of the Make Poverty History campaign in Trafalgar Square. An alliance of almost 400 charities, campaign groups and trade unions, with ample backing from big name celebrities, the Make Poverty History coalition is, perhaps, the most media savvy pressure group the country has ever witnessed and this event was well orchestrated affair.

The rally began in jamboree style, with South African drumming and dance company Fritti providing a musical backdrop as the growing crowd - and media throng - waited for the main event - the arrival of the afternoon’s main speaker Nelson Mandela. His presence at the rally was undoubtedly the main draw for many of the thousands in the crowd and for much of the assembled media. Indeed, it is tempting to suggest that there was little need for the activity that took place before and after Mandela’s nine minute speech, but that would be unfair to the activists from the Make Poverty History coalition who spoke either side of Mandela’s speech. While the appearances from the now requisite celebrities – in this instance TV presenter June Sarpong and pop star Jamelia – seemed a little superfluous (surely Mandela does not need support acts?), perhaps their presence helped persuade some of those who wouldn’t normally attend a political rally to do so.

Amongst the campaigners from NGOs who spoke were Adrian Lovett, Campaigns Director of Oxfam, who sketched out the Make Poverty History manifesto and argued that there needs not to be a cancellation of debt, better aid or fairer trade, but all three together and for many of the thousands in the crowd and for much of the assembled media. Indeed, it is tempting to suggest that there was little need for the activity that took place before and after Mandela’s nine minute speech, but that would be unfair to the activists from the Make Poverty History coalition who spoke either side of Mandela’s speech. While the appearances from the now requisite celebrities – in this instance TV presenter June Sarpong and pop star Jamelia – seemed a little superfluous (surely Mandela does not need support acts?), perhaps their presence helped persuade some of those who wouldn’t normally attend a political rally to do so.

The rally, saying the media have confounded the roles of politicians and celebrities and, in so doing, forced him into the unwanted role of spokesperson for the continent. As he put it in his own inimitable style: ‘Who’s interested if the leader of Niger goes on Newsnight? It’s ‘get Geldof’. I’m Mr bloody Africa.’

Expanding this theme in his speech to the rally, Geldof said he was tired of the pressure group politics and the activism through the media that had been such a large part of his life for the past two decades: ‘I am sick of standing in squares and linking arms in foreign cities, of tear gas, of pop concerts and records, I am sick of this crap’. Instead, he said, ‘I want the politics of responsibility’. The task of the Make Poverty History coalition was, he argued, to ‘go to the mountain top of politics’, to confront the leaders of the G8 with the message for change. He argued that the leaders of the rich countries ‘must be persuaded to do that for which they are paid to do: they must lead. They must understand that it is not simply their job to manage the world in which they live, but to enable the world we wish to create’.

If Geldof is Mr Africa, then it is anyone’s guess what Mandela’s sobriquet ought to be. Bono, apparently, calls him the President of Africa but, according to Geldof, his pal has underplayed it here: he is, in fact, ‘the President of the World’ and Geldof introduced him to the rally as such. Mandela began by telling the crowd, that having officially retired from public life just a few months earlier, he ‘should really not be here’ but that ‘as long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist none of us can truly rest’.

Mandela said that in an era of ever advancing science and technology and rapidly growing wealth there was no excuse for the extreme poverty that exists today. ‘Massive poverty and obscene inequality’, he argued, ‘have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils’ and, given this, the coalition assembled to push the global campaign against poverty would rank alongside those assembled to campaign against these previous evils if it succeeded. Acknowledging the role of British anti-apartheid campaigners in helping set him free and pointing out that they had so often had shown their solidarity through similar rallies in location such as Trafalgar Square – he said the same will and passion was required to help free those imprisoned and enslaved by poverty. Mandela then echoed Lovett’s insistence on a three pronged attack - trade, aid and debt - before signalling once again his formal retirement from political life by handing over the campaign baton to a new generation, symbolically offering the Make Poverty History campaign’s white wrist bands to children from local schools and by telling the assembled crowd that ‘Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom’.

With the planned newspaper headlines generated and the requisite sound bites delivered to electronic media, the jamboree drew to a close a little over an hour after it had started. But this was merely the first of many such events planned through the year as the coalition looks to keep their campaign high on the agenda throughout 2005. Amongst those to come are two global ‘White Band Days’ (on 1st July and 10th September), commemorations of the twentieth anniversary of Live Aid and a mass rally to coincide with the G8 meeting on 2nd July. Whether the coalition can have the impact it hopes during 2005 remains, of course, to be seen. The task will not, as Mandela acknowledged, be easy.
‘Opportunity Society – Improving Social Mobility in the North’

IPPR North, Newcastle, 3rd March 2005

In what they describe as a ‘unique venture’, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), last year opened an off-shoot of their organisation in Newcastle – branded IPPR North - and, in so doing, became the first of the mainstream think-tanks to establish a significant presence in one of the English regions.

