Symposia and Round-Tables (details)

S1: Solidarity and Social Policy [WEDNESDAY 11TH JULY-13.15-14.45]

Stefanie Börner, Daniel Edmiston, John Jordan, Marie Wachinger

Precarious and ‘flexploitative’ working conditions have been widely argued to be atomising, depoliticising phenomena (Standing 2011). Nevertheless, post-2008, Europe has seen an increase in social movements centring on new collective practices (Bailey et al 2017). This panel explores the complex relationship between these movements and social policy more generally, in the context of crisis/austerity programmes that have both mobilised resistance and taken away resources from people and stakeholders.

The panel contributions present a multinational, European picture of social and solidaristic struggles both for and against specific social policies. The panel will identify overarching commonalities and differences in solidarity building movements. In addition, a contribution will challenge specific forms of solidarities as ‘pathologising’ and another will critically discuss the EU’s role in transnational solidarity building.

The panel thus seeks to explore both theoretical/conceptual and empirical questions. The emerging picture will show positive and negative solidarities being constituted in the aftermath of the financial crisis. The symposium therefore should be an interesting addition to the SPA conference as it widens and complements the geographical and analytical focus to the agency of both policy-makers and societal movements and organisations.

S2: Addressing Vulnerability through Social Policy S1: Solidarity and Social Policy

Kate Brown, Helen Stinson, Emma Wincup

Against a backdrop of economic liberalism and austerity, vulnerability has come to play a crucial role in determining eligibility and shaping interventions across a multitude of policy arenas. This symposium takes three domains where vulnerability hierarchies are exemplified, exploring how vulnerable people are affected by exemptions and exceptions and highlighting advantages and problems with this approach. With contributions on drug policy (Emma Wincup and Kate Brown), child sexual exploitation (Kate Brown) and Universal Credit (Helen Stinson), papers will reflect on how behavioural transgressions can have exclusionary side effects for vulnerable groups, illuminating new manifestations of social divisions of welfare and social control. Each contribution will consider how the concept of vulnerability could more effectively be deployed in policy to support vulnerable people. Sharon Grace (University of York) will chair the session, with discussion and open debate following brief paper presentations. Papers as follows:
Recent years have seen the politicisation of issues associated with reproductive rights, nowhere more so than in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The UK also has seen a renewed discussion of why abortion remains regulated by criminal law, rather than like other health care and why abortion is not recognized as an inalienable civil right or a social right like other social rights in the UK. Using Northern Ireland – where the law on abortion remains as it was in the rest of the UK until 1967 – as a case study, this paper looks at theoretical ways in which social policy in relation to abortion may be framed. It explores two streams of theorisation: First, how civil and social rights to abortion are understood and contested and how the outcome varies, even amongst welfare states with key similarities in their broad orientation to social policy. Second, it explores insights from scholarship on Foucault’s biopower paradigm and the possibilities of resistance to control over women’s bodies.

Devolution is unfolding differently across the countries and cities of the UK. While social policies were a key part of the early devolution settlements with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the more recent city ‘deals’ have pursued devolution in the name of ‘economic rebalancing’ and growth. Despite their different emphasises and objectives, these different forms of devolution have important implications for social policies across the UK, as does the 'localisation' of aspects of housing and welfare policy pursued in England in particular.

This symposium brings together three papers which explore the extent, nature and impacts of devolution within the UK across key social policy areas and at different levels (local, city-regional, national).

The first paper will discuss the high-profile Mayoral commitments to address homelessness in Manchester, the West Midlands and Liverpool city regions. The second paper reflects on the scope and potential of city devolution in England and the third paper will consider how powers devolved to Scotland are being used, with a focus on housing, tax and social security.

