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**Social Policy Association**

**Annual Conference 2024**

**University of Strathclyde Technology & Innovation  
Centre (TIC)**

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

*Social Policy Futures*

## Welcome from the Local Organising Committee

Welcome to the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow's vibrant city centre, where the Social Policy Association Annual Conference 2024 is being jointly hosted by social policy scholars working across the Department of Social Work & Social Policy, and Strathclyde Business School.

Social policy research has always been concerned with improving our understanding of welfare states past and present, to work towards more socially just futures. Automation and new digital technologies in public services and social protection are often associated with the expansion of state surveillance, control of populations and the dehumanising of social support. Predictive tools and AI-based solutions seem to squeeze the possibility for agency. And yet the promise of imagining better futures is also present in new technologies and in the work of activists, communities, and engaged social policy research. We have been delighted with the range and quality of abstracts received across all topics and contexts, and especially with papers exploring how social policy research can contribute to both understanding, and shaping, better futures.

Our plenary sessions open with a panel of leading scholars engaging with the topic *Fair Work and Employment Futures: Challenges for Social Policy*. Vanessa Beck, Heejung Chung, Anne Daguerre and Patricia Findlay will share cutting-edge research on the nexus between work organisation, and social policy, with a focus on labour market exclusion, in-work poverty and under-employment. Our second plenary features Professor Catherine Needham on future paradigms for social care, which will draw on the varying experiences and directions of the UK's four nations. And on Friday, the SPA's journal editors have selected the Cambridge University Press keynote from Baron Prem Sikka, who will offer a view from the House of Lords on social policy futures in the UK and beyond.

This year's conference dinner and awards ceremony on Thursday evening is a short walk away in Glasgow City Chambers, beginning with a Civic Reception sponsored by the Lord Provost and Glasgow City Council. Additionally, for those who have booked tickets, we're looking forward to our conference ceilidh in a traditional city centre pub on Wednesday evening, with a welcome drink sponsored by Policy Press.

When we chose the conference theme of Social Policy Futures, none of us could have known that a UK General Election would take place in the middle of the conference. But a potential change of government at Westminster does add extra salience to our discussions. Our conference dinner will be finished in time for the exit poll announcements, and we're delighted to add an extra post-election special event on Friday morning, with the Academy of Social Sciences generously providing breakfast rolls to ease us into Friday morning.

We hope you have a wonderful time at the conference and in Glasgow. Please follow the official @SocialPolicyUK account on X, and use the hashtag #SPAconf24. Policy Press will award one book per day to their favourite tweet using the hashtag!

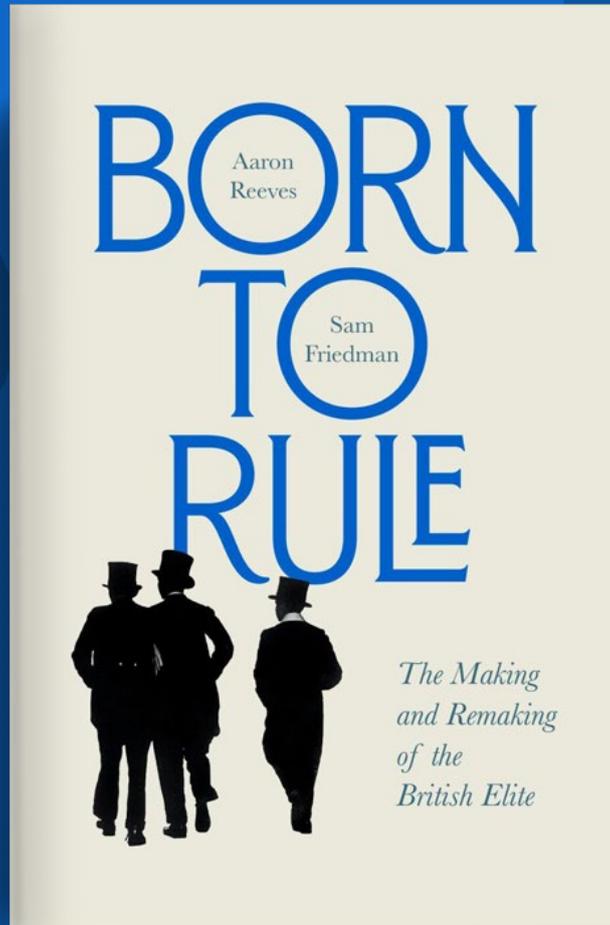
If you have questions, please look out for our student helpers and organising team, or ask at the registration desk.

Best wishes,

The Local Organising Committee.

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**Plenary panel: Fair Work and Employment Futures: Implications for Social Policy  
(Wednesday, 13:00, Auditorium)**

**Professor Vanessa Beck**



Vanessa Beck is Professor of Employment Studies at the University of Bristol. She has researched and published extensively on the experiences of individuals and groups at the margins of the labour market, including those who are unemployed or underemployed, and who experience multiple and complex barriers to (decent) employment. She currently leads a major ESRC-funded project entitled: "A sociological investigation of underemployment and the lived experiences of underemployed workers" (see <https://underemployment.info>).

**Professor Heejung Chung**



Heejung Chung is Professor of Work and Employment at King's College London. She is a comparative labour market researcher with a focus on flexible working, home working, future of work, and gender equality both at home and in the labour market. She has worked with both national (UK, Korea, Germany, Italy, Estonia etc.) and international (European Commission, OECD, ILO, UN etc.) government agencies in developing good labour market and work-family policies. Her most recent book The Flexibility Paradox (Policy Press, 2022) explores the potential exploitative nature of flexible working that can exacerbate gender inequality patterns and result in poor outcomes for both companies and workers.

### **Dr Anne Daguerre**



Dr. Anne Daguerre is Reader in Social Justice at the University of Brighton. Her areas of expertise include welfare reform, labour market policies, social policy and administration, social security, and social rights. Anne has led several research projects funded by the British Academy, the ESRC and the Fulbright Commission. She is currently leading a two year ESRC project “Activating employers: the politics of regulation in the UK, the US and Australia”.

### **Professor Patricia Findlay**



Patricia Findlay is Distinguished Professor of Work and Employment Relations and Director of the Scottish Centre for Employment Research at the University of Strathclyde. Her published work covers topics such as: workplace innovation; improving job quality; public policy to promote fair work and good job quality; skills and skills valuation; and employer-employee partnerships. She recently led the major ESRC project “Improving management practices, work engagement and workplace innovation for productivity and wellbeing” and is currently leading an ESRC/Productivity Institute project “Effective worker voice and pathways to productivity”. She is Co-chair of Scotland’s Fair Work Convention, which acts as an independent advisory body to Scottish Government Ministers, seeking to inform policy action on decent job quality and fair work.

## **Dr Katy Jones**



Dr Katy Jones is a Reader in Employment and Head of the Decent Work and Productivity Research Centre at Manchester Metropolitan University. Katy has published extensively on job quality, employment support, welfare conditionality, vocational training and labour market disadvantage. She co-leads the SPA's Employment Policy Group. She is a member of the Centre for Employability Excellence's Advisory Group, Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter's technical panel, and the Growth Company's Progression to Inclusive Employment Advisory Panel. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Employability Professionals.

**Plenary Lecture: Delivery, drift or decay? What has devolution done for adult social care in the UK's four nations? (Thursday 12:30PM, Auditorium)**

## **Professor Catherine Needham:**



Catherine Needham is Professor of Public Policy and Public Management at the Health Services Management Centre, University of Birmingham. Her research focuses on social care (including care markets and systems). She has published a wide range of articles, chapters and books for academic and practitioner audiences. Her most recent book was published by Policy Press in 2023 and entitled *Social Care in the UK's Four Nations: Between two Paradigms*. She is a Co-Investigator in the ESRC Centre for Care and is Associate Director of the NIHR School for Social Care Research.

**Cambridge University Press Plenary Lecture: Paying for the welfare state: a view from the House of Lords (Friday, 13:30, Auditorium)**

**Prem Sikka, Baron Sikka:**



Prem Sikka has been a member of the UK House of Lords since October 2020. He is also Emeritus Professor of Accounting at the University of Essex and University of Sheffield. His research on accountancy, auditing, tax avoidance, tax havens, corruption, corporate governance, money laundering, insolvency and business affairs has been published in international scholarly journals, books, newspapers and magazines. He advised the UK House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee for its investigation into the collapse of BHS and Carillion.

Prem holds the Working for Justice Award from Tax Justice Network, Accounting Exemplar Award from the American Accounting Association (AAA), Lifetime Achievement Awards from the British Accounting and Finance Association (BAFA) and PQ Magazine, Personality of the Year Award from Accountancy Age and the inaugural (in 2017) Abraham Briloff Award from The Accountant and International Accounting Bulletin for promoting transparency and public accountability of businesses.

## **Conference programme**

Please see up-to-date details of sessions in our online programme: [SPA 2024 Programme](#)

All sessions will be held at Strathclyde's Technology and Innovation Centre (TIC) on Queen Street, unless indicated otherwise.

### **Social Policy Association Annual General Meeting**

Join us for our AGM at 1740 in room 565 of the Teaching & Learning Building (just up the hill from our main conference venue, the TIC). Meet at the TIC registration desk to walk over together at 1735.

### **Conference ceilidh**

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July at 1900, for those who have booked tickets only. Arrival and welcome drink sponsored by Policy Press at 1900, with a buffet dinner served at 1915 and ceilidh to follow, with pay bar. All dances will be explained and walked through by the band. Please note the venue is up one flight of stairs with no lift, and the bar accepts cards only (no cash).

*Ceilidh tickets have sold out. If you would like be added to the wait list, please ask at registration desk.*

### **Civic reception, conference dinner and awards ceremony**

On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July, at 1845 conference attendees are invited to Glasgow City Chambers, for a civic reception sponsored by the Lord Provost and Glasgow City Council. This will be followed by our conference dinner, a Presidential Address from our President Baroness Doreen Lawrence, and the presentation of the SPA Awards for 2024.

### **Academy of Social Sciences-sponsored event**

The morning after General Election day, you are invited to join our panel for breakfast rolls and coffee to examine what the likely new government (whatever its political hue) might prioritise in its social policies, and how social scientists can contribute towards evidence-based policymaking. This is a joint event between the Social Policy Association, the University of Strathclyde and the Academy of Social Sciences. Chaired by Professor Ian Rivers, Associate Principal and Executive Dean of the Faculty and Humanities & Social Sciences, University of Strathclyde.

### **Publishers' exhibition**

Please make time to browse the displays of exhibiting publishers and other organisations, including Policy Press, Cambridge University Press, Palgrave, the Fraser of Allander Institute and Poverty Alliance. Stalls will be located next to the catering on the Level 2 foyer area.

### **Conference catering**

Hot drinks will be served during breaks, and lunch each day, in the foyer areas on Levels 2 and 3. On Friday, we have asked for lunch to have a takeaway option for those leaving promptly.

## Programme Outline

*Please note that the street entrance to the conference centre is on Level 2*

<b>Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July</b>		
<b>09:00 – 17:50 Registration Level 2 foyer area</b>		
09:00 – 12:00	<b>PGR/ECR event</b>	Teaching & Learning Building (booking required)
12:00 – 13:00	<b>Lunch</b>	Levels 2 and 3 foyer areas
13:00 – 14:30	<b>Welcome and plenary Fair Work and Employment Futures</b>	Auditorium
14:35 – 15:35	<b>Paper session A</b>	Conference rooms/ Auditorium
15:35 – 15:55	<b>Afternoon break</b>	Levels 2 and 3 foyer areas
15:55 – 16:55	<b>Paper session B</b>	Conference rooms/ Auditorium
17:00 – 18:00	<b>Paper session C</b>	Conference rooms/ Auditorium
19:00 – 22:30	<b>Ceilidh</b> ( <i>pre-booking required, sold out</i> )	Sloans Bar, 108 Argyll Street
<b>Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July</b>		
<b>09:00 – 17:25 Registration Level 2 foyer area</b>		
09:00 – 10:00	<b>Paper session D</b>	Conference rooms/ Auditorium
10:05 – 11:05	<b>Paper session E</b>	Conference rooms/ Auditorium
11:05 – 11:25	<b>Morning break</b>	Levels 2 and 3 foyer areas
11:25 – 12:25	<b>Paper session F</b>	Conference rooms/ Auditorium
12:30 – 13:30	<b>Plenary Lecture: Professor Catherine Needham: Delivery, drift or decay? What has devolution done for adult social care in the UK's four nations?</b>	Auditorium
13:30 – 14:15	<b>Lunch</b>	Levels 2 and 3 foyer areas
14:15 – 15:15	<b>Paper session G</b>	Conference rooms/ Auditorium
15:20 – 16:20	<b>Paper session H</b>	Conference rooms/ Auditorium
16:20 – 16:35	<b>Afternoon break</b>	Levels 2 and 3 foyer areas
16:35 – 17:35	<b>Paper session I</b>	
17:40 – 18:40	<b>SPA Annual General Meeting</b>	Teaching and Learning Building, Room 565, Richmond Street
18:45 – 21:45	<b>Civic reception, dinner and awards</b> ( <i>pre-booking required, sold out</i> )	City Chambers, George Square
21:30 – late	<b>Local Organising Committee General Election results event</b> ( <i>ticketed</i> )	Strath Union, Richmond Street

<b>Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July</b>		
<b>09:00-12:00 Registration</b> <i>Level 2 foyer area</i>		
08:30 – 09:00	<b>Breakfast rolls served</b>	Level 2 foyer area
09:00 – 10:00	<b>Campaign for Social Sciences post-election reflections</b>	Conference rooms/ Auditorium
10:05 – 11:05	<b>Paper session J</b>	Conference rooms/ Auditorium
11:05 – 11:25	<b>Morning break</b>	Levels 2 and 3 foyer areas
11:25 – 12:25	<b>Paper session K</b>	Conference rooms/ Auditorium
12:30 – 13:30	<b>Plenary C Prem Sikka, Baron Sikka Paying for the welfare state: a view from the House of Lords</b>	Auditorium
13:30	<b>Lunch and conference close</b>	Levels 2 and 3 foyer areas
13:30 – 15:00	<b>SPA Executive meeting</b>	Teaching and Learning Building, Room 551B, Richmond Street

## **Abstracts**

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024**

### **Plenary panel - Fair Work and Employment Futures**

Much of the discussion on the role of social policy in providing access to decent or 'fair' work has focused on the efficacy of supply-side interventions. However, people's experience of - or exclusion from - decent and sustainable job outcomes is largely determined by what happens in the workplace. People's experiences in work and the role of employers and their practices in the workplace are crucial to solving challenges around labour market inclusion and problems of under-employment and in-work poverty. This plenary will bring together research leaders taking forward cutting-edge research on the nexus between work organisation and social policy, identifying key challenges and priorities for future policy.

### **Paper Session 1 - 14:35–15:35**

#### **Symposium 201: Futures of Social Policy Teaching and Learning (papers 202; 133; 89 and 258)**

*Organisers: Enrico Reuter and Alessio D'Angelo*

##### **Symposium proposal**

As British Higher Education continues to experience a turbulent period, both risks and opportunities arise for the teaching and learning of Social Policy. Major risks are associated with an increasingly competitive environment, in which Social Policy as a discipline or subject can struggle to retain its visibility and attractiveness to prospective students. However, there are also significant opportunities thanks to the centrality of Social Policy in addressing many of the societal challenges that define the present and will shape our future. The latest SPA-commissioned report "The current and future state of Social Policy teaching in UK" has highlighted this ambiguous picture, showing both the vibrancy of the subject across British universities, and the pressures under which academics who are teaching social policy operate. This symposium aims to explore further the current situation of Social Policy teaching and learning, to discuss potential future trends, and to identify ways in which social policy academics can sustain their discipline whilst also reimagining its boundaries. The symposium is organised by Enrico Reuter and Alessio D'Angelo, and it includes papers by Emily Ball, Richard Machin, Enrico Reuter, and Kevin Zapata Celestino.

**202**

##### **Social policy curricula: Interpreting subject benchmarks, identifying common themes, gaps and future challenges**

*Enrico Reuter*

*University of York, York, United Kingdom*

##### **Abstract of Paper**

As social policy "is concerned with the distribution and organisation of human welfare and well-being within societies" (QAA Subject Benchmark Statement, 2019, p.4), it is necessarily a subject that is multi- and interdisciplinary, that relates to a wide range of policy fields, that operates at different levels of analysis (from the individual to the structures of the international or global political economy), and that refers to the public, the private and the voluntary sectors.

While the multifaceted nature of social policy is one of its strengths with regard to research - allows for vibrant and diverse strands of scholarly investigation - it can become a challenge when it comes to teaching and learning, and particularly with regard to curriculum design and skills development. The questions of what knowledge and what skills ought to be acquired and developed by students on social policy courses, both at undergraduate and at postgraduate level, and what core themes ought to be explored from which analytical perspectives therefore invite substantive reflection and discussion.

To contribute to these debates, the proposed paper will, first, contrast the current QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Social Policy with the social policy curricula offered by British universities, to identify how the broader standards of the QAA benchmarks are interpreted and translated into concrete study programmes. Based on this analysis, the paper will, secondly, identify commonly shared themes in teaching and learning as well as highlight key markers of differentiations in the provision of social policy courses. Finally, taking a holistic view, the paper will discuss gaps in the wider social policy curriculum and will consider their relevance to social policy teaching, ahead of the upcoming review of the benchmark statement.