Part of the motivation for doing so was likely to be an ambition to tap into the expanding regional level policy networks emerging as plans to create the new North East Assembly gathered pace. North – and IPPR North – and the Blair government too – the North East’s rejection of proposals to create England’s first devolved assembly must have come as something of a shock. What’s more, this was no close run event: almost four-fifths of votes in November’s referendum were cast against the proposed assembly. Much of the popular commentary attributed the result to a general disenchantment with politics and politicians and a belief amongst voters that more government would do little to improve the lot of the region.

Yet, one of the driving forces behind the creation of IPPR North – and its location in Newcastle – was the very fact that the North East is a noticeable poor relation according to most indicators of economic and social wellbeing. The 2004 Indices of Multiple Deprivation study highlighted the challenges for social policy in the North East well, the region being the most deprived of those covered by the study with more than a third of its Super Output Areas (SOAs) falling into the 20% of most deprived SOAs in England. While the North East has long been one of the nation’s less well off regions, what is particularly for the area’s policy makers worrying is the trajectory of change: the North East is now the poorest of all regions in the UK and, as the IPPR themselves have noted, if current trends continue then the average worker in there will receive just half the national average income by 2020.

It was against this backdrop of a need to tackle declining relative social and economic wellbeing but doing so from within existing political structures that this seminar took place. Offering their thoughts for debate were keynote speaker David Miliband, MP for the region’s South Shields constituency and Minister for the Cabinet Office and, as respondent, Professor Steve Machin of LSE & UCL.

Miliband argued that ‘increasing social mobility while promoting social equality is the ultimate test for a progressive government’. His talk had three key, inter-related, themes. Firstly, that improved social mobility must be central to any agenda for increasing fairness and improving economic performance. Secondly, that the Blair government had prepared the groundwork in such a way that the prospects for improving social mobility are actually greater than at any time since the Second World War. Finally, that there was a special need to promote social mobility - and to nurture ambition and aspiration - in the north.

Fleshing out his perspective, he suggested there were four key drivers of social mobility. Firstly, there is early childhood development – in other words, those who are disadvantaged in their early years are more likely to be disadvantaged later in life. Secondly, there is education. He suggested that as the economy has shifted from an industrial to a post-industrial phase, the importance of qualifications has increased enormously. In particular, he pointed to the 50% increase in the relative returns to university degrees since the early 1980s, despite a significant rise in the number of graduates in the same period. Thirdly, he highlighted the labour market, suggesting the past 25 years had seen opportunities for those at the bottom of the market disappear as the labour market polarised. Added to this was the trap of worklessness for many families in some of the old industrial regions of the north.

Finally, he pointed to capital ownership. Assets, he argued, were the essential foundation on which people could build their lives. However, he also suggested that social capital had a key role to play here, communities being key in shaping aspirations and setting norms.

Having outlined the drivers of social mobility, he argued that the scale of the challenge should not be underestimated, but claimed that the Blair government had made considerable progress in addressing these same drivers. In looking to address childhood poverty, increase investment in education, expand employment opportunities and address asset ownership by investing in deprived communities and through measures such as the Baby Bond, the government were aiming to tackle barriers to social mobility in their efforts to create an ‘opportunity society’. He argued that, ultimately, there were good reasons to be positive because ‘progress is cumulative’ and that, having laid the ground in their first two terms, we would see Labour ‘restore the social contract of progress from one generation to the next’ if re-elected for a third term.

Responding, Machin offered a more cautious view. Drawing on analysis of cohort studies, he argued there were clear signs that social mobility had decreased very significantly in recent years and pointed to the growing evidence of widening educational inequality in the UK too. Given this, he suggested the emphasis on education as a route to promoting mobility should be a cause for concern, arguing that the long term picture has been one of the middle class ‘colonising’ ever higher levels of the education system in order to cement their privileged position in the professions.

What was curiously lacking in the debate, however, was what might be specifically done in the North East to assist its development or, indeed, what it is that might be presently lacking to leave it in such a relatively disadvantaged position. Machin throughout spoke in very general terms about the UK as a whole and while Miliband’s team had produced figures showing how the Blair government had addressed some of the drivers of social mobility in the region – the number of unemployed and long-term unemployed now and during the 1980s for instance (down by two-thirds and four-fifths respectively) – he had little to say on how the policy agenda for the North East might differ from that nationally other than to argue in very general terms that a culture of aspiration must be fostered in the region.