With the UK government’s attention focussed on Brexit, has devolution opened up space for devolved administrations within the UK, and local policymakers within England, to implement social policies better suited to local needs and priorities? Or is it leading to a widening of social and economic inequalities? The panel will conclude with a discussion of the risks and opportunities of devolution. The papers in this symposium draw on research undertaken as part of the ‘Social policies and distributional outcomes in a changing Britain’ research programme, which has been funded by the Nuffield Foundation and aims to assess progress in addressing social inequalities in 21st century Britain (see http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/_new/research/spdo/default.asp).
S5: Preventing and Addressing Homelessness: Lessons from Wales [WEDNESDAY 11TH JULY-15.00-16.30]

Anya Ahmed, Andrea Gibbons, Katy Jones, Iolo Madoc-Jones, Michaela Rogers, Mark Wilding

Devolution in 1998-9 presented an opportunity for the Welsh Government to introduce constitutional changes to housing and homelessness policy. From 2009 onwards the Welsh Government comprehensively reviewed its approach to homelessness and subsequently ‘The Housing (Wales) Act’ 2014 placed a new duty on local authorities to take ‘reasonable steps’ to prevent or relieve homelessness for all eligible households. The University of Salford (partnered by Glyndwr University) has completed a longitudinal post-implementation evaluation of the processes and impacts of the Act, while Glyndwr University (partnered by the University of Salford) has conducted a parallel study focusing on the experiences of prison leavers.

S6: Anticipating the next crises. Developing future minded policy and practice [THURSDAY 12 JULY-9.00-10.30]

Stuart Connor, Sandra Shaw, Warren Smith

Ten years on from the crisis of 2018, this symposium asks, if and how future crises can be anticipated. An inherent, but not always explicit, aspect of policy making is its orientation to the future. Put another way, if policy making is not seeking to shape the future, then what is it doing? And yet the future, and how best to make sense of and orient to the future, remains an underserved issue in the social policy literature (Connor, 2017).

Policy agents need to make sense of what might be ahead and in the process develop accounts and claims as to the nature and scale of a given problem and subsequent solutions (Fischer, 2003; Bacchi, 2009). This sense making is made all the more difficult when, as is inevitable when addressing the future, the grounds for making claims are unclear and uncertain (de Jouvenel, 1967). The future represents a particularly vital and contested terrain where both visions over what the future is and should be and the policies and practices that this future requires, are subject to conflict (Dunmire, 2010). Both appeals to a better tomorrow, or the fear of what is to come, can serve as means by which policy makers seek to legitimate the actions, conflicts and sacrifices taken today.

Understood through this lens, the future is a contested and potent site that plays a vital role in processes of meaning making and the mobilisation of power. The three papers in this symposium will explicitly address the question of how the future has, is and could be used to inform policy and practice and the challenges for policy agents seeking to anticipate crises and extend the horizon of what futures are considered probable, possible and preferable. As such the symposium explores the different conceptualisations and orientations to the future available to anticipatory agents and the role of futures in social policy and the role of policy in creating futures. The development of what is described as a future minded (Adam and Groves, 2007) policy and practice is not just an exercise in extending the number of years over which an agent considers the future and or exploring
questions of intergenerational justice, but also one that supports agents to make sense of a complex, open and contested present and future.

**S7: Welfare beyond and within the state: exploring new conceptual and empirical frontiers**

**[THURSDAY 12 JULY-10.50-12.20]**

*Rebecca Ince, James Rees, Kelly Hall, Catherine Needham, Harriet Thomson, Laura Kelly*

Chair: James Rees, Open University

This symposium seeks to move beyond traditional conceptualisations of the interface between the state and other providers, and explore diverse empirical accounts of this interface in action. It is well established that there is a mixed economy of welfare in many fields of social policy (Powell, forthcoming), but the relationship is often seen through ‘static’ lenses including of ‘partnership’ (with a normative emphasis on sharing, collaboration); or contracting (dominated by economistic frameworks such as principal-agent theory); or critical perspectives that focus on the negative impact of processes such as neoliberalisation, privatisation and marketisation (Wolch, 1990).

The symposium aims to explore and develop more nuanced accounts that acknowledged the multifarious ways providers from different sectors, niches or ‘field’ positions interact with each other in the provision of a ‘system’ of welfare services. This includes consideration of how these fields emerge (bottom-up drivers of systemic innovation, top-down policy drivers); descriptive analysis of what is created, and provisional evaluation of emerging impact. Specific fields of welfare provision included in the symposium are mental health, poverty and social inclusion, social care and youth justice/youth crime.