**133**

### **We need to talk about Social Policy: Interventions to keep Social Policy on the agenda**

*Emily Ball*

*University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The recent Chau et al. (2023) report suggests that the study of Social Policy is a declining choice of study for potential undergraduate students when choosing their Higher Education degree programmes (Chau et al., 2023). Using the Chau et al., (2023) report as a framework for an applied discussion, I draw on my role as an Undergraduate Programme Director and outline recent interventions in my own Department to tackle these challenges. I will discuss the insights from admissions data and open days, feedback from Social Policy Student Representatives, minutes from the Social Policy Curriculum subject group and away-day meetings, and actions from a decolonisation reading group and an attainment gap task group in order to share with colleagues in other institutions potential ways we are working – and could work towards boosting the access too, and popularity of the subject nationally. I posture potential changes to the next iteration of the QAA Social Policy Subject Benchmark Standards by arguing there is a need to continue to increase the internationalisation and decolonisation of the Social Policy curriculum as well as an imperative to increase a diversity and choice of assessments available - particularly when students come from non-traditional backgrounds and modules are ‘shared’ with other social science subjects.

**89**

### **A social policy teaching model for times of crisis and polarisation.**

*Richard Machin*

*Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper presents a model for teaching social policy which is used across a range of courses at Nottingham Trent University (NTU)[1]. NTU does not have a bespoke Social Policy degree but the importance of the subject is recognised and it is embedded in modules across a range of courses in the School of Social Sciences including Social Work, Public Health, Health and Social Care, and Youth Justice.

A common challenge in teaching social policy across other disciplines is that its ubiquity is not always appreciated and that it can be associated with political decision-making which students may be disillusioned with. However, students in the social sciences are interested in the impact of grand societal challenges whether this be the rise of extremism, the cost-of-living crisis, the impact of Brexit or the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pedagogical model presented here has three complementary elements designed to help students explore the complex dynamic between social policy and these momentous events:

- Pedagogy inspired by the lived experience: students themselves are often affected in negative ways by policy; this can help engagement with the subject distilling it to a very personal level but requires sensitivity as the (harsh) lived experience of policy affects not only future service users but has a significant impact on many in the classroom.
- Pedagogy underpinned by professional experience: this utilises the real-world expertise of the academic and aids the development of employability skills and a career identity. It draws on critical professional reflections and the discussion of practical and ethical issues.
- Pedagogy informed by research and scholarly activity: this recognises the importance of evidence and research. It helps students to see the links between complex ideas and real world impact and develops critical thinking and evaluation skills vital for the contemporary workplace. This paper will provide practical examples of how the above model has been successfully applied and will be of interest to those who teach on Social Policy degrees or social policy modules as part of other degrees. The model has been shaped by an increasing focus on graduate outcomes and a growing number of international students and the paper considers these issues.

Richard Machin, Senior Lecturer, Social Work and Health, Nottingham Trent University

[1] Machin, R. (2023). Facilitating emotionally resilient learning in times of crisis. Nottingham: Nottingham Institute of Education, Nottingham Trent University.

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### **Teaching Social Policy in the Marketised Higher Education Sector in the UK: Making sense of the current challenges and development strategies for the future**

*Ruby Chau*

*University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

*Sam YU*

*Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This article focuses on the current challenges and strategies for future development in social policy education in the UK, an area that has received limited attention in research. The marketisation of higher education has raised concerns about its negative effects on the future development of social policy education. In response to these concerns, the Social Policy Association (SPA) commissioned three studies (in 2011, 2016 and 2021/22 respectively) over the past 12 years to study the current state and future of social policy teaching in higher education institutions in the UK. The reports contain several suggestions from the respondents and the researchers on the future development of social policy education. This article aims to contribute to this ongoing discussion by examining these suggestions and exploring the diverse perspectives on the role of social policy education in addressing marketisation within higher education. This analysis involves three key analytical tasks. Firstly, the concepts of goods (e.g. private, merit and public) are applied to examine the current modes of social policy teaching provision in the UK. Secondly, informed by the result of the first task, a new framework is introduced that categorizes the suggestions into various development strategies and

demonstrates how each strategy reflects distinct viewpoints on the ideal roles social policy education could undertake in tackling marketisation. Lastly, the framework is applied to analyze the suggestions from the three studies commissioned by the SPA and to reflect on the potential challenges and opportunities each strategy may bring to social policy educators at personal, institutional and disciplinary levels.

### **Symposium 69 - The interface first welfare state (papers 336; 167, 100 and 154)**

*Organisers: Dr Jed Meers and Dr Hayley Bennett*

#### **Symposium proposal**

The front-line of the welfare state is increasingly not a letter, phone call or face-to-face visit, but an online user-interface. The UK's government's flagship 'Universal Credit' is not alone in this 'interface first' welfare bureaucracy: countries across the world are increasingly relying on apps and websites to manage initial applications and the ongoing management of social security entitlement.

Across two sessions, each with 3 papers, this symposium explores the impact of this dramatic change to front-line interactions between social security recipients and the state. A growing social policy literature examines the use of algorithms, AI, and automation in social security decision-making - however, this focus can sometimes neglect other important aspects of digitally mediated interaction and access to social security entitlement. We therefore focus here on digital interfaces.

### **336**

#### **Digital encounters of welfare-to-work: examining Australia's online employment services system**

*Corey Carter, Sarah Ball, Michael McGann  
University of Melbourne, Parkville, Australia*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

There is now a 'digital turn' in activation, characterised by the growing use of algorithms, machine learning, and online platforms to deliver public employment services. While claimants' interactions with advisors have long unfolded under the shadow of information management systems, algorithmic profiling, and computerised case management tools, recent transforms in welfare governance have shifted from forms of screen-level bureaucracy to new forms of system-level (Zouridis et al 2020) or machine bureaucracies in welfare-to-work (Considine et al. 2022). Characteristic of this is Australia's Workforce Australia employment services system, introduced in July 2022, which has seen almost half of all jobseeker claimants serviced via an automated online service with no face-to-face contact, or human interaction. This 'digitalisation' of employment services – unique internationally for the degree of automation involved – is heralded as reducing the transaction (e.g. travel/wait times) and potentially psychological costs (e.g. stigma of attending appointments) that participants experience interfacing with the welfare-to-work system. However, there are concerns that the automated nature of these encounters may be producing a more stringent enforcement of punitive behavioural conditions while restricting opportunities for citizens to contest decisions or for activity agreements to be adapted to the nuanced complexities of people's real lives. Digitalisation, in short, may accentuate the demanding elements of activation while restricting access to enabling supports through digital exclusion and new administrative burdens. This study examines how automating welfare-to-work reshapes the balance between the demanding and enabling elements of activation, such that 'digitalisation' constitutes a change not just in the medium of welfare-to-work encounters but also in the nature of activation and citizens'

experience of social citizenship. The study draws on original empirical research with approximately 60 former and current participants in Australia's new Workforce Australia digital service.

**167**

**Digital First Universal Credit street-level discretion within screen-level implementation: staff and claimant perspectives**

*Laura Robertson*

*Poverty Alliance, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Alasdair Stewart, Sharon Wright*

*University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Digital welfare delivery sparks strong debate. Advocates praise its technological necessity, efficiency and cost-saving potential while critics point to gaps in digital access and literacy, highlighting the sinister side of automation and algorithmic discrimination. Either way, the implementation of Twenty-first Century social security has moved away from traditional face-to-face 'street-level' bureaucracy towards 'screen-level' interfaces. The UK was at the forefront of systems innovation with the 'digital first' delivery of Universal Credit as the core working age benefit for those in and out of work, combining elements for housing and childcare with income transfers and wage top ups. In this paper, we present new qualitative evidence from a JRF-funded research project on how well UC full-service supports people in Glasgow. Fresh empirical evidence is drawn from 28 in-depth interviews with 19 Universal Credit claimants and three focus groups with a total of 23 Jobcentre Plus staff. We find that instead of ensuring standardisation, digital Universal Credit involves high levels of work coach discretion, with variable outcomes even within one city. Both staff and claimants had concerns about the system being unmanageable for many people. Claimants reported feelings of isolation and dehumanisation.

**100**

**You Reap What You Code: universal credit, digitalisation and the rule of law**

*Sophie Howes, Claire Hall*

*Child Poverty Action Group, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

In 2023, Child Poverty Action Group published research *You Reap What You Code*, a comprehensive examination of the universal credit (UC) digital system and the extent to which it upholds rule of law principles. This research looked at many aspects of the UC digital interface, including the UC digital claim form, and the online journal, which claimants use to manage their awards.

This presentation will consider some of the tensions that have arisen between the social security legislation that underpins UC, which is decision-specific, and the UC digital interface, which doesn't reflect the legislation on which it is built. Using evidence from the research, this presentation will outline some of the problems that arise due to this mismatch, for both claimants of UC and officials who are responsible for administering the system. These problems include issues with record-keeping, communicating decisions, and challenging decisions. Taken together, they signal a worrying direction of travel where the legislative framework that governs our social security system, and crucially give individuals rights within that system, are cast aside to make way for 'simple' and 'accessible' digital platforms.

**Analog support for digital inclusion: the administrative and relational experiences of military veterans claiming social security benefits**

*David Young, Lisa Scullion, Philip Martin, Celia Hynes, Joe Pardoe*

*University of Salford, Salford, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The administration of social security benefits in the UK is increasingly digitalised with Universal Credit claimants now primarily interacting with Department for Work and Pensions staff through an online portal. The need to ensure digital inclusion is widely acknowledged, usually meaning that claimants have access to the internet and the ability and means to use it. However, digitalisation also normalises an administrative relationship between DWP and claimants often at the expense of relational human interactions. For specific groups such as military veterans, this can increase barriers to understanding between them and DWP and often requires a support organisation or family member to mediate their claim. This paper will draw on qualitative longitudinal data from interviews with military veterans to examine how they experience interactions with the DWP over time. We argue that digitalisation has increased the administrative nature of claimant interactions and creates a barrier to understanding the specific needs of military veterans as well as other claimants with complex needs.

**Symposium 81 - Climate Change and Social Policy Futures: A Climate Justice and Social Policy Group Symposium (papers 331; 337 and 82)**

*Organisers: The Climate Justice and Social Policy Group*

**Symposium proposal**

Drawing on the urgency and insights highlighted in recent scholarly work, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's warnings and advancements in eco-social policy debates, we stand at a pivotal moment in the integration of social policy, climate policy and climate justice, with the potential to significantly influence both academic research and policy formulation.

This symposium offers a unique opportunity to engage with scholarship in this critical and rapidly advancing field, ensuring that social policy not only responds to but also anticipates the challenges posed by climate change. In light of the overarching theme of the Social Policy Association Annual Conference - "Social Policy Futures," the symposium provides contributions that not only reflect on current methodologies and findings but also envision future directions for research. Our session considers a broad spectrum of social policy research, particularly those that enhance our understanding and capacity to shape more equitable and sustainable futures. In recognising the urgent need for a nuanced exploration of climate justice, our contributions critically engage with the systemic roots of climate injustice, including the critique of capitalist frameworks.

**331**

**Integrating equitable climate action within social policy: reflections from an international collaboration**

*Harriet Thomson, Alice Mah*

*University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Alana Griffith, Winston Moore, Debra Joseph*

*University of the West Indies, Saint Michael, Barbados*

**Abstract of Paper**

From megadroughts and sea level rise to heatwaves, wildfires and species loss, climate change affects us all. However, the felt impacts of climate change, and climate policies, are unevenly distributed along the lines of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. Disproportionately, it is those least responsible for causing climate change, particularly within the global south, who bear the brunt of its consequences, a stark reality exacerbated by the unjust absence of their voices within academic and policy discourses. As a discipline, social policy should be at the forefront of efforts to build a more equitable and sustainable future for all, yet as the work of the UK Social Policy Association's Climate Justice and Social Policy group has shown, there is an urgent need to mainstream climate change within all activities of the social policy discipline. Teaching is a particularly significant, yet so far underutilised, area of the discipline for advocating for climate justice in terms of solidarity, education, and decolonialising climate policy debates, including loss/damage/reparations, especially at a time when British universities increasingly refer to decolonising research and curricula, but often fall short in enacting transformative changes. Drawing from an international collaboration between the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the University of Glasgow (UofG), in this talk we critically reflect on what it means to advocate for climate justice within teaching and research, while recognising positionality. Practical examples are given from work to integrate sustainability within the UWI and UofG curricula, before ending with broader recommendations for mainstreaming climate action within the discipline.

**337**

**Harmonizing Waters. Tailoring Climate Change Mitigation Strategies for Indigenous Communities in the Global South: A Scoping Review of the Literature”**

*Gerardo Arriaga Garcia*

*QAHE, Birmingham, United Kingdom. Solent University, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Climate change poses unprecedented risks to indigenous communities worldwide (Sahu, 2022), with those residing in flood-prone areas in the Global South facing particularly acute challenges. This working paper presents the preliminary results of a systematic literature review focused on climate change adaptation policies in the Global South, focusing on those tailored to the needs and practices of indigenous communities. Emphasising the implications of these policies -or the lack thereof- this review critically examines their impact on local economies and the livelihoods of indigenous entrepreneurs engaged in small businesses crucial for household and community sustenance.

Recent statistics reveal the severity of flooding impacts, with the Swiss Re Institute (2021) reporting economic losses exceeding \$82 billion in a single year, accounting for nearly a third of all losses from natural catastrophes. Additionally Statista (2022) highlights that floods have caused \$299 billion in economic damages globally between 2018 and 2022, underlining the disproportionate effect on marginalised communities. Over 250,000 lives have been lost to floods since 1980, alongside over \$1 trillion in damages (MarshMcLennan, 2021), emphasising

the escalating threat posed by climate change and the need for urgent, effective adaptation strategies. Floods represent a significant challenge, particularly for indigenous populations whose livelihoods are deeply intertwined with their environmental contexts. This increasing vulnerability is exacerbated by climate change and extractive economic activities into flood-prone regions, posing significant threats to economic security, prosperity, and societal wellbeing.

Drawing upon the latest research, including works by Raworth (2017) and Barkin (2023), who advocate for “radical” ecological economics, and Ejarque and Palmisano's (2023) exploration of alternatives and resistances within the capitalist paradigm in rural settings, this working paper identifies the critical need for culturally attuned and ecologically sustainable climate mitigation social policies. Indigenous communities, with their deep-rooted knowledge and sustainable living practices, embody invaluable resources for climate adaptation and resilience. However, the systemic roots of climate injustice, notably through exploitative capitalist frameworks, severely undermine these communities' adaptive capacities.

In conclusion, this working paper aims to contribute to the discourse on climate justice and envisions future directions for both scholarship and policy, emphasising the necessity of embracing radical ecological economics and the wisdom of indigenous practices. In doing so, this paper also aims to contribute to the development of more equitable and sustainable futures for indigenous communities who rely on entrepreneurial activities in flood-prone regions in the Global South.

**82**

### **Place-based and people-centred: insights for a socially inclusive Net Zero transition**

*Lucie Middlemiss, Anne Owen*

*University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom*

*Carolyn Snell, Kelli Kennedy*

*University of York, York, United Kingdom*

*Emily Morrison, Tania Carregha, Samantha Themini*

*Institute for Community Studies, London, United Kingdom*

*Yekaterina Chzhen*

*Trinity College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The transition to Net Zero marks a radical reshaping of many aspects of everyday life in the effort to reduce human caused climate change. It also has the potential to influence positively a number of social challenges: improving public health, reducing the effects of poverty, increasing wellbeing, and bringing communities together. However, these positive outcomes are by no means a given. Households on low incomes are less resilient than ever following austerity, Covid 19 and the cost of living crisis. In this paper, we report on research undertaken in seven low-income neighbourhoods in Leeds and Newcastle in the UK, in which we ran a series of workshops to understand perspectives and concerns on this issue. We found that people's ability to participate in Net Zero was shaped by the particular neighbourhood they live in (due to its geographical location, local services and infrastructure), by their housing (the building and its tenure) and household (the people they live with) as well as by their lack of funds. It is clear from our data that people are already acting on net zero, taking small measures that help them save money, with the support of family, community and employers. However, they have big concerns about their ability to participate in the more substantial changes they can see ahead. Ensuring a successful Net Zero transition for low-income neighbourhoods will require a place-based and people-centred approach, tailoring policy to

specific geographic and demographic needs, alongside financial investment in left-behind people and places.

## **Lifecourse**

**145**

### **(De-) gendering employment and family practices through grandparental childcare in Australia, and social policy implications**

*Myra Hamilton, Alison Williams*

*University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia*

*Virpi Timonen*

*University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland*

*Elizabeth Adamson*

*UNSW, Sydney, Australia*

*Lyn Craig*

*University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Over recent decades, increases in maternal labour market participation and dual earner families have seen greater demand for grandparent childcare while parents participate in paid work. This childcare is overwhelmingly carried out by grandmothers. While there is a growing body of knowledge revealing the greater involvement of women in grandparent childcare, little is known about the way in which gendered norms shape intrafamilial, intergenerational decisions about work and care and the distribution of work and care among and between parents and grandparents. Drawing on in-depth interviews with 33 parents and 36 grandparents using or providing grandparent childcare, 58 of whom were in dyadic relationships, this paper aims to fill this gap. Drawing on Janet Finch's concept of 'legitimate excuses' (Finch, 1996) we analysed the ways in which the accounts reflected highly gendered practices for distributing care between women across generations and relegating men to secondary and even tertiary care providers. We also analyse important but less frequent instances of de-gendering practices related to (grand)childcare and paid work, whereby gendered patterns were disrupted or resisted. We end by reflecting on the implications for the widespread social policy investment in OECD countries in boosting the labour market participation of women and older workers. This includes the way in which the gendering of childcare in families, when coupled with inadequate social policy settings, may see an increase in the labour market participation of mothers accompanied by a decline in the labour market participation of older women, undermining the broader policy objectives of boosting the labour market participation of (all) women and older workers.