However, several of those speaking from the floor did point towards some of the more deep seated drivers of social (in)mobility in the region that perhaps require more fundamental responses than are presently envisaged. Most notable were exchanges concerning the impact of deindustrialisation on a regional economy that was (and is) one of the most industrially based in the UK. While it was agreed that New Labour’s policies had gone some way to addressing the high levels of unemployment that resulted from the rapid decline of many of the region’s staple industries in the 1980s and early 1990s, a number of speakers argued that there were far fewer opportunities for advancement up a ‘career ladder’ in the more service based occupations that had replaced them. Added to this, according to some, was a relative lack of labour market opportunities for those with higher level skills that fuelled an outward migration of many of the region’s better qualified workers.

But the elephant in the room that no-one mentioned was devolution: with no institutional mechanism for promoting a North East specific agenda, some of the impetus behind a North East specific debate had, perhaps, diminished. Indeed, whether the tenor of the discussion would have differed much had the seminar taken place under the aegis of the national IPPR and in London rather than Newcastle was a moot point.
Scottish Social Policy Network (SSPN)

Gerry Mooney and Sharon Wright with an update on SSPN News

Building on the success of the Scottish Social Policy Network launch conference in October 2004, we are pleased to announce another seminar specifically tailored to social policy academics and practitioners in Scotland. The day seminar ‘Attitudes to Welfare in Scotland: what do we know?’ will be held at the University of Stirling on Friday 7th October 2005 (further details on page 27). This event is designed to draw on expertise from around Scotland to reflect on our current knowledge base, derived through both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, about attitudes to welfare. What do people want and how do they view their social rights and responsibilities? Does Scotland want something different from other parts of the UK? And if so, what and why? The afternoon sessions are intended to link these research findings and discussions with wider perspectives about social policy learning and teaching. What can social policy academics in higher education learn from those in further education, community and voluntary organisations? How can the academic community better serve those in other sectors and further develop relationships with those in practitioner, community and activist organisations?

In addition to this, members of the SSPN have been active in building links with campaigning organisations in other ways. SSPN Co-convenor, Gerry Mooney, has been working with the Glasgow-based Poverty Alliance to produce The Poverty Report Card 2005. Supported by The Open University, The Poverty Report Card 2005 contains a dozen short essays that assess the Government’s record over the last 8 years in areas such as fuel poverty, financial exclusion, child and schooling and disability. The authors of the essays then give marks out of 10 for each of the ‘subjects’. The Report Card finishes with 10 key challenges for all the political parties contesting the General Election, challenges that will need to be met if progress is to continue to be made. The Report Card is available free to download by following the Resources Link on the Alliance website or is £5 for the printed version (full details on the website – www.povertyalliance.org).

Support for the Scottish Social Policy Network is still strong and growing, with more than 70 members. Not all network members yet enjoy the benefits of the sspn@jiscmail.ac.uk electronic discussion list. So, if you would like to join in discussions, please subscribe on www.jiscmail.ac.uk.

Gerry Mooney, The Open University
GCMooney@open.ac.uk
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New editor required for Social Policy Review

Martin Powell’s period as editor of Social Policy Review is due to end this summer. A new editor is required from June 2005 to join Linda Bauld and Karen Clarke in editing the review for a 3 year period, starting with edition 18.

Editors must:
● be familiar with current developments in research and teaching across the discipline;
● have experience of editing publications (including commissioning contributions);
● be able to undertake the commissioning and editing of work alongside the existing editors.

As SPR is now published jointly with The Policy Press editors are also involved in a substantial amount of liaison with The Policy Press.

If you are interested, please send details of relevant experience, skills, etc. to Linda Bauld (L.Bauld@socsci.gla.ac.uk). If more potential applicants apply than are required, a selection will be made by the current editors and SPA officers, on the basis of the above criteria.
EASP (East Asian Social Policy)
1st Workshop

The East Asian Social Policy (EASP) held its launching workshop at the University of Bath from 13th to 15th of January 2005.