**S8: Markets, morality and wellbeing: the moral economy of inequality, time and health**

**[THURSDAY 12 JULY-10.50-12.20]**

*Tania Burchardt, Rod Hick, Lee Gregory, Marisa Wilson, Denise Baden, Stephen Wilkinson*

Chair: Karen Rowlingson

In capitalist economies, particularly neo-liberal varieties, the apparent ‘logic’ of ‘the market’ dominates people’s lives. While this logic can be critiqued on its own terms, the specific focus on ‘rationality’ can also be questioned and combined with more value-based considerations. This symposium draws on the concept of moral economy to explore the current and potential role of different logics and values in relation to key aspects of people’s lives. The first paper (Burchardt and Hick) challenges the idea that all that matters to well-being is money and consumption. Specifically the paper examines what inequalities look like once we move beyond metrics of income and wealth into other aspects of life that people value such as health, physical security, learning and participation; and how advantage and disadvantage in these domains interacts with more familiar market-based inequalities. The second paper (Gregory) argues that a focus on time and temporality can help challenge dominant economic logics and values around money and markets. And the third paper (Wilson, Baden and Wilkinson) explores the ecological approach to health in Cuba which can provide useful lessons to help overcome some of the social and ecological limitations of market-centred approaches to public health in capitalist societies.
Round Table 1: Bringing time centre stage: the possibilities and challenges with taking a qualitative longitudinal approach THURSDAY 12 JULY-10.50-12.20

Ruth Patrick (Chair), Morag Treanor, Aniela Wenham, Jane Millar, Rita Griffiths, Peter Dwyer

Over recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the potential in qualitative longitudinal research (QLR) in efforts to better understand social policies and their impact (Corden & Millar, 2007; McCleod and Thomson, 2009). At the same time, and tied to this, there has been a growth in the visibility and application of QLR within social policy, with some high-profile and impactful QLR projects including the ambitious, ESRC funded Welfare Conditionality study. Bringing in time as both a vehicle and object of study (Henwood & Shirani, 2012), QLR creates possibilities to generate a dynamic and more finely grained picture of responses to social policy interventions, with particular possibilities in exploring how far and whether policy agendas focused on the provision of welfare, including aspects of behavioural change, achieve the desired outcomes (Corden & Millar, 2007).

This workshop will provide an opportunity to hear methodological reflections from several researchers who have been working with QLR in different ways, and – in particular – to consider both the possibilities and challenges inherent within this approach. Several of the contributions will also explore the dynamic interplay between QLR, how gendered identities and roles unfold over time, and the place of social policy within this.

Short presentations will be followed by a discussion including all participants. This discussion will provide opportunities to explore future possibilities for this methodology within social policy, as well as to consider how it can be most effectively employed in efforts to engage with policymakers and key stakeholders at different levels of policymaking.

Contributing to the workshop will be the following:

Peter Dwyer (University of York): Peter leads the large-scale Welfare Conditionality project, which has followed a diverse group of people over time as they are directly affected by welfare conditionality. His contribution will consider the advantages and disadvantages of using a large repeat qualitative panel study with a diversity of welfare service users to explore the effectiveness of welfare conditionality in moving people off welfare and into work over time.

Rita Griffiths (University of Bath): Rita is Co-investigator (working with Jane Millar (University of Bath) and Fran Bennett (University of Oxford) on a three year (2018-2021), ESRC funded longitudinal research project exploring work, care and intra-household financial decision making among couples with children claiming Universal Credit. The research will explore how increased activation for partners in couples, the extension of conditionality to working families and new monthly payment arrangements are being responded to and affecting work-care patterns, intra-household financial management and distribution, and gender roles and relations. Rita will outline the rationale for, and explore the anticipated challenges arising from, the longitudinal aspects of the research design.