**230**

### **Different Depression Levels among the Middle-Aged and Older Populations in South Korea: Focused on Latent Profiles of Preparation for Old Age**

*Myeong-Sook Yoon, Kyu-Hyoung Jeong*

*Jeonbuk National University, Jeonju, Republic of Korea*

*Sung-Hee Lee*

*University of Derby, Derby, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

South Korea is a country where there is a rapidly growing aging population with baby boomers transitioning into the elderly group, constituting approximately 18% of the total population in

2023. By 2025, the country is expected to be a super-aged society where the aging population is 21% (Statistics Korea 2022). Entering into an old age is a major life transition while preparing for old age involves lifelong and multidimensional processes that go beyond financial preparation for retirement.

This study is aimed at identifying the preparation processes for old age among middle-aged and older individuals. By using Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) the study is also aimed at verifying the different depression levels based on the classified latent profiles. This study employs the data from the eighth wave of the Korean Retirement and Income Panel Study (KReIS VIII). 2,660 middle-aged (40 to 64 years) and 720 older adults (65 years and above) were selected for the analysis.

The result shows that the middle-aged group is categorised into three subgroups; insufficient (N=263, 10%), good (N=1,437, 54%), and financially insufficient (N=960, 36%), whereas the older group is categorised into four subgroups: insufficient (N=106, 15%), physically good but financially insufficient (N=169, 23%), average (N=215, 30%), and good (N=230, 32%). With regards to the different levels of depression among these latent subgroups, it reveals that among the middle-aged group, the "Insufficient Preparation" subgroup had the highest depression level, followed by the "Financially Insufficient Preparation" and "Good Preparation" subgroups. Among the older group, the "Insufficient Preparation" subgroup showed the highest level of depression. The study argues that it is important to support middle-aged and older adults with the consideration of their respective characteristics, especially encompassing physical, social, and economic aspects of preparation for their old age.

There are two significant implications of this study: first, while most existing studies on preparations for old age and disparities in depression levels adopted a variable-centered methodology, this study embraced a person-centered approach to empirically determine the number of latent subgroups of preparation for old age within the middle-aged and older groups. Second, the study provides fundamental data for establishing support social policy measures, considering a lifelong and multidimensional process for old age and examining differences in depression levels among the latent subgroups.

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### **The Consequences of Young People's Labour Market Uncertainty for Future Pension Savings in Europe: Findings from Comparative Research**

*Dirk Hofaecker*

*Institute for Social Policy and Social Work, University of Duisburg-Essen, Essen, Germany*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Following the gradual shift from primarily public to multi-pillar pensions systems, young people in European countries are increasingly expected to supplement contributions to public pension schemes with own private savings to ensure a decent standard of living for their later life. At the same time, however, many young people in Europe increasingly face difficulties in entering the labour market or finding a stable, permanent and decently-paid job. For young Europeans, the increasing expectation to make savings for older age thus is accompanied by a decreasing ability to make such savings within specific parts of the population. Yet, until now, only little research has explicitly analysed this "long-term link" between current youth labour market uncertainty and future pension outcomes.

Drawing back to findings from two recent EU-funded projects (EXECPT, YOUNG-IN) and using evidence from a recently edited volume based on this research (Hofäcker, D. and Kuitto, K. (eds.) "Youth Employment Insecurity and Pension Adequacy"), the presentation first will outline current trends in unemployment and atypical employment among youth today. In a stylized way,

it will then discuss how such labour market uncertainties are treated in contemporary public and private pension systems and which risks such insecure employment patterns entail for savings behaviour and pension accrual.

Building on this, the presentation will finally develop recommendations on how public policies can mediate the detrimental effect of insecure employment on future pensions savings. In particular, it will discuss possible strategies in social as well as labour market policies.

## **History**

**14**

### **Out of step? Clinical workforce planning, medical school expansion, postgraduate training and health service delivery in England since 1948**

*Michael Lambert, Liz Brewster*

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

Ensuring there are sufficient trained and qualified clinicians for each specialism available and accessible throughout the nation has been a wicked problem for policymakers since the inception of the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948. The problem has been amplified by the separation of responsibilities, both centrally and locally, for each of the constituent elements: clinical workforce planning, medical school provision, postgraduate specialist training and health service delivery. The result has been for this crucial domain of health policy to be out of step with others upon which it is reliant, subject to intermittent and isolated intervention, and leaving the underlying dilemmas in place. These dynamics have been exacerbated by the shift from government to governance, intensifying inequalities in staffing levels, medical student demographics, differential career prospects, and access to quality specialist health care. Whilst the 2023 NHS Long Term Workforce Plan recognised many of these dilemmas underpinning this ‘wicked problem’, they remain starkly visible as the blueprint of reform is slowly implemented, encountering the same set of difficulties. Using the past of the NHS to understand the present and consider its future, this paper explores the interrelationship between the four elements of clinical workforce planning, medical school numbers, postgraduate specialist training and health service delivery in the NHS. Based on local, regional, and national archival sources covering each of the four components, it offers a narrative showing their interrelationship which are contextualised in place over time. The paper concludes by considering how the underlying assumptions which have perpetuated clinical workforce inequalities can potentially be addressed through reorienting governance structures and processes, both spatially and organisationally, to better align with the aim to provide comprehensive, universal, accessible and free-at-the-point of use care for the whole population.

### **Supplementary sources of funding for the NHS in England and Wales: the contribution of prescription charges, charity, and private patient fees, 1948-23**

*John Mohan, Helen Abnett*

*University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

*David Clifford*

*University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The UK's National Health Service (NHS) is often thought of as one in which funding was derived largely through direct taxation. In practice non-statutory sources of funding for health care did not disappear following the establishment of the service in 1948. The best-known of these sources were prescription charges and income from private patient treatment. Both of these have been controversial at times, and the subject of efforts at abolition, but both have remained part of the funding mix. Charitable sources of income were never proscribed and eventually active fundraising was permitted, after 1980.

Little is known about long-term trends in these three sources of income, and this paper reports on research in which we have constructed a 75-year time series of data on these three sources of income for the NHS in England and Wales, which we compare with trends in GDP and trends in NHS expenditure. We describe the process through which these data were assembled – a process dogged by NHS reorganisations and changes in accounting practices, which requires careful attention to ensuring consistency over time, especially with regard to charitable sources of income.

In our paper we therefore:

1. Describe the growth of these three categories of supplementary funding for the NHS, drawing attention to key break points and to connections between these and changes in NHS policy;
2. compare the respective growth of these contributions to NHS finances over time, to the growth of NHS spending itself, and to the growth of GDP
3. assess their significance relative to the NHS budget; a conventional view of charitable fundraising, for instance, has been that it makes a trivial contribution but, in practice, it is a subject that has received less attention than prescriptions and private patient income even though its proportionate significance, at times, is comparable.

The research contributes to wider debates about changes in public policy towards the NHS and in particular whether or not certain initiatives constitute a break of slope (in other words, simply an acceleration of existing trends) or a breach of principle (put another way, whether efforts to raise funds in these ways constitutes privatisation).

### **Policy and practice regarding fundraising for hospital charities in the UK: 1960s to 1990s**

*Rosemary Cresswell, Bernard Harris*

*University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The Health Services Act of 1980 has often been regarded as an important turning point in the history of charitable support for the UK's National Health Service and it has been thought that this also had implications for the voluntary sector more generally. Mohan and Gorsky (2001: 96) argued that 'the Health Services Act of 1980 introduced two major innovations: health

authorities could organise their own charitable appeals; and they were empowered to use Exchequer funds to pay for the costs of launching [them]'. This was seen as simultaneously liberating the NHS and threatening other voluntary activities (for example Brenton 1985: 66). However, evidence for the direct impact of the Act on hospital finance is mixed. During the 1980s, the sums which were directly associated with the new powers rose substantially, but they still constituted only a small fraction of the total value of the sums associated with other sources of 'voluntary' income, such as gifts, donations and legacies (see e.g. Lattimer and Holly 1992: 95).

This paper places the impact of the new Act in a more long-term context. It looks at the history of attempts to introduce new forms of fundraising via suggestions for the establishment of lotteries since the 1960s, before looking at changes to the taxation of charitable gifts in the 1980s and 1990s. It pays particular attention to the fundraising activities of Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (GOSH), and explores the extent to which changes in the role of fundraising were driven by the development of new fundraising technologies.

Our research draws on papers from the UK's National Archives, oral histories with politicians, a witness seminar, Home Office reports, and contemporary publications regarding fundraising practice. Although charitable income might have increased as a result of the 1980 Act, the paper examines the extent to which these changes might have occurred anyway by considering the extent to which previous policies either permitted or encouraged hospital donations in earlier periods.

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## **Families 1**

**29**

### **Effect of Family Policies on Fertility Intention: A Survey Experiment Towards Young Adults in Two China's Mega-cities**

*Shuyun FAN*

*The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Global societies face persistent challenges due to a low fertility rate, projected to decline from 2.4 to 1.9 this century (United Nations, 2020). Family policies such as birth subsidies, tax exemptions, maternity leave, parental leave, and childcare support have been implemented to encourage fertility intentions and behaviors (Bergsvik et al., 2021). China also struggles with low fertility rates, with a record low of 1.3 in 2021, falling below the replacement level (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). The increasing cost of raising children contributes to a notable decrease in fertility intentions among the young Chinese (Wang et al., 2016). Consequently, China needs to develop effective family policies based on the experiences of other aging countries.

This study focuses on the potential of five existing family policies as a solution to China's low fertility rates. A multi-factorial vignette design was employed to examine the impact of these policies on the fertility intentions of young adults following the reversal of the One-child Policy. Fertility intention, measured by the intended number of children, served as the dependent variable. The study used a full factorial design, considering five policy factors at two levels, resulting in 32 policy scenarios. To cover all conditions, eight survey sets, each containing four hypothetical policy scenarios, were created. A total of 4,000 respondents aged 18 to 24 were recruited through an online survey platform, with equal representation from Beijing and Shenzhen, resulting in 16,000 respondent-vignette cases.

The findings from an ordered logit model revealed that direct birth subsidies, tax exemptions for newborns, and free childcare provisions had a significant positive impact on the fertility intentions of young Chinese adults, particularly when it came to more than one child. However, extended maternity leave and extended parental leave did not significantly influence fertility intentions. The study explored demographic variations, including city selection, gender, marital status, and educational level, but found no significant difference in fertility intentions under policy stimulation. Additionally, the research demonstrated that individuals' reflections on family policies supporting increased fertility intention varied across different data collection periods.

This research contributes to enacting future family policies as universal welfare in China megacities. The findings underscore the importance of targeted policies, such as birth subsidies, tax exemptions, and childcare, in addressing low fertility rates in China. They also highlight the need for continuous evaluation and adaptation of family policies, as individuals' perceptions of these policies may evolve over time.

**30**

### **How Does Leave Policy Length Shape Individual Fertility Preferences? A Parenthood Penalty Perspective**

*Ke Meng, Linrui Zhong*

*Tsinghua University, Beijing, China*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Persistently low and declining fertility rates portend worrying futures. Despite that various countries have extended leave policies to promote fertility rates, the anticipated increase has not been realized, signalling a disconnect between policy intentions and outcomes. Examining the impact of leave policy length on individual fertility preferences helps understand this discrepancy, as fertility rates are ultimately the culmination of numerous individual decisions. Existing research has revealed that leave policy length impacts individual fertility preferences through various mechanisms, such as emotional bonding with children and the distribution of caregiving responsibilities. However, the role that parenthood penalties -the detrimental effects of parenthood on individuals' labour market outcomes- play in the impact of leave policy length on individual fertility preferences has not been thoroughly explored, possibly due to the neglect of research contexts beyond societies with equal gender roles.

This paper fills the intellectual gap by examining how leave policy length affects the relationship between parenthood penalties and individual fertility preferences, particularly in societies where personal aspirations conflict with traditional gender norms. This paper selects China, where "compressed modernity" intensifies the tension between individuals' pursuit of self-actualisation and traditional gender roles, as the research context to examine the research question. Using the skill specificity of occupations as a novel measurement for parenthood penalties, this paper employs multilevel models to analyse data comprising 6311 employed

individuals across 30 provinces from seven waves of the Chinese General Social Survey (2010-2021).

The findings show that in societies where individual aspirations clash with entrenched traditional gender norms like China, while longer maternity leave exacerbates the negative influence of motherhood penalties on women's fertility preferences, longer paternity leave reduces this effect. However, neither the length of maternity nor paternity leave significantly affects the relationship between fatherhood penalties and men's fertility preferences. The research findings provide new insights that in such societies, the limited effectiveness of extended leave policies in boosting fertility rates is attributed to the inherent gender inequalities in the labour market. Therefore, this paper concludes by discussing how the research findings can inform countries such as China, Japan and South Korea in adapting their leave policies to promote gender equality in the labour market and consequently raise individual fertility preferences, ultimately advancing towards better futures characterised by not only improved gender equality but also increased fertility rates.

**190**

**Spending on family support, early help, and youth services that work for reducing child welfare interventions in England: when, where, and for whom?**

*Calum Webb*

*University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

This paper presents the findings from a three year research project estimating the effectiveness of greater spending on preventative children's and young peoples' services for reducing rates of child welfare interventions, defined as varying degrees of social work involvement up to and including a child being placed in care. Despite significant interest in this question, analyses are often contradictory due to a substantive methodological problem that is not always addressed adequately in quantitative research. The study found strong evidence that greater spending on these services is effective for reducing child welfare interventions, and that cuts of around £210 per child between 2009-10 and 2021-22 are associated with around 6,300 more children in care nationally (7.7% of the care population); 3,100 more children being placed on a child protection plan (6.1%); and 1,300 more children 'in need' (0.3%) than we would expect in 2021-22 had spending stayed at its 2009-10 level. However, the effect of greater spending varied dramatically over time, place, and across social divisions. Spending on preventative services was least effective between 2012-13 and 2016-17 and most effective and consistent before 2011-12, despite (or perhaps because of) policies such as the Troubled Families Programme and the establishment and influence of highly individualising 'early intervention' science that best characterise the policy paradigm at the time. The effects of spending also vary dramatically across the country, with increased spending leading to more interventions in some local authorities, not fewer. Spending on these services also tended to reduce rates of children looked after more among male, ethnic minority, and older (16+) child populations, specifically and especially where these services helped to mitigate systemic and structural factors like child poverty. This means that extensive cuts of more than half of what was spent per capita in 2009-10 under the coalition government and successive Conservative governments has disproportionately affected children in these populations.

## **Healthcare 1**

**12**

### **Spaces of Equality: Universal Healthcare, Trust and Redistributive Preferences**

*Tobias Schillings*

*University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper explores the relationship between universal healthcare and individual perceptions of social and public trust by conceptualising universal policies as 'spaces of equality' that shape citizens' relationship both vertically with the state and horizontally with society. In using healthcare as a case study of wider universal welfare programmes, the paper establishes a theoretical link between public trust and the support for redistribution as a political economy mechanism behind social expansion – with trust acting as a mediator in the relationship between universalism and the political support for redistributive policies.

In relying on a novel Healthcare Universalism Index (Schillings and Sánchez-Ancochea 2023) to measure varieties of universal healthcare provision across the world, and on data from the World Values Survey (WVS) and the European Values Study (EVS), the theory is tested using multilevel regression models across 108 countries.

After establishing a strong association between universal healthcare and social trust, the analysis highlights that a combination of improvements in universal healthcare and trust is necessary to strengthen the support for redistributive policies. With the precondition of trust, universalism has a significantly positive relationship with individuals' preferences for both taxation and social security. As such, the study finds evidence for the hypothesis of 'virtuous cycles of universalism' that universal policies can strengthen social and public trust by creating 'spaces of equality' which, in turn, can foster cross-class coalitions for supporting redistribution.

**13**

### **Progressive versus Competitive Democracy: Examining the Political Determinants of Universal Healthcare**

*Tobias Schillings*

*University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The achievement of universal health coverage (UHC) for all stands at the centre of the international development agenda, for example as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Still, processes of healthcare reform remain inherently political rather than technocratic and face a variety of political economy barriers. While the literature has consistently highlighted the central role of regime type and especially democratisation, it remains poorly understood which specific attributes of democracy are conducive for achieving truly universal healthcare systems.

This paper examines the political determinants of universal healthcare and explores the role of left-wing, progressive forces and electoral competition for determining universal health coverage and healthcare spending. In using healthcare as a case study for broader universal welfare reform in the Global South, this paper hypothesises that electoral competition, through the mechanism of mobilising cross-class political coalitions for social policy expansion, is the key democratic driving force for achieving comprehensive and universal policy reforms.

Drawing on the novel Healthcare Universalism Index (Schillings and Sánchez-Ancochea 2023) to measure varieties of universal healthcare provision across the world and the Varieties of

Democracy (V-Dem) dataset, the theory is tested for a large panel of countries. As such, the paper finds evidence that democratisation or left-wing governments alone are often necessary but not sufficient conditions; instead, the existence of competing political forces is crucial for advancing universal policy reform.