Funded by the Social Policy Association, the University of Bath, and Taiwanese Government, it intends to bring together those who are researching in the field of East Asian social policy in the UK. In spite of increasing interests, there have been few attempts for researchers and doctoral students working on this issue to share their works and build the research network in the UK. Therefore, it aims to understand current transformations of East Asian social policy and build the research network among social policy researchers who are interested in East Asia in order to enlarge research resource pool and to enhance understanding and knowledge about East Asian social policy, while seeking to encourage research on East Asian social policy. From the initial preparation there have been significant interests in this workshop, not only in the UK but also from abroad, which has been witnessed by the fact that about 40 scholars and post-graduate students from various universities attended at the workshop, in spite of only about two and half months preparation time.

On the first day of the workshop, there have been two sessions; each participant prepared the short introduction of his/her current research and shared research interests and then discussed how to build and develop the research network, which resulted in forming the temporary committee for the network.

Throughout the first day participants had opportunities to get to know one another and develop the ideas on the EASP research network. Academic sessions started from the second day, consisting of ‘Gender and social policy’, ‘East Asian social policy development and welfare regimes’, ‘Ageing and social policy’, and ‘Policy process’. From all presentations, it has been widely noted that East Asian societies have been rapidly changed, including from family-labour market-age structure to economic environments.

In ‘Gender’ session, three papers were presented. With regard to the rapid growth of women’s economic activity, the first paper (Ms. Kim) focused on balancing issue between work and motherhood in Korea. Examining working mothers’ reconciliation process, the role of extended family and mother’s responsibility for supporting children’s educational needs have been discussed. The second paper (Ms. Wu) introduced social and economic changes in Taiwan over the last decades. In particular, the newly established law for gender equality in employment suggested potential for further changes in gender relation in Taiwan. The final paper (Ms. Chun) focused on gendered characteristics of health in Korea. Showing how women’s health has been changed, it argued that gender culture based on Confucian tradition restrict women’s lives and health.

In the second academic session, the identity of East Asian welfare regimes was discussed. Prof Gough extended the welfare-state regime framework to welfare regime framework including welfare-state regime and informal security regime, and argued that East Asian welfare regimes except China could be uniquely labelled as ‘Productivist welfare regime’. Mr. Liu, again, confirmed the uniqueness of East Asian welfare regimes in his comparative study with other OECD countries. China has been under the influence of globalisation, Prof Mok presented, in that privatisation and marketisation have been adopted as public policy strategies with strong government’s control. However, some inquiries were raised with regard to the methodology of typology and ‘uniqueness’ remained as an important question.

‘Ageing’ session, the third session, was the biggest, led by Prof Hill’s thought-provoking speech on ‘Policies for Ageing Societies’. He emphasised that ‘dependency ratio’ issue should include the issue of economically inactive people in labour market and intergenerational issue need to consider asset transfer as well. Subsequently, there were four comparative or country-specific presentations dealing with frameworks of ageing (Dr. Ogawa) and different policy issues concerning ageing such as pension (Mr. Choi), long-term care (Ms. Yamashita), and social service (Ms. Wen) in Japan, Taiwan and Korea. There were deep discussions on various issues; ageing framework, the validity of contributory pension system for securing old-age security and financial sustainability, and the possibility of non-profit organisations’ role as welfare providers and a community care model in East Asian countries.

In the last session, policy process in Korea where there have been significant changes in welfare states programmes since late 1990s was presented, particularly paid attention on civil society organisations and movements. While Ms Lee tried to seek the identity and roles of local civil society organisations’ role in agenda-making and local welfare improvement, Mr. Chung showed how one central civil society organisation succeeded to change old public assistance law into modern public assistance law. The session’s chairperson, Prof. Moon a leading figure in the policy-process of changing public-assistance law, adds more explanation on this. The conceptualisation of civil society organisation, the role of elites and the reason why Korean civil society movements are stronger than other countries were discussed.
This was the first and meaningful step for researchers who are interested in East Asian social policy, especially for enhancing and sharing their understanding and knowledge on rapidly transforming East Asian societies. From the workshop, participants have seen a great potential of this network, which can be developed not only within the UK but also to the international level. For the next step, the temporary committee has started to prepare the emailing group for the EASP network and the second workshop/conference. Everyone who is interested in the EASP is welcome to join the emailing group and the second workshop/conference, which is going to be held from 30th June to 2nd July 2005 at the University of Kent. For further information about the EASP research network and its second workshop, please visit website www.welfareasia.org or email to Yu-ting Liu (ytliu@hotmail.co.uk) or Young-Jun Choi (sspyjc@hotmail.com).