Jane Millar (University of Bath): Jane worked with Tess Ridge (University of Bath) on a QLR study of lone mothers and their children, which started around 2001, and followed the families as the mothers started work, exploring issues of employment, incomes, and family relationships (Millar and Ridge, 2017). Her contribution will reflect on the ways in which she and Tess have sought to use their research to engage with the policy world over time.
Morag Treanor (University of Stirling): Morag has carried out two QLR research projects with families living in poverty and partners from the third sector. The first project with Barnardo’s was called ‘Below the Breadline’ and collected data monthly from families during 2008. The evidence from this was used by the New Labour government in debates ahead of the Child Poverty Act 2010. The second is an annual project with CPAG into the effects of welfare reform on families across Scotland (2013-present). Morag will explore the scope of QLR with third sector partners, and the ways in which it can be used as a method to influence policy making.

Aniela Wenham (University of York): Aniela has worked on a QLR study looking at experiences of teenage motherhood (2004-). Aniela will reflect upon her current fieldwork stage, encompassing data with individuals over a 14-year period, to draw attention to the impact of social policy through the accounts of those subject to intervention. The ethical dilemmas of following a small group of participants over a 13-year period will also be discussed.

S9: Situating stigma in social policy analysis: how stigma is felt, lived and experienced [THURSDAY 12 JULY-15.00-16.30]
Kayleigh Garthwaite, Hannah Jobling, Lisa Morriss, Ruth Patrick, Aniela Wenham
Recently, developments surrounding the conceptual underpinnings of stigma have gained increasing traction and interest. These contributions have drawn attention to the social aspect of stigma, and how stigma is mediated through social relations of power (Scambler, 2018; Tyler, 2018). However, despite such theoretical advances, there is comparatively little research interrogating the place of social policy in the contribution, re-production, or even resistance of stigma. This symposium will explore the relationship between social policy and stigma. In doing so, we will investigate the connection between macro structures, and their enactment of stigma, alongside the micro dimensions of social life.

This symposium presents evidence on the experiences of particular groups, whom have been the subject of intense policy intervention, and whom are often subject to acute judgment, stigma and feelings of shame. Four complementary papers draw on research with teenage mothers (Wenham); birth mothers who have had a child removed (Morriss); people with mental health difficulties (Jobling); and people with direct experiences of poverty (Garthwaite and Patrick). All share an engagement with the role and significance of stigma, and help better understand how it interacts with social policy interventions. The symposium will contribute towards a greater understanding of the lived experiences of stigma, but importantly, explore how policy and practice has the potential to both induce stigma and, in some instances, enable forms of resistance and contestation.

S10: Joining the Dots between the UK and China: Innovations in health, social care, housing and urban development [THURSDAY 12 JULY-15.00-16.30]
Vikki McCall, Sabrina Chai, Ling Ge
With an ageing population on a global scale, it is more critical than ever to explore the wider potential of housing, health and care sectors in supporting homes and communities. For example, China is currently going through a transitional phase from family-based models of care to community care. However, the links between urban development and other key elements of social policy such as ageing, volunteering and social care are currently unclear. This symposium will explore how to bridge boundaries across health, housing and social care and learn what works for
supporting community-based models of care on an international level. The symposium will explore key questions including:

- Why is it important to conduct cross-national research in health, social care, housing and urban development?
- What are the challenges of conducting cross-national research in health, social care, housing and urban development?
- What barriers and opportunities are there to research these key social policy areas within different welfare regimes?
- What barriers and opportunities for countries in different welfare regimes to learn from each other in these policy areas?
- What is the potential for a cross-country comparative frameworks in areas of in health, social care, housing and urban development?

Round Table 2: How to increase the number of students choosing undergraduate Social Policy degrees [THURSDAY 12 JULY-15.00-16.30]
This round table is an open discussion about how to increase the number of students choosing undergraduate Social Policy degrees.

The 2017 SPA report on the “Current and Future State of Social Policy Teaching in UK Higher Education Institutions” stated that 50% of survey respondents offering a view said they had found recruiting Social Policy students more difficult over the past five years. This suggest that sharing knowledge about ‘what works’ is worthwhile.

Lavinia Mitton (Kent) will chair the discussion. Hugh Bochel (Lincoln), Clare Williams (Wolverhampton), Sharon Wright (Glasgow), and Jan Eichhorn (Edinburgh) will kick off the roundtable. We will then open the discussion to the floor.