**74**

**The Political Dynamics of Healthcare Services Privatization in South Korea: Beliefs, Interests, and Adversarial Coalition Building**

*Do Kyung Kim*

*Seoul National University, Seoul, Republic of Korea*

**Abstract of Paper**

Why do policy actors engage in the policy process, and why do conflicts arise instead of fostering concession and collaboration? These enduring inquiries within the policy sciences discipline prompt exploration. While traditional theories such as pluralism and the policy network model have predominantly explored the interests of policy actors, the Advocacy Coalition Framework places emphasis on the role of policy actor's beliefs in motivating their participation. Nonetheless, these theories converge on investigating either interests or beliefs as the primary motivators for policy actors' engagement in the policy process. This paper seeks to examine whether policy actors are exclusively driven by either interests or beliefs or if their involvement stems from a combination of both. Interests and beliefs intertwine, compelling policy actors to partake in the policy process. This paper regards interests and beliefs as mutually reinforcing motivations underlying policy actors' engagement in policy making. Against this backdrop, this paper aims to dissect the motivations propelling policy actors' involvement in the privatization of healthcare services in South Korea. Spanning a decade and traversing three distinct political regimes with disparate ideological orientations, this case has garnered considerable attention from various policy actors.

The privatization of healthcare services transcends mere policy alteration, constituting a foundational overhaul of the healthcare system in Korea. Consequently, a multitude of policy actors have participated in the debate, driven by diverse interests and beliefs. They have forged adversarial coalitions, engaging in contentious debates to advance their respective agendas. Thus, understanding the motivations behind policy actors' participation and coalition formation during this discourse is imperative for comprehensively grasping the overall substances of the healthcare privatization debate in Korea.

**Methods 1**

**5**

**Trauma-Informed Research- Engaging vulnerable and marginalised populations ethically, compassionately and effectively.**

*Rebecca Hamer*

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**Abstract of Paper**

Trauma-Informed practice is increasingly prevalent in the rhetoric of best practice guidance when working with a variety of vulnerable populations including in substance misuse, the criminal justice sector, looked after children, survivors of abuse and homelessness. These are all populations where it is critical that social policy researchers engage with and access responsibly and efficiently, informing the development of policies and practice that can improve

the wellbeing and outcome of historically marginalised and underserved communities. By recognising and responding to the permeation of trauma and PTSD symptoms throughout these populations and their experiences at individual, community and systemic level, social policy research can conduct research that empowers these populations while providing the optimum insight into their needs, challenges and experiences.

However, trauma-informed research is an under-recognised and under-developed area, despite having huge potential for social policy research practice and future directions. If we are to recognise the prioritisation of trauma-recognition and response in future strategic objectives (including in the NHS and at national and local government level), this must bridge between practice and research. Drawing on the presenter's experience researching with traumatised populations in partnership with clinical experts in PTSD, this paper proposes a framework for conducting trauma-informed research, offering a powerful and ethically and methodologically transformative future direction for social policy research with often hard to engage, vulnerable communities.

**17**

### **The role of social policy research in enacting future welfare services: focusing on elicitation and sharing previously tacit knowledge**

*Ibrahim Mahajne*

*Zefat Academic College, Zefat, Israel*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

**Context:** My previous critical study showed that national welfare service reforms produced restricted achievements for the Palestinian minority in Israel. This finding is explained, inter alia, by policy planning according to irrelevant universal 'Western' knowledge.

The lecture calls for social policy researchers to focus on the process of elicitation (revelation, expression, access, capture, or extraction) of knowledge from the covert (tacit, implicit, or hidden) layer to the overt (explicit, codified, or formal) layer. This is because sharing previously tacit knowledge is essential for policy planning for minorities' social services that lack adequate knowledge, especially in heterogeneous societies.

**Method:** The case study describes and explains strategies used by minority social workers to share previously tacit knowledge and highlights the importance of these processes. It poses the question: How do social workers, working with children and youth in welfare bureaus, share previously tacit professional knowledge? It relates to three sub-questions: 1) What hidden knowledge was revealed by social worker in the field of at-risk children and youth in the last three years? 2) What is the importance of sharing this knowledge for the field? 3) What steps have been taken to share this knowledge?

Qualitative methodology employed purposive sampling to select research candidates from the list of the "Forum of Arab Welfare Bureaus". All 20 children and youth workers who expressed willingness to participate, took part in semi-structured in-depth interviews.

**Findings:** Palestinian social workers exposed tacit knowledge they had revealed and shared concerning prolonged institutional deprivation found in out-of-home settings that dramatically limited their ability to ensure resident minors' rights. This knowledge was shared in four ways, in order of frequency: retention, transmission between colleagues, documentation for the future and publication. Effort invested to share knowledge is insufficient due to inappropriate professional training and lack of a suitable infrastructure and organizational culture.

Interviewees were aware that sharing and dissemination of their previously tacit knowledge could serve three players in the Children and Youth Services: the target population (giving them

a voice), professionals (uniting them for collective action) and government institutions (equipping them with data concerning service gaps for appropriate policy development). Research contribution: Social policy research can contribute to both understanding and shaping better social policies by improving strategies for elicitation and sharing of previously tacit field knowledge.

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### **Why are things this way? A coproduced artwork as social policy research**

*Eileen Alexander*

*London School of Economics, London, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In 2023 six residents of Hackney, East London, came together with an artist and a social policy researcher to take photos in response to a series of open-ended prompts about the cost of living crisis. The pictures sparked a much broader conversation exploring the intersecting challenges participants faced and the hopes they articulated for themselves and society at large. Together the group coproduced the installation *Why are things this way?* Exhibited at the LSE in spring 2024, it presented a selection of the group's photographs alongside fragments of text drawn from transcripts of group meetings and individual conversations.

The paper reflects on the process of developing this participatory research project and producing the final artwork. It discusses how engaging creatively with a subject can make participation in research more accessible to people and motivates participants in a way that leads to their active involvement and the sharing and exploring of rich and unexpected insights. In turn, presenting the research as an artwork makes it possible to reach diverse new audiences and offers the viewer non-literal and non-linear modes of engaging with research findings. The paper argues that bringing together research and artistic practice in this way can help to disrupt an arms-length understanding of the world – offering a direct, emotionally engaged, holistic view of people's lives and their ideas about the world.

## **Youth 1**

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### **Empty convoys? Disabled people navigating lifecourse transitions in the community**

*Catherine Needham, Hayrunisa Pelge*

*University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom and Centre for Care, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper draws on semi-structured interviews with disabled people and their unpaid carer/paid support worker to look at navigating lifecourse transitions. We explore whether the theory of care convoys (Kahn and Antonucci, 1980; Antonucci et al., 2013) – developed in gerontological research and often involving participants in Assisted Living (AL) settings – is applicable to working age disabled people who are living in the community. The concept of care convoys was developed to convey how people travel through life with a shifting network of support, focusing on age related dynamics rather than, for example, being disabled from birth or a young age. A convoy is often depicted as a set of concentric circles, with the person with care needs at the centre and their unpaid and paid care networks in circles around them. We found that for working age disabled people, there were three aspects of the care convoys model that

were hard to apply to their experiences: (1) Whereas the convoy model suggests movement and progression, people were often stuck or blocked in their lifecourse changes; (2) People tended to have small convoys, in that, they were not travelling through life with a rich array of support that the care convoys model suggests; (3) It was not always obvious who was at the centre of the convoy; disabled people and carers/support workers were offering each other mutual support. One interpretation of our findings is that the care convoy model needs to be adapted to make it more applicable to working age disabled people who are living in the community. However, another is that the normative assumptions in the convoys literature about progression foreground a critical engagement with the limitations of life for disabled people who often experience accumulative barriers when attempting to change their lives.

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### **Multifactorial Influences on Social Isolation Among Young Adults: A Focus on Korean Young Adults**

*Yebin Jeon, Myeong-Sook Yoon*

*Jeonbuk National University, Jeonju, Republic of Korea*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Social isolation has emerged as a major social problem today. However, the impact of social isolation on young adults has received relatively little attention in the literature. Recent studies have shown that young adults report feeling more lonely than older adults. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the social isolation of young adults and to reduce it. To this end, this study focuses on young adults (20-39 years old) in Korea, where social isolation has recently increased dramatically. In particular, we aim to examine the influence of residential, economic, and environmental factors that may affect social isolation, as well as the personal characteristics of young adults. To this end, this study used the STATA 17 statistical programme and conducted regression analysis on 1,667 Korean young adults using secondary data. As a result, among individual factors, young adults in their 30s and unmarried had higher levels of social isolation, and gender had no effect. Among residential factors, those living in the metropolitan area had higher levels of social isolation, and home ownership had no effect. Among residential factors, the level of social isolation was higher among those living in the capital area, and home ownership had no effect. Among economic factors, the more negative the prospects (future economic status), the higher the level of social isolation, while home ownership, type of employment (regular permanent position), and household income had no effect. Finally, in terms of environmental factors, the less resources a person had to help in a crisis, the higher the level of social isolation, while experience with government services had no effect. The most influential factors were residence in the capital area, marital status, age, prospects (future economic status), and resources to help. These findings confirm that there are various dimensions of factors that affect social isolation among young adults. This suggests that in order to reduce social isolation, it is necessary to provide interventions based on the area of residence and individual factors of young adults, as well as policies that support them to maintain a stable state.

## **Paper Session 2 - 15:55–16:55**

### **Symposium 277 - Just futures of care and work: policy ‘solutionism’ and the adult social care workforce (papers 271; 274 and 272)**

*Organiser: Erika Kispeter*

#### **Symposium proposal**

This symposium focuses on one area of the (increasingly devolved) welfare state in the UK: adult social care. In the contemporary ‘polycrisis’, policies are facing the challenge of redesigning social care to be more equitable while maintaining the sustainability of the current system. By focusing on the case of the care workforce, this symposium draws on engaged research to explore experiences of paid care, the role of ‘magic concepts’ (Pollitt and Hupe, 2011) in social care solutionism, and the necessity of both just care and just work in ‘socially just futures’.

The first paper (Kispeter and Hussein) analyses how stakeholders from the UK's four nations predict and imagine the future of social care, with a specific focus on policymaking and implementation. The second paper (Vicario and Brookes) reflects on four research methods used to uncover workforce innovations in the fragmented care system, emphasising the role of pragmatism and creativity in social policy research. The third paper (Whitfield, Kispeter and Hamblin) analyses case studies with care providers to critically explore the digital imaginary in policy. Together, the projects aim to contribute to improving the lives of care workers, and to capture scenarios, trends and practices shaping the future of care work and, with it, the whole of the social care sector.

#### **271**

#### **Identifying ‘hidden’ phenomena for social policy research: methodological reflections from a project exploring Long-Term Care workforce innovation.**

*Serena Vicario, Nadia Brookes*

*Centre for Care, Sheffield, United Kingdom, Centre for Health Services Studies, University of Kent, Canterbury, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Identifying extent and nature of innovation is a key concern within human sciences. In social policy, the interest in innovation has recently intensified, due to the need to provide new responses to pressing challenges facing the welfare systems. These include changing demographic trends, with growing population with Long Term Care demands, and widespread staff shortages. Innovation may help to address these issues, but detecting it in the social care domain remains problematic (e.g., due to sector fragmentation and competitive dynamics characterising the services marketisation). In management studies, several methods to locate innovation have been developed, but seldom tested in social policy. The key issue addressed by this paper is the application and usefulness of four methodological approaches to detect innovation, focusing on those connected to the LTC workforce. We will critically discuss the use of a bibliometric index (Literature Based Innovation Output Indicator), stakeholder consultation, systematic examination of social care awards, and documentary internet search.

Using a large electronic database, we retrieved 83 potential workforce innovations developed between 2020-2022 (33 in 2020, 36 in 2021, 14 in 2022). We discussed the topic of workforce innovation with 24 stakeholders affiliated to 15 UK-based organisations. The stakeholders suggested 77 potential new practices and provided insights on the role that innovation may play in addressing future workforce challenges. Following a stakeholder's advice, we consulted the lists of winners of 11 major UK-based social care prizes, locating 92 award-winning initiatives.

Finally, we conducted an online search of accredited internet websites, and selected 16 projects with innovative elements. In total, 296 potential LTC workforce innovations were retrieved and grouped into ten clusters (e.g., ‘Recruitment and Retention’, ‘Improvement of working conditions’).

Based on the outcomes produced, we argue that the four approaches may be adapted to locate innovation in social policy domains facing challenges like those described. Moreover, we would make the following methodological recommendations: i) Defining and clarifying how innovation should look like is crucial for identification purposes; ii) The methods have strengths and limitations and are useful primarily when used in combination. This allows retrieving innovations at different system levels, and internally validating mutually supplementing data; iii) The methods do not replace primary data collections, necessary for understanding innovation in-depth.

To retrieve innovation for social policy research, we propose the adoption of a creative, flexible and pragmatic methodological approach. This proved suitable to detect relatively rare and isolated phenomena, as LTC workforce innovations.

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**‘Tech has become an obsession’: exploring the digital imaginary in social care contexts’**

*Grace Whitfield, Kate Hamblin, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

*Erika Kispeter, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Digital technology has been positioned in policy publications as a ‘solution’ to issues of unmet need and workforce supply issues in the social care sector, with a particular focus on digitising social care records and use of monitoring systems (Wright, 2021; Glasby et al, 2022). In government discourse, technology is presented as inherently innovative and associated with increased efficiencies – constructing a digital imaginary of care. This paper contrasts this imaginary with actual implementation and effects of technology, drawing on three case studies of care providers in England, alongside interviews and roundtable events with stakeholders working in health and care commissioning, unions, care providers, sector bodies, think tanks, and charities. We ask: what digital technologies are local authorities, care providers, and individuals using? What are the implications of this use on the care workforce, i.e., in altering tasks and the quality of jobs? Who benefits from technology use, and what are the risks? Through these inquiries, we analyse the co-constitution of care and technology. For example, technology is designed with particular conceptions of ‘good’ care in mind, but it also shapes practices of workers and people using care services in line with those conceptions. Beyond care, there are co-constitutions between technology and disability and ageing (Peine and Neven, 2021), as well as between technology and ideas of ‘good’ work. The findings also provide insight into imaginaries of a ‘good’ welfare state. The policy focus on presumed cost-saving abilities of technology in the already quasi-marketised sector indicates, we suggest, an ideological shrinking of state functions and a paucity of political will to pursue more meaningful reform.

### **How to solve the adult social care workforce crisis in the UK? Stakeholder views on social care policy reforms**

*Erika Kispeter, Shereen Hussein, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

While a public debate on social care in the UK has not taken place, there is consensus that ‘something must be done’ to solve the crisis of social care. As part of a study conducted at the ESRC-funded Centre for Care, we consulted stakeholders from the four nations of the UK about social care policy reforms, with a focus on what implications past and current reforms had for the care workforce. Stakeholders included representatives of trade unions, associations of social care providers, sector bodies (e.g., Skills for Care), charities representing people drawing on social care and their informal carers, as well as researchers at universities and think tanks. In this paper we are presenting the analysis of the stakeholder discussions, drawing on rich empirical data. We have adopted a discursive approach and conducted policy frame analysis (Fischer, 2003; Verloo, 2005). A policy frame is defined as an organising principle that transforms information into a structured and meaningful problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly included. When coding the transcripts, we asked questions, such as: What did stakeholders diagnose as the key workforce-related problems in social care? What did they identify as the cause of a problem? What policy actions did they propose as (part of) the solution? Who were the key actors involved in the proposed solution?

The paper makes two interconnected contributions to social policy analysis. First, it contributes to debates about social care in the UK: we will compare and contrast the policy frames we have identified in the stakeholder discussions, focusing on the proposed solutions. We have identified ‘transformative’ frames that propose radical change to social care and ‘incremental change’ frames that do not challenge the status quo. Second, the paper contributes to the literature on the values driving social care policymaking in the UK (e.g., Needham and Hall, 2023). Frame analysis has enabled us to unpack the normative claims which were encoded in stakeholders’ statements: by identifying certain aspects of reality as problematic and proposing changes towards a more desirable state of the world, frames are always normative and value driven.

### **Digital social policy 1**

### **Exploring the Role of Physical and Digital Mobilities in Social Exclusion within the Context of Urbanisation and Digitalisation: An Examination of Individuals’ Skills, Infrastructure Performance, and Social Ties**

*YUMING ZHANG and Tiago Moreira, Department of Sociology, Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom*

*Jonathan Wistow, Department of Sociology, Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom. Wolfson Research Institute for Health and Wellbeing, Durham, United Kingdom. Durham Research Methods Centre, Durham, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Urbanisation and digitalisation actively reconfigure individuals' social exclusion (SE) status. This shift is attributed to the increased speed of information and material exchange facilitated by technological applications. It remains unclear how changes in physical mobility (PM) and digital

mobility (DM) will rearrange individuals' mobility practices and culture, influences from social ties, and how such rearrangement interacts with the urban contextual environment to shape social, civil, and production engagement. Thus, this paper combines geographic information system (GIS) and qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to explore the complex causal pathways for SE.

We collected self-reflective data through an online questionnaire from 739 respondents across three cities, covering PM and DM mobility skills (SK), PM and DM performance (Pol), PM and DM social ties support (ST), and social exclusion (SE) in social, civic, and productive activities.