Yun-Jung Kim & Young-Jun Choi
University of Bath

Pressure, Policy-Making and Policy Outcome - Understanding East Asian Welfare Reforms - (Thu) 30th June to (Sat) 2nd July, 2005 at the University of Kent, UK

The second East Asian Social Policy (EASP) conference will take place at the University of Kent, UK, on the 30th June to 2nd July 2005. The conference seeks to enhance the knowledge and develop the research network in the field of East Asian social policies. The conference is open to academics and doctoral students from any discipline working or interested in East Asian social policies.

- Plenary Speakers Include:
- Professor Vic George, University of Kent, UK
- Professor Michael Hill, University of Brighton, UK
- Professor Catherine Jones Finer, University of Oxford, UK
- Professor Yeon Myung Kim, Chung-Ang University, Korea
- Professor Yeun-wen Ku, Chi-Nan University, Taiwan
- Professor Shogo Takegawa, University of Tokyo, Japan
- Professor Peter Taylor-Gooby, University of Kent, UK
- Further details on line at: http://www.welfareasia.org/
The International and Comparative Social Policy special interest group has secured funding from the learning and teaching support network for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP) and the Globalism and Social Policy Programme to support the group’s ‘E-Learning Global Welfare’ project over 2004-05. The project is also supported by Sheffield University, Queen’s University Belfast and SWAPtsn.

The project aims to facilitate the development of learning and teaching resources in global welfare studies, an area distinctive due to its topicality, universal relevance and dynamism, and presents a focus for the productive input of a range of educational practitioners and students. The World Wide Web has clearly been of huge benefit in relation to the study of global welfare, most specifically in allowing access to material made available by a vast array of governmental and non-governmental organisations. However, the development of knowledge and understanding of global welfare policy can often be hampered by its comprehensiveness and limited by unfamiliarity with sources and uses of information. By developing e-resources which can address a significant frustration experienced by students (and lecturers) of global welfare i.e. the difficulty in identifying, locating, accessing and making effective use of relevant and up to date sources of information, specific documents and statistical data, the project will contribute to the promotion of global welfare studies within social policy and cognate fields.

Specifically, we will be developing a subject specific virtual library, rendering accessible quantitative datasets on global health and welfare issues and pooling a range of pedagogic ideas, methods and activities on the ICSP website (www.globalwelfare.net). Over the longer-term this will help build the website into a valuable pedagogic and research resource that facilitates the identification, navigation and practical use of a range of sources and types of information in global welfare studies. We hope to draw on the knowledge and expertise of those of you who are teaching and researching in this subject area. If you would like to contribute to the one or more elements of the project, on an ad hoc basis or more regularly, please contact us on ICSP@shef.ac.uk. All contributions to the development of this resource will be appreciated and, more specifically, acknowledged on the ICSP website.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Nicola Yeates and Zoe Irving,
ICSP co-convenors
Attitudes to Welfare in Scotland: What do we know?

University of Stirling - Friday October 7 2005

10.30 - 11.00 Registration and coffee
11.00 – 11.10 Welcome
Gerry Mooney & Sharon Wright, SSPN
11.10 – 1.00 Plenary Session
How do we know what we know?
What does the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2004 tell us about attitudes to welfare in Scotland?
Catherine Bromley, Scottish Centre for Social Research
Systems, Fiddling and Strangers: Scottish young people on the welfare state
Ian McIntosh, University of Stirling
What makes Scotland want something different?
John Curtice, University of Strathclyde
Discussant: Mike Danson, University of Paisley
1.00 – 2.00 Lunch
2.00 – 2.45 Introductory Views
Learning from Each Other: promoting social policy ‘education’ in Scotland
Higher Education
Colin Clark
Further Education
Tony Sweeney
Voluntary Sector
Mike Bell, Capacity Building Project
2.45 – 3.30 Workshops:
A. Higher Education  B. Further Education  Voluntary Sector
3.30 – 4.00 Feedback and Discussion
Julia Waldman, SWAP
4.00 – 4.15 Seminar Close

Contact jennifer.gordon@stir.ac.uk to book a free place at this event
SPA and JUC help fund new study on the quality of Social Policy research

The Joint Universities Council Social Policy Committee and the Social Policy Association have provided some funding towards an 18-month research project to be conducted by Professor Saul Becker. The project will commence in February 2005 and the findings will be published to coincide with a joint meeting of the SPA/JUC at the 2006 SPA annual conference to be held at the University of Birmingham.

The study will undertake to define the criteria by which the quality of social policy research should be judged, drawing on the views and expertise of social policy researchers themselves, and those who commission and use this research.