Ideas under consideration will include:

- Cautious tweaks that can be achieved at institution level (e.g. what marketing strategies work?)
- Working across institutions (e.g. should we collaborate with other bodies?)
- More radical ideas (e.g. do we need a new narrative about social policy as a degree?).

S11: Tax Matters: researching taxation and social policy [FRIDAY 13 JULY-9.10-10.40]
Micheal Collins, Sally Ruane, Adrian Sinfield
Matters related to taxation appear in the canon of social policy research, for example in relation to the distribution of tax reliefs in pensions policy or the impact of tax credits on household income or participation in the labour market. However, the crucial role of taxation in shaping welfare, although initially posited by Titmuss, has never developed as a central concern within the discipline. The recent crisis, and its associated austerity and policy initiatives, has further underscored the relevance of taxation to social policy.
In response, a group of researchers have recently established an SPA supported group on Taxation and Social Policy to foster discussion, debate and research on the role and relevance of taxation to social policy.

The symposium will also include a brief introduction to the new SPA supported group.

**S12: Crisis in health and social care [FRIDAY 13 JULY-9.10-10.40]**

*Ian Greener, Martin Powell, Jon Glasby*

Includes papers that examine the relationships between the NHS and local government, Inquiries in the NHS, and the meaning and consequences of crisis in the NHS.

**S13: Destitution in the UK [FRIDAY 13 JULY-11.00-12.30]**

*Mark Simpson, Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Daniel McArthur, Glen Bramley, Filip Sosenko, Janice Blenkinsopp, Gráinne McKeever, Ciara Fitzpatrick, Rachel Loopstra, Chris Goulden (Chair)*

The perceived increase of destitution has drawn media, political and academic attention for a number of years, but prior to Fitzpatrick and others’ 2016 study there had been little systematic investigation of the nature and extent of destitution in the contemporary UK. The first paper in this symposium reports the findings of a follow-up report on the extent, distribution, causes and experience of living in destitution in a modern welfare state. A second paper draws on a parallel study – drawing on the same qualitative data set – that seeks to devise a legal definition of destitution, explores the role of legal problems in causing destitution (and vice versa) and the potential for legal interventions to lead out of destitution. Finally, the growing presence and use of food banks has been particularly emblematic of the perceived spread of destitution. Through analysis of factors underlying food bank use, the third paper challenges the recurring official statement that the reasons for dependence on food aid are ‘complex’. Collectively, the papers demonstrate that while the lives of people experiencing destitution are unquestionably complex, interventions to eliminate destitution need not be.

**S14: Government procurement as a governance policy tool kit [FRIDAY 13 JULY-11.00-12.30]**

*Orly Benjamin, Katharina Sarter, Mathew Johnson, Lena Karamanidou*

Over the last two decades, scholars engaged with marketization and the way it has re-shaped caring services, report similarities and differences in the form it took in countries with diverse welfare histories and cultural traditions. However, overall, the emerging general picture suggests that marketization has reshaped three major areas in welfare governance: the role of the state as an employer in the provisions of quality jobs; de-familialization through the delivery of quality services; and, de-commodification generated by the re-organization of the provision of care.

Marketization restructured these areas of governance by a range of practices, one of which is the competition based contracting out of caring services. Competition-based tendering as a distinct form of marketization is specifically supported by legal stipulations organized under government procurement regulations, which refer to the purchase of goods and services by public sector bodies.
These legal regulations, anchored in supranational level regulations, create some similarity in the organization of caring services. Yet, specific contracting practices are negotiated more locally.

Public procurement has opened up possibilities for profit or for otherwise benefiting of public funds for various service providers who may now compete over public authorities’ tenders. In their turn, public authorities must always comply with the EU principles of transparency, equal treatment and non-discrimination, mutual recognition and proportionality. While some scholarly research has already directed attention to the ways in which these opportunities have shaped social services and, more specifically, the quality of employment in these services, not enough is known about the extent to which public procurement practices promote policies and the social dialogue around these policies.

Our symposium invites marketization researchers who deal with the way public procurement informs the quality of jobs, the quality of services or the provision of care, among other forms of policy making, to submit their research. Researchers working from within a gender/feminist perspective, a focus on caring services and ethics of care and/or issues of professionalization, are particularly welcome.