Additionally, we gathered data on infrastructure distribution using a GIS as contextual evidence for city membership. First, we deployed an exploratory regression analysis to examine the interaction effects of ST&SK and ST&Pol on SE. Then, we used SK, Pol, ST, and city membership as conditions and social, civic, and production engagements as SE outcomes in QCA to further investigate the complex causal pathways for social exclusion.

The regression analysis indicated the negative interaction effect of both ST&SK and ST&Pol on SE. By further interpreting coefficients, the regression analysis revealed that without enough level of social ties support, the enhanced Pol causes the SE. However, without good enough Pol, ST can still have positive impact on social inclusion. Combining QCA and GIS analysis revealed that individuals who acquire mobility skills out of necessity, yet whose mobility fails to effectively connect them with social, productive, and civic/political engagements, find themselves at a reinforcing loop of SE. The development of the housing market, the prevalence of digital services, amenities, and transport services can further exacerbate SE for this population. The detailed pathways from ST, SK, and Pol to SE outcomes varies and were shaped by the urban layout and infrastructure configurations.

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### **Drawing policy lessons from Robodebt: Error by algorithm or the politics of welfare austerity**

*Peter Whiteford*

*The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

“Robodebt” is the label applied to an Australian government initiative between 2015 and 2019 designed to increase recoveries of “overpayments” made to social security recipients. Robodebt involved data-matching historic records of fortnightly benefit payments made to individuals with past annual income tax returns, identifying discrepancies between these records. It reduced human investigation of the discrepancies, with the automatic calculation of overpayments for many individuals based on a simple algorithm that averaged earnings over the relevant year, followed by raising of a debt against those individuals. This led to the initiative being labelled on social media and in the mainstream media as “Robodebt”.

Following complaints from many of those affected, there were multiple investigations and inquiries, and a Federal Court Case which ruled the policy unlawful – that is, the “overpayments” were not overpayments. The government paid back more than \$1,000 million to more than 400,000 people after conceding the largest class action settlement in Australian history. The subsequent government appointed a Royal Commission, which reported in July 2023 and made 57 recommendations to improve the administration of the social security system. An additional sealed chapter of the report recommended the referral of individuals for civil action or criminal prosecution.

This paper argues that Robodebt was a “policy fiasco”, as it undermined rather than protected the integrity of the social security system, and the outcomes could have been foreseen at its

inception. The objective of this paper is to clarify the structural factors in Australian government Budgetary and welfare policies that created the deeper environment that resulted in this “shameful chapter in Australian public administration”.

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### **Redesigning Social Assistance Programs in the Digitalized World of the Future: Strategies for Efficiency, Access and Inclusion**

*Didem Koca, Nigde Omer Halisdemir University, Ankara, Turkey.*

*Ulku Istiklal Ortakaya, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Ankara, Turkey*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Redesigning Social Assistance Programs in the Digitalized World of the Future: Strategies for Efficiency, Access and Inclusion

Objective: This study aims to provide strategies for the future design of social assistance programs in today's rapidly advancing world of digitalization. The focus is on how social assistance programs can be integrated with digitalization and how this integration can improve efficiency, access and inclusion.

Significance: Digitalization offers great opportunities in the field of social assistance. However, existing social assistance programs need to be rethought in order to make effective use of these opportunities. This study will provide social policy makers with important insights to help them understand the role of digital technologies in social assistance and develop policy recommendations for the future.

Research Question: Which strategies can improve efficiency, access and inclusion in the digitalization process of social assistance programs?

Methodology: This study will focus on a literature review and analysis of the digitalization process of existing social assistance programs. It will also examine good practice examples from similar transformation processes and share lessons learned from these examples.

Findings: The findings of the study will include the challenges faced in the digitalization process of social assistance programs and recommended strategies to overcome these challenges. In addition, lessons learned from digitalization strategies implemented in different countries and recommendations for future research will be presented.

Conclusion This study aims to contribute to developing policy recommendations that will shape the future of the digitalization process in the social assistance field. It is recommended that future studies evaluate in more detail the impact on the effectiveness, reach and inclusiveness of social assistance programs.

### **Symposium 97: Responses to increasing socio-economic insecurity: income support strategies (papers 136; 149 and 229)**

#### **Symposium proposal**

The topic of economic insecurity reappeared with great frequency in the scientific and political debate following the Great Recession. Job instability and other labour market changes, changes in family structures, the increasing unsustainability of the housing market in urban areas, the structural weaknesses of households or the weakness of available welfare buffers brought economic insecurity to the centre of the debate. Economic insecurity has been conceptualized in different ways, but the common traits are associated to the risk of suffering economic losses leading to hardship in maintaining certain standards of living, to the point of jeopardising, in the most serious cases, the financial sustainability of households. Despite the economic recovery in the 2010s, the Covid pandemic has opened a new chapter of insecurity such as forced layoffs and the emergence of furlough scheme to address short-term lockdowns. Structural

insecurities due to a rise in the gig economy, an overheated housing market and labour flexibility remained and have been amplified through the rising cost-of-living.

Governments have tried in different ways to respond to new challenges. Indeed, welfare and employment policies can play a significant role in softening such impacts. However, at the same time policy makers (at both national and local level) face budgeting constraints, potentially hampering reforms and much needed interventions. The combination of the raise of economic insecurity and fiscal constraints also leads policy-makers to having make choices on which groups and risks should be targeted with new or reformed safety nets.

This symposium will focus on policies and strategies developed to support individuals and households facing income instability and/or struggling to make ends meet or to face unexpected expenses.

In particular, this symposium seeks to explore issues such as:

- Reform of unemployment benefits;
- Introduction of minimum income schemes;
- Political debates around minimum income schemes reforms;
- Perverse effects of reforms such as institutional mismatches between labour market changes and welfare arrangements, causing raising insecurity;
- Localized responses.

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### **Debt, poverty and living standards in Great Britain**

*Elaine Robinson, Juliet Stone, Matt Padley*

*Loughborough University, Loughborough, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The relationship between debt, poverty and living standards is complex. Since 2008, there has been a rise in debt for essential needs to supplement inadequate income. Conversely, servicing debt may tip households below an acceptable standard of living as debt repayments cover a greater proportion of their income. However, little research has been done to examine the impact of debt and debt repayments on living standards.

This research used the Minimum Income Standard (MIS) as a benchmark to analyse the interwoven relationship between debt, poverty and living standards in Great Britain. We utilised longitudinal income and debt data from 35,000 people over a ten-year period to examine the role of debt across demographic groups.

Those who have arrears for utility bills, council tax and rent show a high risk of respondents being below the MIS threshold, indicating that these households are entering into indebtedness to meet basic needs, rather than to materially improve their living standards. It is mostly working age households that are affected by bill arrears, reflecting that those of pension age are less likely to have any debts than those of working age.

Influential factors over who is pushed below the MIS threshold due to debt repayments include: the presence of children (especially to lone parents), sickness or disability, or adverse life events, such as the loss of employment or relationship breakdown. However, accounting for debt repayments pushes people further below the MIS threshold in all economic activity categories. Notably, the employed show the greatest increased risk of being pushed below the MIS threshold when debt repayments are considered. This emphasises that employment is not necessarily a route out of poverty and deprivation.

These findings have policy implications for debt collection and how poverty is measured. Universal Credit (UC) advances (issued to enable claimants to cope during the 5 weeks without payment) are later deducted at source from payments at a rate of up to 25% of the UC basic

allowance. This places an additional burden on households who need to access the advance to make up for the lack of adequate income. Furthermore, measures of poverty need to incorporate the impact of debt repayments to reflect lived experience.

**149**

**What would you give-up to introduce a Universal Basic Income? Insights from a methodological project eliciting public preferences for income-based policies**

*Neil McHugh, David Bomark, Rachel Baker, Neil Craig, Ruth Lightbody and Cam Donaldson, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Verity Watson, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, United Kingdom*

*Clare Bambra and Victoria McGowan, Newcastle University, Newcastle, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Universal Basic Income has come to prominence in the UK as a means of redistributing resources to reduce income and health inequalities. A Universal Basic Income provides a regular, unconditional cash payment to all individuals in society. This would provide a new form of societal safety net by providing a base level of financial support. However, alternative income-based policies exist that, for example, are targeted at those below a poverty line and/or require obligations to be met. Currently, we lack insight into what type of income-based policy the general public prefer when income and health outcomes are made explicit and what, if anything, individuals would give-up to see a new income-based policy implemented. We present results from an NIHR funded development project focused on designing questions to elicit preferences for Universal Basic Income and competing income-based policies. A mixed-method, face-to-face survey was undertaken with 50 members of the general public across Scotland and England. This included a ranking exercise of six different income-based policies (Universal Basic Income, Minimum Income Guarantee, Negative Income Tax, Targeted Basic Income, Participation Income and Universal Credit), Willingness to Pay (WTP) questions and qualitative questions to explore rationales. Our results suggest it is feasible to elicit public preferences for income-based policies using stated preference questions that require respondents to make trade-offs between income-based policies with different policy characteristics and when health and non-health outcomes are made explicit. Rankings suggest that a Negative Income Tax is most preferred on average and Universal Basic Income divides opinion. However, there is also evidence of preference heterogeneity as respondents have different preferences for different policy characteristics (i.e. for universal policies or those with obligations) and for different forms of the same policy characteristic (i.e. universal or targeted policies). WTP findings also suggest there is no clearly preferred policy. Evidence of preference heterogeneity suggests that a future larger, nationally representative study asking the general public stated preference questions with trade-offs to elicit their preferences for income-based policies should be combined with deliberative methods. Such evidence could provide much needed new insights to inform policymaking around implementing potentially transformative income-based policies.

## **Towards a second recalibration of means-tested income support in Spain? The creation of the IMV**

*Manuel Aguilar Hendrickson, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain*

*Ana Arriba González de Durana, Universidad de Alcalá, Alcalá de Henares, Spain*

### **Abstract of Paper**

In 2020, in the midst of the Covid19 pandemic, the Spanish government created the Ingreso Mínimo Vital (IMV, Livelihood Minimum Income), Spain's first nation-wide minimum income scheme.

Means-tested income support for the working age population was reformed in the 1980–1990s in what may be considered a significant recalibration of the Spanish welfare state. This series of (often ill-coordinated) reforms brought about a complex and fragmented system with two main components, targeted unemployment assistance benefits and regional minimum income schemes. This "system" was built on the cleavage between non-contributory (means-tested) social security and social assistance, roughly aligned with the cleavage between "poor unemployed people" and the "socially excluded". The cleavage was compounded by the former being a responsibility of the central government and the latter of regional governments. We have analyzed this elsewhere (Aguilar-Hendrickson & Arriba González de Durana, 2020).

This set of benefits worked all the way up to the Great Recession without any strong debate, aside from limited criticism about the inadequacy or the limited coverage of benefits for some groups. The Great Recession deeply impacted a large section of low income groups, and the limits of the benefit system brought about pressures for change from the European Commission, trade unions, NGOs and political parties.

Several reform proposals appeared between 2014 and 2019. Two of them have been particularly significant. On the one hand, the AIREF and the Ministry for Inclusion and Social Security have advocated a deep restructuring of the system, integrating all benefits into a single program, adjusting means-testing and making it fully compatible with work. On the other hand, the Ministry of Labor and trade unions have advocated for an improvement in coverage for both "subsystems", but keeping them separated and limiting compatibility of unemployment assistance benefits and jobs.

In this paper we analyze the reform proposals presented in the aftermath of the Great Recession and the implementation of a limited reform between 2020 and 2024, and how a complex multilevel governance arrangement has influenced its results.

Aguilar-Hendrickson, M., & Arriba González de Durana, A. (2020). Out of the wilderness? The coming back of the debate on minimum income in Spain and the Great Recession. *Social Policy & Administration*, 54(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12605>

## **Symposium 238: Dynamics of devolved health policy in the UK (papers 224; 216; 245 and 312)**

*Organiser: Ellen Stewart*

*University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

### **Symposium proposal**

In 2024, it will have been 25 years since significant social policy powers were devolved to Holyrood, the Welsh Assembly and Stormont. In the early years of UK devolution, studies of social policy divergence flourished, but there has been markedly less scholarly attention paid to the drivers and consequences of this divergence in the last decade. As part of a broader project of collective reflection on Scotland's health policy past and future, Strathclyde's Centre for

Health Policy (CHP) is proposing a symposium at the Social Policy Association's 2024 Conference on devolved health policy across the UK.

Our particular focus on health policy reflects the fact that it was an area with relatively little divergence before devolution, yet has been described as 'the most significant policy area to be devolved', with evidence of intra-UK experimentation and learning (Smith and Hellowell 2012) 2012). One assessment of divergence identified significant shared goals and approaches in the devolved nations, with English health policy increasingly standing apart (Greer 2016). There is, accordingly, significant interest in understanding how and why policy in this area has evolved in the post-devolution years and what we can learn from this, both for future health policy and for other areas of social policy in which devolved powers have recently increased (e.g. social security).

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### **The path not taken – devolution and health service reform in Northern Ireland**

*Ann Marie Gray*

*Ulster University, Belfast, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Post the reintroduction of devolution in Northern Ireland in 1998 health policy developments have been characterised as relatively inactive, with less divergence from Westminster health policy than observed in Wales or Scotland. The health and social care system has been caught in a series of organisational reviews, with the Northern Ireland Executive struggling to articulate, craft and implement policy. This policy inactivity has generally been argued to be the result of the political instability and focus on constitutional issues which has defined devolution in the jurisdiction. This paper explores other potential explanations and considers what factors and actions, within the jurisdiction of the devolved administration, can support large scale health care improvements in what is now the worst performing health system in the UK. Areas of focus include: the consequences of political 'distance' from health policy making in Northern Ireland during the period of devolution from 1922 to 1972 and the direct rule years; a lack of clarity about goals and values which has afflicted social policy generally; centralisation and an absence of localism in health policy and delivery structures; and, limited opportunity for public participation.

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### **NHS regimes across the UK as distinct forms of political performativity**

*Ewen Speed*

*University of Essex, Colchester, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper considers two problematisations about the NHS across the UK. The first problematisation considers the NHS as a universal service. This is a powerful trope, one that continues to enjoy widespread endorsement, despite numerous breaches to inherent social practices of universal care (e.g. unwarranted variations in treatment or healthcare rationing). The second problematisation is the UK wide love for the NHS. This affect can be regarded as fulfilling an ideological role, working to 'fix' a particular view of the NHS within the public imaginary.

Using a logics of critical explanation approach, this paper considers how the different UK NHS regimes are utilised as forms of political performativity, adding a political level to the social and ideological problematisations presented above. Consider all NHS regimes (across all jurisdictions, since 1948) as forms of political performativity. If accepted, this suggests a clear

need to explore the ways in which these processes of performativity bring forward different projects of nation and state through their articulation. Of course, the English NHS is different from Northern Ireland, which is different from Scotland which is different from Wales. However, the extent of these differences, (based on minor variations, but where the universal principle remains the same) often reach far beyond the social practices they relate to (e.g., do different bureaucratic models equate to superior provision?). Typically these claims tend to be articulated in or against the 'majority' English model. As such, these forms of political performativity, extend into claims of statehood and even nationhood, constituted of and by healthcare nativism. In turn, this is predicated upon an ideological commitment to the idea of the 'universal NHS' (whatever that might be articulated as). Healthcare nativism processes and practices function to cover over or background many of the contradictions constructed in these claims.

Exploring these processes of political performativity from a critical logics approach illuminates the interplay, overlap, and departure between the different social, political and ideological practices articulated across the devolved NHS regimes in the UK. In turn, this can shed light on the work that political actors look to the NHS to accomplish for them, both directly, and in the context of wider political projects. It is important that we understand these processes if we are to continue to develop our understandings of the complexity of devolved politics and policy in the UK.

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### **Clear blue water? Divergence and devolved health care policy in Wales.**

*Paul Worthington*

*Independent Health Policy Analyst, Newport, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Over the last two decades, health policy in Wales and England has seen significant divergence. The 2009 abolition in Wales of the internal market in healthcare saw the establishment of seven local health boards in NHS Wales, responsible for the health of their local population, and providing or commissioning the full range of health services. This contrasted with the continued market-driven approach in England, exemplified by the 2012 Lansley reforms. This policy divergence in Wales was seen as a deliberately distinctive approach from England and reflective of the different ruling political parties in both countries – a powerful symbolism with health being the biggest single area of Welsh Government expenditure.

This divergence was mirrored in other health-related areas; Wales has seen legislation related to minimum unit pricing of alcohol, earlier adoption of policies on smoking bans and organ donation, as well as the Well-being of Future Generations Act. There were notable differences in approach during the COVID pandemic and there are calls for greater devolution in other areas which impact on health such as social security.

At the same time there are also policy parallels. There was also a high level of co-ordination across the UK during the pandemic in key areas such as scientific advice, PPE guidance, and vaccination policy. More recently, Wales and England have developed separate but markedly similar policies and legislation which aim to create a more collaborative approach to health services procurement.

Wales has a different geography, demography and politics to England, but similar challenges in terms of both healthcare services and public health. Questions arise about the future shape of respective healthcare policy, especially in a potentially changing political landscape. The paper is based on a combination of reviews of published evidence and professional experience.