A difficulty experienced in RAE 2001, and commented on publicly by some of the international representatives of the social policy sub-panel, was that there was no clear, explicit and transparent criteria/benchmark for determining the quality of social policy research (academics and researchers in social policy departments etc.), those who commission social policy research (e.g. JRF, ESRC, government departments etc.), and those who use the findings for policy or practice purposes (e.g. policy makers/managers, health workers etc.). For simplicity, these groups shall be referred to as the ‘social policy community’.

Study design and methodology

Phase 1: Scoping discussions will be held with identified key social policy/social sciences ‘research methods’ academics to generate baseline information/criteria of what constitutes high quality research in social policy, drawing on existing established criteria from subject areas aligned to social policy (for example, sociology, social psychology, politics etc.).

Phase 2: Drawing on the themes and findings from phase 1, an electronic questionnaire survey will be developed and emailed to all those who are on the social policy discussion list (@800 people), and to those who have registered their email details on the SPA register of expertise, as well as to other identified key stakeholders and organisations (e.g. JRF, ESRC, government departments, etc.) that broadly constitute the social policy community. Paper copies will be available for other key stakeholders who are identified and who may not wish to complete an electronic version. The data collected from (and via) this electronic survey will be collated, analysed and written up to give a broad profile and ranking of criteria and issues identified by the social policy community.

Phase 3: The profile from the second phase of the study will be used as the basis for a day-long workshop to discuss, clarify and rank the quality criteria for social policy research. It is envisaged that the workshop will be for invitees drawn from the social policy community, and including the Social Work and Social Policy & Administration panel members for RAE 2008.

Phase 4: A report will be produced which brings together the findings from all the phases of the study, including a discussion of the process/methodology for the study (which is of interest in its own right). The Policy Press (TPP) has expressed an interest in publishing the report. The findings/quality criteria for social policy research will also be published in other forms, including articles in relevant newsletters and journals.

Timetable

Phase 1 (scoping discussions) will start in February 2005; Phase 2 (electronic survey) will commence around April/May 2005; Phase 3 (workshop) will be held around October/November 2005. The report (Phase 4) will be drafted in early 2006, with the published report being launched at a joint meeting of the JUC SPC and SPA, to take place at the July 2006 Social Policy Annual Conference at the University of Birmingham. Further dissemination of the report, findings and quality criteria would take place on an ongoing basis after that.

For further information, please contact Saul Becker at the Institute of Applied Social Studies, University of Birmingham: S.Becker@bham.ac.uk

If you are not already a member of the SPA then please consider joining us! Membership brings numerous benefits – including free subscriptions to Policy World, the Journal of Social Policy, Social Policy & Society and Social Policy Review as well as discounted rates for our annual conference, Membership rates, which varying according to incomes, are competitive, and start at just £18 per year. Full details of membership packages and rates – as well as membership application forms – can be found online at http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/spsw/spa/memb.htm

Joining the SPA

www.social-policy.com

Despite the obvious links, there is a longstanding lack of literature addressing the impacts of the provision of transport services on the quality of life enjoyed by people as they follow their everyday lives. This is particularly surprising given the intimate connections between the level and quality of transport provision and the economic, social and cultural opportunities open to individuals, and the importance of these factors in informing planning theory and practice throughout Europe and North America.

“Running on Empty: Transport, social exclusion and environmental justice” is an edited collection designed to begin to plug this gap. Drawing together a range of case study contributions from the UK and US, the editor, Karen Lucas of the Transport Studies Unit at the University of Westminster, has set out to increase the visibility of transport issues at a time when government policy is (rhetorically at least) focused on addressing “social exclusion” as never before.

The book starts with the kind of brief review of the links between transportation systems, settlement pattern and the resulting spatial distribution of economic and social opportunity that is often found in the introductory sections of general transport policy texts. From this foundation, the early sections of the book go on to outline how differential access to transport is sustaining and enhancing social polarisation. For over four decades, transport policy was focused on accommodating the car. Personal mobility was both a means of generating economic growth by liberalising labour and housing markets, and a visible sign of increasing prosperity. Governments were obliged to facilitate these twin processes, being under pressure from powerful motor industry interests and the emerging ‘car-owning democracy’. Even today, any real or perceived attempt to limit this mobility, through tax rises or the imposition of new charges such as road pricing, is guaranteed to elicit a powerful political response.

One of the problems with the car-based orthodoxy is, as Lucas points out, that not everyone has or will have access to a car. Some people will always remain dependent on other forms of transport for health, income or other reasons. But as land use patterns decentralised in response to the new opportunities presented by the car, such people, who often live in inner cities, found themselves in areas where the population became successively poorer. In other words, in many places, public transport became residualised, the option of last resort for those unable to participate in our car-based society.