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### **25 Years of Devolved Health Policy in Scotland: What can we learn from reflecting on early pathbreaking reforms?**

*Katherine Smith, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Ellen Stewart, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In this paper, we report two witness seminars, held in spring 2024, in which we brought together key actors (from politics, the civil service, third sector, and academia) involved in two landmark reforms of Scottish health policy which took place in 2003: the abolition of the internal market in the NHS; and the ban on smoking in public places. These two events were chosen because of their timing in the first post-devolution parliament, and because of their foundational status in shaping the future direction of the NHS in Scotland, and Scotland's sense of itself as a public health leader in policy terms. We explore the context and motivation for these reforms from the perspective of these different actors, and reflect on what they tell us about the enabling conditions for path-breaking reforms. We conclude that the path of post-devolution Scottish health policy has been characterised by two imperatives: first to craft a health system better suited to Scotland's distinctive circumstances, including its geography and its unwelcome status as 'the sick man of Europe'; and secondly to demonstrate that distinctiveness, whether to justify devolution, bolster calls for further devolution or, in the case of SNP politicians, for independence.

### **Social Security 1**

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#### **Becoming Accountable: Relational Power in Public Encounters for Tax Credit Services**

*Sara Closs-Davies, Alliance Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom*

*Koen Bartels, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

*Doris Merkl-Davies, Bangor University, Bangor, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Public encounters are multifaceted dynamics in which relationships between citizens and the State take shape through political struggle for democratic accountability and socio-economic outcomes. Recent work calls for moving beyond understanding public encounters as face-to-face communication but offers a limited conceptual foundation for understanding accountability dynamics in-between citizens and street-level bureaucrats and their implications for power and socio-economic inequalities. We draw on critical accounting research to conceptualise public encounters as a relational nexus of neoliberal discourse, accounting technologies and communicative practices that exerts relational power. Based on a critical-interpretivist ethnography of the UK Tax Credits System, we demonstrate how claimants in significant financial and emotional hardship 'become accountable' for their own tax obligations and welfare. By understanding public encounters in terms of relational power, we offer a critical, interdisciplinary perspective on how automated and punitive social welfare systems turn disadvantaged citizens into self-responsible subjects accountable to the State.

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**When street-level bureaucrats meet privacy rules: dilemmas and coping behaviours in the implementation of social policies**

*Menno Fenger, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, Netherlands*

*Vincent Homburg, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia*

**Abstract of Paper**

Street-level bureaucrats need to balance different demands and logics related to their clients' well-being. The introduction of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) adds a new set of dilemmas to this balancing act: dilemmas related to their clients' privacy. We explore how street-level bureaucrats cope with dilemmas involving clients' privacy rights and infer antecedents and underlying motivations and justifications of these behaviours using analyses of a vignette survey administered to 301 municipal Dutch street-level bureaucrats working in social policy, individual and group interviews. We show that street-level bureaucrats' orientation on clients' needs and emergencies affect coping responses and conclude that clients' privacy interests are not yet an unequivocal and uncontested part of street-level bureaucrats' attitudes and professional corpus.

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**Indentured: benefit deductions, debt recovery and welfare disciplining**

*Daniel Edmiston*

*Autonomous University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain. London School of Economics and Political Science, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The UK social security system performs an important role as a creditor and debt collector for many benefit claimants, with more affected by deductions than formal welfare conditionality or sanctions. At the time of writing, around 45% of Universal Credit claims were subject to a benefit deduction. By comparison, 32% of all UC claimants were subject to conditionality, and 6% of claimants subject to conditionality were experiencing a sanction. Deductions, then, are central to understanding low-income life in the UK. With that in mind, this paper draws on a mixed-methods project to explore the policy rationale, administration and effects of benefit deductions at a particular moment of crisis. Through new analysis of statistical releases, I evidence increasing indebtedness and an Inverse Care Law, whereby UK social security performs worst for those who need it most. Drawing on qualitative longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork conducted at the height of the cost-of-living crisis, I also evidence how deductions affect the lives and trajectories of low-income claimants. Over time, deductions set in motion events that wore away at the resources, resilience and relationships of claimants with many deprived of warmth, light, food and habitable accommodation. Deductions often compelled claimants to ration, go without or prioritise debt recovery over the fulfilment of their basic needs, which profoundly damaged their physical and mental health. The analysis offered details how deductions weaponize debt, often in ways that financialise benefit claimants and their entitlements that prove counter-productive to the stated policy objectives of deductions: worsening the poverty-debt trap and pushing people (further) away from the labour market.

## **Symposium 67: Mainstreaming Family Policy: International Perspectives (papers 83; 105; 107 and 79)**

*Organisers: Anna Tarrant and Linzi Ladlow, SPA Family Policy Group*

### **Symposium proposal**

In recent years, the complex and evolving relationship between the family and social policy has become ever more apparent. Families are being made increasingly responsible for the welfare of themselves and their children, in a context of neoliberal social policy and the stealthy privatisation of core services. This creates pressures for families in all their diversity and sustains inequalities within and between them. More recently, there has been an explosion of interest in the extent to which and how, low-income, and indeed all families, have been supported to weather multiple crises, not least the pandemic and cost of living crisis. The crisis of childcare provision and push towards improved parental leave are also high on campaign and policy agendas and are galvanising commentators, policy makers and academics alike. To this extent, family policy has never been more pertinent and indeed visible and yet it remains relatively peripheral as an interdisciplinary sub-field of social policy.

Bringing together shared expertise in this broad thematic area, the SPA Family Policy Group has been set up to establish a stronger platform from which to mainstream family policy; understand policy changes that are relevant to families; and to collate evidence for the purposes of campaigning on, and influencing, policy decisions that impact on diverse experiences of family life. This inaugural symposium, hosted by the Family Policy Group, provides an opportunity to reinvigorate and consolidate a focus on family policy as a core subdiscipline of social policy scholarship. Combining an expert panel (with Anna Tarrant, Alison Koslowski, Patricia Hamilton and Sug-Mee Lee) with 15 minute presentations, the symposium creates an opportunity to revisit past debates, consider family policy in the present and explore future directions for the mainstreaming of attention both to families themselves and to the broad sets of policies that influence on family life both explicitly and sometimes inadvertently. We seek to address the following questions and more:

- What is family policy and what is its place and contribution in social policy as a discipline?
- What are the key contributions being made by Family Policy scholars presently and across which areas of welfare?
- What might be the future of family policy scholarship look like as a mainstream concern, and what are the key priorities for policymakers?

**83**

### **Declining fertility rates and stratified reproduction among women in East Asia: What can we learn from the cases of China, Japan and South Korea?**

*Byung-cheol Kim, Remin University of China, Beijing, China*

*Lianhua Li, Tokyo Keizai University, Tokyo, Japan*

*Namhee Doh, Korea Institute of Child Care and Education, Seoul, Republic of Korea*

*Sung-Hee Lee, University of Derby, Derby, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The paper is aimed at investigating the policy responses followed by the recent declining fertility rates in China, Japan and South Korea, in particular, the impact on the current pattern of stratified reproduction among women in these three East Asian countries. By utilising qualitative policy case studies, it critically examines how each government has contributed to this falling

and stratified reproduction among women. We argue that each government has taken into little consideration intersectional structural barriers that some groups of women and/or younger couples might face resulting in their involuntarily giving up birth due to their socio-economic circumstances, such as lower educational and income levels, insecure employment and/or regions where they are located. While recognising women's reproduction as an individual right, we argue that government intervention should consider the intersectional context of women's decision on giving birth, which could lead to them delaying their pregnancy or involuntarily giving up this goal.

Keywords: lower fertility rates, stratified reproduction, intersectionality, qualitative policy document analysis, East Asia

**105**

### **The influence of family policy on varieties in child protection**

*Brittany Fox-Tomlinson*

*University of Lincoln, Lincoln, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Child protection and children's social care is not often considered 'family policy'. However, comparative policy analyses of family services, including varieties in gendered care (e.g., Lewis, 1992, Pfau-Effinger, 2005) and welfare state regimes of familialism (e.g., Hantrais, 2004, Leitner, 2014), invite us to ask: what is the influence of family policy on child protection services?

By theorising about the relationship between cultural conceptions of the family, family policy decisions and services, and variations in child protection approaches, this research explores how different welfare states might converge on shared systems of child protection policy and practice.

Through a multivariate analysis of defamilialisation measures and child outcomes across 24 OECD countries, a series of child protection 'clusters' have been identified, demonstrating not only similarity in terms of the child protection systems in place, but also of shared cultural understandings of children, their families, and the role of the state. With variations in child protection systems influenced by shared political, social, and geographic legacies between nations, the appearance of clusters asks us to consider how global and regional changes to family policy might indirectly influence the systems that protect the world's most vulnerable children.

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### **Where do the needs of non-resident parents and their children fit in family policy?**

*Katherine Hill, Donald Hirsch*

*Loughborough University, Loughborough, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Policy focus on non-resident parents often relates to the extent of their responsibilities towards children who they do not have full time care for, in particular financial contributions made to the 'primary carer'. The needs of non-resident parents themselves receive less attention, with limited research in this area, and they are overlooked in policy, where a parent who is not the primary carer can be seen as a single person even when they have responsibility for their child some of the time. There are financial implications, particularly for low-income non-resident parents in this situation, as the social security system bases their entitlement to benefits on the needs of a single person. This does not recognise their role as a parent and the needs and costs involved when caring for their child, which are especially relevant when this includes overnight stays. Our research drew on discussion groups with non-resident parents to look at these needs

and costs (using our Minimum Income Standards approach) including for suitable accommodation, being able to do things with the child, getting them from a to b. It highlights that meeting a child's needs involves more than basic practicalities - it's about making them feel at home, secure, comfortable, and maintaining the relationship. We also show that the majority of these costs are additional and have a relatively small impact on a primary carer's costs, as bringing up a child across two households requires more resources overall. Being unable to meet such costs risks the child's needs not being adequately met when they are with the non-resident parent, and potential impact on a child visiting. We consider where Universal Credit and social security support with housing costs could better recognise the needs of parents and children in this situation.

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### **The State of Family Policymaking in the Gulf**

*Ahmed Aref*

*University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The family in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) holds paramount importance, serving as the bedrock of society. This is reflected in national development plans that prioritize the family unit, leading to the inclusion of family-centric policies and programs within national documents. However, rapid societal transformations, encompassing political, economic, and social spheres, are fundamentally altering the structure of families in the GCC. Factors such as urbanization, technological advancements, increased female labor force participation, and shifting demographics are prompting a necessary evolution in GCC family policymaking mechanisms. This paper delves into the key challenges confronting families in the Gulf region, with a particular focus on the policies and programs being developed and implemented to empower and support families navigating these changes. The paper will explore the constraints hindering family policy development within the GCC, including demographic imbalances, the socioeconomic context, and cultural and political considerations. Furthermore, it will examine successful models of specific family policies under social protection schemes, ultimately aiming to illuminate potential policy options for the future.

## **Voluntary and community sector**

**28**

### **Transforming South Africa's welfare regime by transforming civil society: SmartStart, the Social Employment Fund and Early Childhood Development.**

*David Fryer, Rhodes University, Makhanda/Grahamstown, South Africa*

*Claire McCann, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

South Africa has a large and strongly redistributive welfare state (Lustig, 2016). While there is no evidence supporting anti-welfare tropes (particularly that receipt of welfare itself fosters dependency) major questions remain at the system level regarding the nature of South Africa's welfare regime and its role in South Africa's broader development path.

The paper argues that a central structural feature of post-apartheid South Africa is that it has drifted into a distinctly two-tiered liberal welfare regime. 'Welfare capitalism' serves the minority who can afford private provisioning. The 'welfare state for the poor' has two self-limiting features confining it to an essentially residualist role. Firstly, because it relies on

redistribution rather than on catalysing resource mobilisation by transforming poor communities, limited means are forever diluted by enormous needs. Secondly, it projects bureaucratic rather than democratic embeddedness, with the state delivering to, rather than actively engaging, the poor, creating a regulatory burden that exacerbates the tradeoff between quality of provisioning and reach.

Early Childhood Development (ECD), the focus of this paper, illustrates these features. There is an increasing understanding of the sector's potentially transformative role, both at the micro level and as part of a system-shift to a social investment welfare state. Recognising this, the government passed legislation in 2015 targeting universal access to high-quality ECD by 2030. However, ECD access and quality gaps have actually increased (with only about a third of 0-4-year-olds in poor communities having access to any ECD outside the home), reflecting the two constraints. In particular, the state's relationship with the non-state ECD sector has been characterised by an attempt to impose an inflexible regulatory structure that the state lacks the capacity to enforce, and for which it provides inadequate resources.

This paper argues that the key to unlocking these constraints is the so-called fourth pillar of the welfare diamond (Ravazi, 2007), namely community and civil society. The paper explores an important initiative to empower and transform this pillar in South Africa, focussing on two key actors in this ecosystem. SmartStart, an Early Learning social enterprise founded in 2015, has positioned itself as a 'platform' for empowering partners rather than a direct provider and has achieved significant reach (over 100 000 children). The Presidential Social Employment Fund, launched in 2020, provides an innovative model of state funding that works through civil society partners (including SmartStart) and therefore embodies the possibility of democratic rather than bureaucratic embeddedness.

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**Policy research and advocacy in partnership: A case study of the UWS-Oxfam Partnership**

*Hartwig Pautz, Chloe Maclean*

*University of the West of Scotland, Paisley, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

With its focus on the partnership between the University of the West of Scotland and Oxfam Scotland, the paper critically reflects on over ten years of cooperation between the two organisations. For its interest in promoting a 'more equitable and sustainable Scotland', the UWS-Oxfam Partnership has sought to tie together policy research with policy advocacy in order to influence Scottish policy and policy makers. Key principles of the Partnership's activities – for example, participatory research principles – will be outlined.

The paper scrutinises how differing organisational cultures, organisational priorities, and *modi operandi* can sometimes conflict and sometimes complement each other. This presentation will discuss the Partnership's successful and unsuccessful attempts to influence the policy agenda and in doing so, consider the role and significance of policy research and policy evidence in achieving impact. In doing so, this presentation presents an innovative model for social policy research that seeks to create socially just futures.

The paper is based on the presenters' long involvement in the Partnership as its co-chairs and will draw also from internal evaluations undertaken jointly with Oxfam Scotland and Oxfam GB.

**Alternative insights for social innovation policy: A study of community-based innovative projects in the context of social service in Hong Kong**

*Kwok Kin Fung, Suet Lin Hung, King Lai Wong, Yu Cheung Chan*

*Department of Social Work, Hong Kong Baptist University, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong*

**Abstract of Paper**

Social innovation (SI) has been the emphasis of the Hong Kong SAR government ever since its neoliberalist change in social welfare policy in the 2000s. Under the social service sector reform context, SI has generally been seen as new solutions that involve new products, services, or practices to address new social problems. The policy emphasis in SI for the SAR government is the development of social entrepreneurship and cross-sectoral collaboration to create social impact through such innovative initiatives. The government mainly provides seed money or scale-up funding to encourage the involvement of social entrepreneurs from different sectors, including businesses and other professionals and aims to enhance the economic efficiency of the social service sector. However, the maximalist perspective of SI that emphasises enhancing the welfare of disadvantaged groups and their capacities for better use of assets and resources has received less attention and is underexplored in such a context.

This paper explores the influential factors affecting the development of SI initiatives in the context of social service in Hong Kong. The data was from nineteen community-based innovative projects conducted by the NGOs, which joined the “NGO Innovation Hub” (NIH) programme, funded by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC). The research process involved a qualitative design, including participant observation of researchers of the participated projects, qualitative interviews of the workers, and secondary data analysis of the related documents and reports. The findings highlighted the proactive nature and importance of innovative small-scale projects and their experiments and the significance of different community development approaches in providing critical support to relevant target service users and fostering collective actions for community improvement. The resultant findings testify to the significance of replicable small-scale innovative projects in facilitating SI practices as a viable alternative to social entrepreneurship emphasised in the SI policy of Hong Kong. It contributes to the social innovation literature and provides insights for SI policy to practitioners and policymakers in Hong Kong and other East Asian countries with similar entrepreneurial emphasis.

**Education 2****Territorial Governance in the Devolved UK: Education and Social Policy in recovery from Covid 19**

*Margaret Arnott, University of the West of Scotland, Paisley, United Kingdom*

*Jenny Ozga, Jo-Anne Baird, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Covid 19 disrupted education provision globally and highlighted and deepened inequalities. It prompted demands for education recovery planning to go beyond a return to ‘normal’ in thinking about the future shape of provision, including recognition of the impact of family background, poverty and poor mental health on education attainment. These demands highlighted the need for the closer alignment of social and education policy, yet across all four UK education

systems, in the period before 2020, recognition by policymakers of the social factors affecting education outcomes, and of the related contribution that social policy knowledge could contribute to policy had diminished.

For example, in England, the UK Conservative government's policy on education disadvantage has consistently promoted the prioritisation of incessant assessment and a narrowing of the curriculum, while dismissing social explanations of education outcomes (Jones 2020). As the number of children living in poverty has increased significantly, so support for them and their families has steadily diminished. Over 1,400 Sure Start Centres have closed in England since 2010, and while recognition of the impact of poverty on performance is more evident in policy in the rest of the UK (rUK), the period before Covid saw a preoccupation with improving data-based performance, for example in OECD's PISA league tables (Arnott and Ozga 2012, Arnott and Ozga 2019).

After the pandemic, tensions emerged across the UK between policy initiatives that respond to the evidence of social explanations of underachievement and seek to address these challenges and those that focus on a rapid return to 'normal' (Arnott, 2024). We have examined education recovery planning, including the extent to which social policy expertise and knowledge were and are mobilised in planning for recovery. Through an analysis of key policy texts setting out plans for education recovery in the UK's four nations we identify the dominant education recovery narratives that were constructed, the resources-including expert knowledge- that they mobilise or exclude in recovery planning, and the importance of party politics in shaping recovery responses. We adopt an interdisciplinary theoretical framework drawing on social policy and political studies and education policy analysis.