The fact that such conditions can substantially contribute to the difficulties faced by people in such communities prompted the government’s Social Exclusion Unit to undertake a comprehensive review programme on the links between poverty, restricted life chances, and transport exclusion. In many ways, this book can be seen as a response to the SEU’s “Making the connections: final report on transport and social exclusion”, in that it seeks to maintain the visibility of transport issues at the upper levels of policy making. The bringing together of a number of useful statistics that illustrate the levels and depth of transport polarisation at the outset of the book is particularly valuable.

Although the objective of the book is to be welcomed, it nevertheless falls into many of the traps that often ensnare edited collections of this type. Although the case studies themselves – which range from community transport and local bus service improvement in the UK to public participation initiatives and ‘reverse commuting’ programmes in the US – are often highly interesting and informative in their own right, there is very little consistency in style and analytical content between them, which makes the book hard to read in the round.

Transport policy is a complex set of contradictions, and one of the dangers of focusing on one policy concern is that this level of analysis is lost, things appearing much simpler than they really are. Further, social exclusion objectives are often used by policy makers as an “odd on” justification to support the case for policies that would have been promoted or implemented in any case. To try to isolate the social exclusion element risks painting an over-simplified view of the inevitably complex policy picture.

In general, the contributions in the second half of the book that focus on the American experience avoid these pitfalls, giving more insight into the policy system. This is partly due to the clearer subject focus, but also because the legalistic basis of much US practice means it is easier for the researchers to trace convincing arguments through the policy making process. The chapter dealing with the use of civil rights legislation to force change in the policies of the MTA transit authority in Los Angeles is a particularly strong example.

By inserting summary chapters at the end of each section, Lucas attempts to find the common ground between the individual contributions. But inevitably these fall short of ideal, since the case studies are just too diverse, and the writing styles too different, to be effectively drawn together. In addition, in making the valid point that the empirical research ‘raises more questions than it answers’, Lucas makes a rod for her own back by highlighting just how difficult it is to separate out the reduction of social exclusion from the other objectives that inform policy. An almost throwaway remark on the complexities and contradictions between policies aimed at reducing exclusion and those designed to improve environmental performance exemplifies this perfectly.

Worse still, the final concluding chapter, which aims to summarise the insights of the book as a whole, is extremely short, and very descriptive. There is no real synthesis of the strands of argument present in the book. Finally, in setting out a range of challenges for future policy, the editor both reinforces the apparent selectiveness of the book’s treatment of complex policy issues, and is in danger of appearing very naive about the practical and political realities of implementing transport policy: to recite the argument that road pricing is by definition regressive is to miss the fundamental point of the economics that lie behind it, and to gloss over the valuable insights that recent experience – such as that in London – has given us about its real world effects.

In short, this book is useful for the collection of free-standing case studies it brings together, but it is by no means the final word on the subject of transport and social exclusion.

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Paul Pierson, Avice Saint Chair in Public Policy at the University of California at Berkley, is probably best known to social policyists for his contributions to the debate on welfare state resilience and retrenchment, notably his 1994 book Dismantling the Welfare State? Reagan, Thatcher and the Politics of Retrenchment and two more recent edited collections European Social Policy: Between Fragmentation and Integration (with Liebfried, 1995) and The New Politics of the Welfare State (2001).

What ties Pierson’s work together is a focus on the importance of institutions and, indeed, the past in shaping – constraining - future policy development. In this book – described in the promotional material as ‘groundbreaking’ – he sets out with the aim of distilling the theoretical elements of his earlier work and, more specifically, ‘to flesh out the often-invoke but rarely examined declaration that history matters’ (p. 2).

The book begins with an analogy: imagine you have been invited to a restaurant – called ‘The Modern Social Scientist’ – which is the finest new eatery in town. The chef, proud of the state-of-the-art kitchen she heads, offers you a tour of it before you eat and explains it is split into two parts. On the left hand side are the ingredients (which she calls ‘variables’) all of which are completely fresh and of the highest quality. On the right is a spectacular range of complex, high-tech measuring devices that astonish all visitors to the kitchen. The chef then explains her culinary approach to you: it is all about having the perfect ingredients, perfectly measured. She says that if this condition is met then the cooking process – including the sequence of which ingredients are added when and how the different ingredients are combined - does not matter. ‘Few would want to patronize a restaurant with such a philosophy of cooking’, Pierson argues (p.1), ‘but most social scientists are working in that kind of kitchen’ This sets the tone for the rest of the book which expands on the central claims that timing and sequence matter hugely in the policy making process.