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**Governing for the wellbeing of all children: The role of secondary school governors in England in supporting children at risk of food insecurity**

*Abigail Page*

*London School of Economics and Political Science, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Childhood food insecurity has risen rapidly in England over the last decade, with potentially detrimental short and long-term consequences for children's health and wellbeing, and learning and social justice. The main policy instrument for addressing childhood food insecurity in England is the provision of free school meals to pupils eligible for the means-tested benefit. However, in secondary schools many eligible pupils do not take-up their entitlement and meal quality is often poor.

According to the English Department for Education (DfE), accountability for school food provision, including free school meals, sits with school governing bodies. Reforms of school governance through academisation, have led to significant changes to the governing structures and accountability arrangements in many schools. Within Multi-Academy Trusts diverse models exist, with responsibilities delegated differently between Trust boards and local governing bodies. Little is known about how school governors (in whichever governance model they sit) conceptualise food insecurity within the context of their wider statutory duties for health and wellbeing, learning and tackling disadvantage, nor about the enablers and barriers to governor action on food insecurity.

This paper discusses findings from a comparative case study research project with three schools in the southwest of England with different governance arrangements. It brings together

data from documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews with school senior leaders and members of governing bodies, and surveys of children and staff.

The study finds a high level of awareness amongst senior leadership teams and teachers of the impact of food insecurity on child wellbeing and learning, and implications for school priorities such as behaviour management and narrowing attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. There was little reference to food insecurity within school strategy and policy documentation, but evidence of a range of formal and informal actions taken by school staff in response to student food insecurity.

Governor awareness of school food provision accountabilities varied significantly, with many governors unaware of DfE requirements and guidance. Despite this, some governors did make connections between student food insecurity, school food provision, and student capabilities to learn and be healthy. These governors identified the risks student food insecurity poses to achieving priorities identified within their school improvement plans, particularly with regards to improving outcomes for disadvantaged children. Students, staff and governors raised concerns about the accessibility, quality, and healthiness of school food provision and the extent to which it meets the needs of food insecure children.

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### **Branded school uniform: Is it worth it?**

*Rachel Shanks, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, United Kingdom*

*Matt Barnes, City, University of London, London, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In June 2023, a Children's Society survey found that parents spend on average £422 a year on secondary school uniform and £287 on primary school uniform (BBC News, 2023). This jumps to £482 (secondary) and £353 (primary) when including school uniform, PE kit and bags – higher than the cost of school lunches (CPAG, 2023). The high cost of school uniform can, in part, be put down to school policies that make parents buy branded/compulsory clothing from specialist uniform shops, often exclusive single suppliers, rather than giving parents the choice of buying items at cheaper stores such as supermarkets or high-street chains (Shanks and McKinney, 2022).

In England, 2021 statutory guidance was introduced to ensure the cost of school uniform is affordable for parents. The guidance stated that schools should ensure that their uniform supplier arrangements give the highest priority to cost and value for money and keep the use of branded items to a minimum. Single supplier contracts should be avoided unless regular tendering competitions are run where more than one supplier can compete for the contract and where the best value for money is secured. (DfE, 2021)

In Wales there has been statutory guidance on school uniforms for several years and this was last updated in 2023. The Welsh guidance prioritises the use of generic uniforms and mentions that blazers and caps in particular should not be expected. In Northern Ireland there is non-statutory guidance and policymakers are interested in exploring the idea of a uniform price cap. In Scotland non-statutory guidance is due to be issued in 2024. This follows a national consultation on school uniform in 2022 which received almost 3000 responses predominantly mentioning affordability and sustainability, while primary school children in focus groups were most interested in comfort.

This paper outlines the current policy guidance on school uniform costs in the UK. It then presents initial findings from two local studies that compare the cost of branded/compulsory school uniform items to generic uniform from supermarkets. Finally, the paper outlines the plans for a UK-wide study that maps the market for branded/compulsory school uniform. The

proposed research study will identify the scale of branded/compulsory items in school uniform policies across the UK, collect pricing data from uniform suppliers, test the quality of uniform, and speak to pupils, parents and headteachers to understand whether branded/compulsory school uniform is worth it.

### **Symposium 53: Social Policy Futures through the 21st Century (papers 164 and 55)**

*Organiser: Prof. David Byrne*

#### **Symposium proposal**

This symposium will explore both the context which Social Policy as both an academic discipline and a domain of policy formation and practice will face given the possible trajectories – note emphasized plural – of the global socio-ecological system through the 21st Century. This future will be determined – in the sense not of exact specification but rather of setting boundaries to possibilities – by how we move forward from the era of the Capitalocene when global growth has been driven by energy extracted from fossil fuels in a capitalist market system. We are proposing to offer four papers with the following themes:

The implications of the end of the capitalocene for Social Policy

The Role of Understanding Process in Exploring the Future for Social Policy

Constructing Scenarios as a mode of action research towards a sustainable and equitable future.

The Ethical Issues which arise in predicting and acting towards future states.

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#### **The implications of the end of the capitalocene for Social Policy**

*Eoin Flaherty*

*Maynooth University, Maynooth, Ireland*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper discusses the prospects of achieving a transition beyond the capitalocene, and the potential pathways to achieving this. It is now relatively uncontroversial to claim that the future flourishing of humanity is incompatible with ongoing economic growth. The dominant public policy solutions focus on various strategies of de-carbonization. These are often linked to downsizing or substituting polluting sectors, seeking 'green' alternatives in areas such as transport or power generation. Insofar as policy has expressed a concern for worker's wellbeing, the most prominent expressions of this are in various forms of 'green new deals', 'just transitions', or 'eco-social welfare states'. The preferred concept of 'Capitalocene', as opposed to the geologic 'Anthropocene', centers the forces and relations of production in its account of humanity's position in global ecology. By this model, capital is the principal culprit, and its origins date to roughly between the age of European colonialism, and the British industrial revolution. The concept serves several preferable functions. First, it de-emphasizes the culpability of 'humanity in general', focusing our analysis more on the beneficiaries on the capital side who benefit from monopolies of production, and who derive their returns from wealth as opposed to earned income alone. Such is the extent of this inequality, that the top 10% globally are responsible for 50% of cumulative emissions over the last three decades. Secondly, by focusing on the systemic nature of capitalist accumulation, it provides a sharper account of how our (now globally dominant) mode of production and accumulation depends fundamentally on increased growth – which is inherently materially intensive. What might the end of the capitalocene look like, and what are the pathways to achieving this? I consider this through three related questions. (1) What evidence from history, or from actually existing forms of production, gives hope that alternatives to materially and energetically intensive production

might be possible? (2) How can we deal with a principal challenge to effective policy implementation, namely the current state of inequality and power of the super-rich – not just in terms of income, but of wealth, and the capital-labour share of national income? (3) Given the scale of change required under the ISSPs Representative Concentration Pathways, how feasible is intuitional change, on the timescale mandated by their projections? Will this change be incremental or revolutionary? I hope that by posing these questions, we might better address the incrementalism and institutional inertia of eco-modernism.

**55**

**Constructing Scenarios as a mode of action research towards a sustainable and equitable future.**

*David Byrne*

*University of Durham, Durham, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Scenarios are tools for envisaging futures. Many corporations develop scenarios to guide their strategies for development and their has been some deployment of them by the UK government, primarily in relation to potential pandemic disease. There is one interesting general scenario “Changing Places” (2017) which is rather optimistic in tone, if surprisingly innovative for a UK government publication. There are relatively few scenarios which address the issues which are the general foci of Social Policy as a discipline.

Scenarios are narrative accounts of what futures are possible with a description of what actions are needed to make specific futures come to be. It is noteworthy that corporations are much happier with scenarios than are elected governments because corporations take a long view beyond the limited party political electoral horizons of governments in democracies.

This paper will present an argument for developing scenarios as a tool for popular voice at the level of city regions in the UK (although the method is generally applicable). Currently planning as a process is carried out by a mix of austerity stricken local governments willing to do whatever realty capital wants and unelected Local Enterprise Partnerships in England dominated by traditional economic elites – the new magistracy. In practice city region Mayors are deeply implicated in neo-liberal oriented modes of governance. In the era of the Capitalocene this will not do. Collective development of good potential futures through scenario construction embedded in action research approaches to social transformation is a way of both developing alternative futures and making them part of public debate and political process.

**Paper Session 3 - 17:00–18:00**

**Digital social policy 2**

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**The Impact of Digital Access on Social Welfare: An Investigation with Cluster Analysis**

*Ulku Istiklal Ortakaya*

*Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University, Ankara, Turkey*

**Abstract of Paper**

The relationship between digital inclusion, level of development and social welfare is one of the most important issues facing modern societies. Understanding this relationship is critical for

the future of social policies. In this context, digital inclusion has become crucial for sustainable development, while inequalities in digital access continue to widen socio-economic gaps. This study will cluster countries according to their level of digital inclusion and development to highlight the unique challenges and opportunities for digital equity. By identifying digital access and literacy patterns, the study will provide insights that can guide social policies aimed at reducing the global digital divide. The main objectives of this study are to cluster countries according to their digital inclusion rates and development levels, analyse socio-economic indicators within each cluster, investigate the impact of digital inclusion on socio-economic outcomes, and propose targeted policy interventions to increase digital inclusion. The study will use k-means cluster analysis with World Bank and International Telecommunication Union data categorised according to the United Nations Human Development Index. The statistical analysis will assess the correlation between digital inclusion and socio-economic indicators. In this context, we aim to identify clusters of countries with similar digital inclusion and development characteristics. Arguably, while more developed countries show higher digital inclusion, developing countries may exhibit different needs that require specialised policies. This is because developed countries tend to have more extensive bandwidth infrastructure, higher education standards, and policies with fewer economic barriers to accessing technology. In developing countries, on the other hand, limited infrastructure, low levels of education and economic constraints reduce digital inclusion rates. These results will inform better strategies for harnessing digital technology for socio-economic development and equity. The results will improve our understanding of digital inequalities and inform effective policy-making for better digital equity worldwide. The integration of digital tools, particularly in education, health and employment, requires policymakers to understand how they can apply these tools to improve social welfare. While digital transformation can improve the efficiency and accessibility of public services, developing policies to reduce digital exclusion is a critical step towards achieving social equity.

**280**

### **Digitalisation and job intensity in Europe**

*Albert Varela*

*University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The role of digital technologies in enhancing the monitoring of workers (McGovern et al, 2010), in facilitating multitasking and the acceleration in speed and volume of communications (Green et al 2022), in limiting recovery time and 'on-the-job leisure' (Giménez-Nadal and Sevilla, 2022), or in enabling the temporal-spatial encroachment of work on personal and family spheres (Mazmanian et al, 2013; Kelly and Moen, 2020; Chung 2022) appear as plausible and interrelated mechanisms behind the reported increase in both discretionary and non-discretionary job effort amongst workers (Felstead et al, 2019). While some evidence (Green 2006; Felstead et al, 2019; Green et al 2022) supports this, other research, notably Menon (et al, 2019) is less conclusive and posits that technology alone cannot account for the growth in work intensity, and that managerial practices and workplace regimes (O Riain and Healy, 2023) must be factored in. This paper contributes to this growing body of work by examining the relationship between digitalisation and work intensity across European countries (Gallie & Zhou, 2013; Green et al. 2013) using multiple waves of the European Working Conditions Survey. It uses multilevel models (Meuleman, Davidov and Billiet, 2018) that specifically exploit the nested structure of repeated cross-sectional datasets (Fairbrother, 2014) to model both cross-sectional, cross-national and temporal variation in digitalisation (Kelvyn and Bell, 2015;

Schmidt-Catran and Fairbrother, 2016) as encouraged by Green et al (2022:479). This makes it possible to assess the effect of digital technology on work intensity at the same time as the wider social and economic context is becoming increasingly digitalised. Likewise, contextual level-data on institutional and political economy features of countries can then be used to understand cross-national variation on how digitalisation and intensification are related.

**322**

### **Integrating Digital Inequalities into Social Policy Frameworks: Challenges and Opportunities**

*Ulku Istiklal Ortakaya, Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University, Ankara, Turkey*

*Didem Koca, Nigde Omer Halis Demir University, Nigde, Turkey*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper addresses the challenges and opportunities in integrating digital inequalities into existing social policy frameworks and methodologies. Digital transformation profoundly impacts all segments of society, presenting new challenges and opportunities for social policy researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. The study focuses, in particular, on how digital inequalities in critical areas such as education, healthcare, and labour markets can be integrated into social policy frameworks.

The paper first defines digital inequalities and provides an overview of their socio-economic consequences. Then, it emphasises the importance of addressing digital inequalities in existing social policy frameworks and analyses previous studies on this topic.

The main part of the research details the challenges faced in integrating digital inequalities into social policy research and practice. These challenges include data access, inadequate technological infrastructure, policymakers' low familiarity with digital tools, and inadequate legal and regulatory frameworks. The paper proposes various strategies to overcome these challenges.

Finally, the challenges faced in integrating digital inequalities into social policies and the opportunities that this process can offer are emphasised. These opportunities include more inclusive policymaking processes, more efficient delivery of targeted social services, and greater transparency in policymaking.

The paper argues that integrating digital inequalities into social policy frameworks can play a critical role in enhancing social well-being and strongly calls for this process to be encouraged. In this context, the research results provide an important resource for social policy researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in tackling digital inequalities.

## **Emotions & social policy**

**15**

### **The use of trigger warnings in teachings on social problems**

*Melanie McCarry*

*University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Trigger and content warnings are part of public space. Potentially triggering content, including that related to gender-based violence, suicide, and racist violence, is flagged for audiences on social media, in festival programmes, or through pre-broadcast announcements. However, how and whether these should be used in social policy classrooms has been less discussed.

Questions have been debated about how to prepare students for potentially 'triggering' content in the classroom particularly in relation to the study of domestic abuse and sexual violence for example, but less so in relation to social welfare and related policy development. Specifically what students actually need and/or expect in the classroom has, however, rarely been investigated. Issues are complicated by the fact that in much public debate, trauma, distress and offence have been unhelpfully grouped together. To unpack the practice, purpose and efficacy of trigger of warnings in social science, arts and humanities classrooms, through an anonymous online survey and focus groups with staff and students we investigated: how teaching staff understand, use and/or refuse trigger warnings, in relation to gender based violence teaching content; the classroom experiences and needs of student-survivors in relation to engaging with university classroom content on gender based violence; and the understandings of, and relationships between, trigger warnings, content notes and concerns about distress and offence in university classroom contexts. This paper will consider the findings from this research in relation to teachings on social problems.

**59**

### **How important is the role of emotion in crimes of stalking?**

*Karen Fullerton-Chalmers, Amanda Morrison*

*University of the West of Scotland, Paisley, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Fear as a requirement in section 39 Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act causes complexities within the recognition and reporting of stalking by the victim and by the authorises. This article will explore the factors which contribute to this specifically gender, age, communicative ability, and trauma response as well as recommendations to improve victims' response. When the criminal justice sector investigates a report, they will refer to the requirements in law that have been broken. By doing so, the fear element in stalking cases takes priority and the behaviours themselves become secondary despite the escalation in such behaviours.

Fear is an emotion therefore is subjective to each individual and thus makes it arduous to measure and prove. When considering individuals who have endured lengthy victimisation, their fear level reduces. Trauma plays a role in how victims respond to their victimisation as their brain functions differently. As stalking is a psychological crime, many victims suffer from trauma due to their victimisation. To preserve oneself, trauma victims will dissociate and suffer from memory fragmentations regarding the event so therefore cannot comprehend or recant details which consequentially causes difficulties when reporting.

Gender also plays a role in fear levels as victimised females are more fearful than victimised males. This perpetuates myths around male victimisation and as a result may prevent men from seeking help or reporting and as they do not showcase fear, authorities mislabel their victimisation.

Age can also influence how individuals feel fear. Young people rarely recognise their stalking victimisation as their fear levels is lower than their adult counterparts. This is attributed to brain development. It is vital that this is considered when investigated stalking cases which involve young people, as the 'fear' element may not be visibly present.

Supplementary factors come into play such as someone's ability to communicate emotion effectively i.e., difficulties with learning and/or language. Individuals who may not be English speakers may find it challenging to express their emotions and therefore fear.

Emotion in law does have its place, as without these thresholds are not met. It allows a level of credibility to those affected by a crime to present how the victimisation has impacted their life. However, a key recommendation would be that the justice system understand the factors above when considering fear in stalking cases to ensure that all stalking victims receive the correct legal recourse.

**261**

**'Waging relentless compassion': acts of resistance against welfare cruelty.**

*Jason Pandya-Wood*

*University of Nottingham Malaysia, Semenyih, Malaysia*

**Abstract of Paper**

Have we reached the nadir of cruelty in the articulation, design, and provision of social welfare? Some of us would argue in the affirmative. The spectacle of those with wealth and power standing in unrelenting judgement of those without seems to have plumped the very depths of human decency. In what has been called the 'shattered nation' marked by deep inequalities (Dorling 2023), have we 'abandoned our basic humanity'? (Ryan 2020: 200). Aside from headline grabbing, there is little upside: cruelty manifests in consistent policy failure measured on outcomes and costs, compounded exclusion and the internalisation of stigma.