Pierson build this argument up – appropriately enough – in a logical sequence of related claims. The first chapter explores the notion of path dependency which has permeated much of the welfare state literature in recent years - most notably underpinning claims in the comparative field that we see a number of distinct and enduring welfare regimes across the world. There has been much confusion about the notion of path dependency - some even viewing it as the claim that nothing changes (Rhodes, 2004) - so Pierson proceeds carefully here. He introduces the notion of positive feedback the claim that each step down a particular path reinforces the likelihood of future change following the same direction because the costs of switching rise. The notion is central to his definition of path dependence which he uses to refer to ‘social processes that exhibit positive feedback and thus generate branching patterns of historical development’ (p. 21).

The second chapter then examines the issues of timing and sequence. The claim here is that there are instances in which we wish to know not just what the ‘value’ of some variable is, but the time at which it occurred. We want to know not just what, but when’ (p. 54). More specifically, his argument is that timing and conjunctures need to be viewed hand-in-hand: when two events or conditions are present at the same time their effects may be quite different in different time periods. This is particularly so given the presence of positive feedback in policy systems: if a particular path is well entrenched before two conditions are present that the impact is likely to differ from circumstances in which that is not the case. What this means at a practical level is that policies can miss the boat so to speak: recent campaigns to universalise health care in the USA, for instance, had little chance of success in the face of the entrenched power of the ‘medical-industrial complex’ but might, as in other countries, have succeeded at an earlier date. Pierson (p. 77) argues that ‘in a fundamental sense, these reformers were too late’.

This links into the third of themes tackled in the text: the long-term nature of social and political processes. Pierson (p.79) argues that ‘the time horizons of most analysts have become increasingly restricted... we look for causes and outcomes that are both temporally contiguous and rapidly unfolding. In the process, we miss a lot’. Drawing an analogy with the natural sciences, he says that a compacted time frame is not always a problem. Some phenomena – he cites the example of a tornado – have short term impacts and develop in short time spans. Other phenomena, however, cannot be appreciated without taking a longer view: earthquakes have a short term (physical) impact but their causes are rooted in long term processes, while global warming has both long term causes and impacts. In the social science, he argues, we need to be think more deeply about the time frames encompassed in our research and, more particularly, to encourage work that considers the long durée, because ‘a great deal of social life is simply off the radar’ at the moment (p. 98).

The remainder of the book builds on these three themes in a discussion of institutional design and development. Here, he places great emphasis on the limits to institutional design, stressing in particular that most institutions are far from malleable and that unintended consequences flow from much political action. Such observations are now commonplace, yet he expresses frustration at the response of most social scientists to these common observations, suggesting for the most part that we sweep these problems under the carpet. Instead, he argues, we need to move such issues to the fore of our analysis: to think much more about the causes of inertia, about ‘deep equilibria’ that resist change and, in an echo of call made by Adrian Sinfield in the last issue of Policy World, to spend more time looking ‘downstream’.

The implications of these claims for policy analysis are manifold, but the most forceful of all is his insistence that (p. 165-6): ‘...there are strong arguments for thinking about policy development as something distinct from the ways in which powerful political actors select policies at a moment in time... [for] the preoccupation with moments of policy choice can often direct our attention towards the dramatic and away from the important’.

There is no doubt that this is another impressive contribution from Pierson. It is not, though, a book that will appeal to everyone; indeed, it may, ultimately, appeal to a rather limited audience for two key reasons. The first is that for those with a strong interest in the
institutionalist literature there is a little that is new in the book for it draws heavily on a number of previously published (albeit excellent) articles. The second is that for those with a more general interest - perhaps drawn to Pierson’s work as consequence of his writings on the welfare state - may well be put off by the very abstract nature of the text. Paul Spicker (2001: 151-2) said of an earlier Pierson text (The New Politics of the Welfare State) that it ‘takes no prisoners... it all makes sense if you sit and work at it, but the labour reminded me of nothing so much as schooldays struggling with Latin prose’. While the prose is clear in this instance, Spicker’s charge remains true here. There are few empirical illustrations of his claims and the book can be heavy going. Moreover, it focuses for the most part on top level political institutions rather than the institutions of the welfare state that emerge from them. It will, perhaps, be read by few social policymakers as a consequence.


References


"This series is essential reading for students across a range of subjects and courses who need to gain a comprehensive understanding of welfare issues."

Pete Alcock, Professor of Social Policy and Administration, University of Birmingham