Looking to opposition parties to lead the charge against welfare cruelty seems at present like wishful thinking. Instead, we are faced with an increasing narrow terrain marked by unimpressive and unambitious political will and imagination.

Yet, if we turn our attention away from the political mainstage, resistance to cruelty and mediation of its effects is in abundance. In what might be one of the most interesting parallels with pre-Welfare State Britain, actors from outside of the State are serving as important firewalls in the intimate spaces where social policy connects with everyday life.

This paper considers the role of the compassionate actors and the strategies they deploy to resist or mediate the unkindest effects of the decisions made by those outermost removed. Examples of resistance are found in acts to promote human dignity in charitable food banks (Pickering and Wood, forthcoming), shifting power imbalances through community organising (Wood 2023) and promoting alternative perspectives founded on compassion (Wood 2024).

What do these seemingly disparate acts teach us about the utility of traditional models of political opposition to inhumane welfare?

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**Symposium 246: Understanding the effects of Universal Credit on mental health in the UK: A multi-institution investigation (papers 148; 244 and 302)**

*Organisers: Andy Baxter – University of Glasgow*

**Symposium proposal**

The introduction of Universal Credit (UC) as a replacement for six existing ('legacy') benefits began in 2013 as a planned phased rollout. At its launch, UC's stated purpose was to prompt more people to enter employment and increase hours or pay, streamline the application process, and reduce fraudulent claims. Previous research has highlighted indicators of harms to mental health of claimants as a result of the new policy and has suggested mechanisms by which these changes may produce these effects.

This symposium aims to bring together three aspects of the quantitative policy evaluation work investigating the mental health effects of Universal Credit. We use multiple data sources across various time periods to conduct comparative analyses of the impact of the phased rollout across the UK. We examine the differential impacts across household types and claimant characteristics, and the potential amendments to the UC system which may reduce harmful effects. We discuss the mounting evidence of the harmful effects specific to the UC benefits system and the need for ongoing changes to reduce the mental health impact to claimants.

**148**

**Impacts of Changes to Universal Credit on Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Difference in Difference Analysis**

*Martha Tindall, Andy Baxter, Peter Craig, Vittal Katikireddi, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*David Taylor-Robinson, Sophie Wickham, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Universal Credit (UC) is the largest reform of the UK welfare system since the Second World War. It streamlines six legacy benefits and tax credits, seeking to simplify claims and encourage employment. Research suggests UC harmed mental health pre-pandemic, potentially due to implementation processes like increased conditionality and lower payments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in recognition of the adversity people were facing, the UK Government made changes to UC, including introducing a £20 weekly uplift and suspending work search requirements. Changes were not made for most legacy benefit recipients. We investigate if pandemic-related changes to UC modified its effect on mental health.

We analysed data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study, a household-based panel study that follows a representative sample of the UK population annually. Data were from 2018, when UC first became available in all local authorities, to 2021, when pandemic-related changes were withdrawn. The study population consisted of working age adults (16-65) who reported claiming legacy benefits or UC pre-pandemic (N=13,750). We compared outcomes in UC and legacy benefit claimants, treating those sampled from April 2020 as potentially exposed to pandemic-related reforms. Mental health was measured using the 12-item General Health Questionnaire, a validated measure of psychological distress, producing scores from 0 to 36. Effects were compared across household structure (lone parents/coupled parents/single adults/childless couples), age (under/over 25s) and country. Analysis followed a difference-in-difference approach using two-way fixed effects linear models, adjusting for confounders including age and sex.

Pandemic-related UC reforms were associated with reduced psychological distress, -0.97 points (95%CI:-1.73,-0.22), relative to legacy benefit recipients. Subgroup analysis showed no difference in effects for under- versus over- 25s or between UK countries. Heterogeneous effects were found across household structures. Single adults and coupled parents claiming UC experienced improved mental health relative to legacy benefit claimants: -1.47(-2.71,-0.24) and -1.75(-3.25,-0.25) respectively. Lone parents and childless couples on UC experienced harms to mental health. This is less certain due to smaller sample sizes: 0.32(-1.36,1.99) and 1.42(-0.56,3.39).

Our results suggest UC improved the mental health of single adults and coupled parents during the pandemic, potentially due to the changes to UC in place at this time. Further research is required to determine impacts on lone parents and childless couples. Findings strengthen evidence to support reducing UC conditionality and increasing generosity as means of improving mental health among socio-economically disadvantaged people in receipt of welfare benefits.

**244**

**Welfare reform and families' wellbeing: Exploring the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit on the mental health of lone and coupled parents with dependent children in the UK with difference-in-differences analysis**

*Maria Marimpi, Sophie Wickham, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom*

*Andy Baxter, Martha Tindall, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

**Background**

To strike balance between the objective of decommodification – e.g. ensuring citizens uphold an acceptable standard of living regardless of individual conditions – and efficient delivery, contemporary welfare states are undergoing significant transformations. Universal Credit (UC) is one of the most radical welfare reforms in Europe, merging six means-tested benefits and tax credits into a single benefit since 2013 in the UK. Qualitative evidence suggests harmful health impacts, particularly for vulnerable groups, such as lone parents, but quantitative evidence is limited. We exploited the phased geographical UC rollout to explore its mental health impact on lone and coupled parents.

**Methods**

We used data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study (2009-2019) for working age adults (aged 18-64) with at least one dependent child ( $\leq 16$  years) living in England, Scotland, and Wales (female: 97.84%). We linked participants based on their month and year of interview to administrative data to identify whether respondents were in a UC-active Local Authority. We

used difference-in-differences analysis to estimate the mental health effects of moving onto UC, comparing families reporting UC or any of the six 'legacy' benefits (treatment group) (N=27,279) to families receiving alternative benefits (comparison group) (N=19,243). We ran separate analyses to disentangle the impact on lone and coupled parents. Mental health was assessed using a binary indicator derived from the 12-item General Health Questionnaire with scores 4 and above indicating persons experiencing higher psychological distress.

#### Results

All treated groups suffered poorer mental health relative to the comparison group between 2009 and 2019. Our difference-in-differences analysis showed significant mental health harms one year after the introduction of UC; families eligible for UC experienced a 4.3% (95% CI 0.2%, 8.3%) increase in psychological distress compared to the non-eligible group. We found a greater effect of 5.5% (0.5%, 10.6%) among coupled parents. Lone parents experienced a 2.5% (-1.1%, 8.8%) increase in distress, although this was not statistically significant, possibly due to lower statistical power.

#### Discussion

UC introduction appears to be detrimental to families' mental health. Reflecting qualitative findings, we found a significant negative impact on couples' mental health and a trend towards significance for lone parents. Given the majority of respondents in our study were women, it is possible that some UC features may be especially harmful to female claimants, including, for example, the joint assessments or the assignment of a 'lead carer'. Further research is required to shed light on these mechanisms to inform policy practices.

**302**

### **Estimating the mental wellbeing impacts of Universal Credit across low-income households using the Annual Population Surveys, 2013-2019**

*Andy Baxter, Martha Tindall, Marcia Gibson, Vittal Katikireddi, Peter Craig, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Maria Marimpi, Sophie Wickham, Ben Barr, David Taylor-Robinson, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom*

*Heather Brown, Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom*

*Clare Bamba, Newcastle University, Newcastle, United Kingdom*

*Mandy Cheetham, Northumbria University, Northumbria, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

##### Background

Income and social security are fundamental determinants of mental health and wellbeing. Universal Credit (UC) is a large-scale reform to the UK's welfare system, replacing six existing benefits and tax credits, currently paid to over 6 million recipients. UC aimed to simplify claiming benefits and to encourage claimants to move into employment. Previous studies have suggested harms to mental health resulting from the new system, via mechanisms such as decreased benefit income, incurred debt and increased stress. Introduction was phased on a geographical basis from 2013 and was available in all areas by the end of 2018 to all new claimants, existing recipients whose circumstances changed and those who chose to switch to the new system. We aimed to identify the effect of UC on mental wellbeing on low-income households by treating the phased rollout as a natural experiment.

##### Methods

We analysed repeated yearly cross sections of the nationally-representative Annual Population Surveys 2013–2019. Mental wellbeing was measured using 'life satisfaction', happiness, life rated as 'worthwhile' and anxiety. We examined respondents in low-income households (less

than £12,000/year household equivalised income; n=245,658), comparing those living in areas where UC had been introduced to those in areas where it had not, using difference-in-difference analyses. In subgroup analyses, we tested for differential effects on under-25s, disabled people, single people, women, non-white ethnicities, people with caring responsibilities, single parents and people with low educational attainment (compared to complementary subgroups). We also compared effects between Scotland, Wales and England, to take account of differences in the way UC is administered.

#### Results

Exposure to UC was associated with lower 'life satisfaction' (-0.06; -0.09 to -0.03), happiness (-0.04; -0.07 to 0.00) and 'life worthwhile' (-0.07; -0.10 to -0.04), and greater anxiety (0.07; 0.03 to 0.12) across low-income households. Single people, disabled people and women saw greater harms across all four outcomes. Young people (aged under 25), people with caring responsibilities and those with qualifications below degree level saw increases in anxiety. There were small, additional harms to 'life satisfaction', 'life worthwhile' and anxiety in Scotland compared to England.

#### Conclusions

Consistent with studies of the effect of UC on mental health, we found evidence of harmful effects of UC across four measures of mental wellbeing. Effects on anxiety were exacerbated across multiple axes of vulnerability. Future adaptations to the UC system should consider potential mechanisms of harm to reduce adverse consequences for mental health and wellbeing.

### **Symposium 267: SPA Employment Policy Group Symposium (Employer practices and labour market realities) (papers 63; 75 and 184)**

*Organisers: Ceri Hughes and Katy Jones*

#### **63**

#### **Emergent Policy Positions on Earned Wage Access; A Sticking Plaster or Lifeline for the Low Paid?**

*Victoria Walker*

*Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Financial well-being (FWB) has been of increasing interest to academics and policy makers alike since the 2008 recession (Brüggen et al., 2017; Fan and Henager, 2022), however, the recent economic climate has evoked a resurgence of interest from employers as they grapple with how best to support employees who might be facing financial hardship. Recent CIPD evidence reports that some employers and HR functions have begun to respond to these pressures by developing FWB policies (Cotton, Marriott and Perkins, 2022).

Within the space of employee FWB, an emergent practice of concern is Earned Wage Access (EWA), which allows employees to be paid accrued wages before their contractual pay date. Advances in financial technology have given rise to a new market of third-party providers who facilitate this service for employers via app-based platforms, where employees can access their wages early in exchange for a transaction fee. Currently these services are mostly commonly procured by employers in low and hourly paid service sector work, such as retail and hospitality, with their adoption becoming more mainstream (Woolard, 2021). Providers claim to provide employees with an alternative to high-cost credit, giving workers with greater control, flexibility and sense of fairness with their wages (Hari and Bhanushali, 2022).

However, several concerns emerge regarding the lack of regulation; users of EWA are not provided with the normal statutory protections and complaints procedures provided with standard consumer lending, and providers are not required to carry out affordability assessments (Woolard, 2021). EWA is currently most commonly used in service sector work which is highly precarious, and while such schemes may provide a stop gap in terms of credit, it does not overcome the unsustainability associated with low wages and insecure working hours. Additionally, regular and unrestricted access to wages in advance will likely leave some low wage workers continuously dependant on wage advances, creating cycles of debt and poverty.

EWA has received very limited attention in the academic literature from employment policy scholars. This research, which is at the preliminary stages, addresses this gap by providing a rapid evidence review of the academic and grey literature, which will give an overview of the current regulatory landscape and policy positions of key stakeholders in the UK and other international contexts. The implications for employment policy, employee well-being, and the regulation of workplace fintech will be discussed, with a research agenda proposed.

**75**

### **Rethinking employer interactions with Active Labour Market Policy: expanding notions of co-production**

*Katy Jones*

*Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Employers are fundamental to the outcomes of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) and related programmes. As interventions traditionally designed to move unemployed people into work, the way employers engage with ALMPs, and the quantity and quality of opportunities they provide are critical to their success or otherwise. A small body of existing academic research has conceptualised employer interactions with ALMPs in various ways (Ingold and McGurk, 2023). Here, existing theorisation tends to treat employers as knowing agents – who are aware of, and choose whether to participate in, particular ALMP-related programmes. For Ingold and Valizade (2015), employers may engage through directly recruiting participants and providing work experience, engaging in either ‘instrumental’ or ‘relational’ ways. Orton et al. (2019) make a distinction between employers as ‘reactive gatekeepers’ or ‘proactive strategic partners’. Van der Aa and van Berkel (2014) conceptualise employers as ‘clients’ or ‘co-producers’ in ALMP. Recognising the status of employers as ‘clients’ of ALMP, Raspanti and Sarius (2021) identify asymmetrical relationships in favour of employers as staff in public employment services develop strategies to secure employers’ cooperation. Existing literature has also tended to explore employer involvement in particular programmes designed for particular target groups, for example young people, disabled people, long-term unemployed (Orton and Green, 2018; Sowa et al, 2015; Scholz and Ingold, 2021), or engagement with related subsidies (Coleman et al, 2014) rather than on ALMP more broadly in particular national policy contexts.

This paper demonstrates that employers’ role in the co-production of ALMP is broader than their explicit participation – encompassing those employers who do not explicitly participate in ALMP, but who may be impacted by it and who through their own actions impact on the outcomes of such policies. This paper extends previous analyses of ALMP-employer engagement, arguing for an expanded conceptualisation of employers as ‘co-producers’ in ALMP, reflecting their broader role in co-creating the conditions within which ALMPs are enacted. It presents analysis of new data generated by the first substantive research focused on employer perspectives and experiences of Universal Credit (the main vehicle for UK ALMP), which included semi-structured

qualitative interviews with 124 employers and policy stakeholders (ESRC Grant Ref: ES/V004093/1).

**184**

**Interrelations and intersections of underemployment's dimensions: lessons for policy**

*Vanessa Fuertes, University of the West of Scotland, Paisley, United Kingdom*

*Vanessa Beck, Levana Magnus, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom*

*Daiga Kamerāde, University of Salford, Salford, United Kingdom*

*Miguel Muñoz, Luis Torres-Retamal, Tracey Warren, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The aim of this paper is to explore the co-occurrence and interrelations of different forms of underemployment. The rise of in-work poverty and underemployment have been characteristic of the UK labour market in recent decades. Latest figures show that over one in five UK workers in 2023 is in severely insecure work (Florisson, 2024), around 60% of those living in poverty are in households where someone works (Cribb et al., 2022), and in-work poverty is increasing (JRF 2024).

There are multiple outcomes from these labour market trends. Underemployment is a key societal risk that makes workers insecure in their daily lives and more vulnerable to economic fluctuations or unexpected personal or societal events. There is a dangerous reframing of expectations, where workers need to be available, whether employed or self-employed, to work in jobs below their potential or preference in terms of hours, wages and/or skills. With regards to its negative financial, health, and wellbeing consequences, underemployment has been considered as more akin to unemployment than employment. While research shows that job satisfaction and productivity are affected by job quality and skills underutilisation.

Despite the growth and importance of underemployment, there has been little attention given to the multi-dimensionality of this concept, and to the interactions and overlaps of its various dimensions. Time (or visible) underemployment has often been the focus, but there are other important invisible dimensions of underemployment such as skills and wage underemployment. Our ESRC mixed-method longitudinal study on underemployment and the lived experiences of underemployed individuals in the UK aims to fill in this gap and explores underemployment as a multi-dimensional objective and subjective phenomenon that affects individuals, households, and communities. Initial quantitative findings suggest that the three dimensions of underemployment have grown since 2008, especially skills underemployment (Torres et al., 2023).

In this paper we present the analysis of the first wave of qualitative data from our project. We explore the prevalence and lived experience of the three dimensions of underemployment for 60 individuals working in Bristol, Glasgow, Nottingham and Salford in the hospitality, retail and warehouse, or social care sectors. The paper focuses on how underemployment dimensions interact and compound creating stacks of underemployment and disadvantage that policy needs to understand and tackle. We pay particular attention to combined underemployment dimensions and the choices or 'limiting choices' (Gable and Florisson, 2023) individuals make regarding their working lives.

**Symposium 67: SPA Family Policy Group Launch**

*Sung-Hee Lee, University of Derby, Derby, United Kingdom*

*Brittany Fox-Tomlinson, Anna Tarrant, University of Lincoln, Lincoln, United Kingdom*

*Katherine Hill, University of Loughborough, Loughborough, United Kingdom*

*Ahmed Aref, University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom*

*Alison Koslowski, UCL, London, United Kingdom*

*Patricia Hamilton, University of York, York, United Kingdom*

### **Symposium proposal**

In recent years, the complex and evolving relationship between the family and social policy has become ever more apparent. Families are being made increasingly responsible for the welfare of themselves and their children, in a context of neoliberal social policy and the stealthy privatisation of core services. This creates pressures for families in all their diversity and sustains inequalities within and between them. More recently, there has been an explosion of interest in the extent to which and how, low-income, and indeed all families, have been supported to weather multiple crises, not least the pandemic and cost of living crisis. The crisis of childcare provision and push towards improved parental leave are also high on campaign and policy agendas and are galvanising commentators, policy makers and academics alike. To this extent, family policy has never been more pertinent and indeed visible and yet it remains relatively peripheral as an interdisciplinary sub-field of social policy.

Bringing together shared expertise in this broad thematic area, the SPA Family Policy Group has been set up to establish a stronger platform from which to mainstream family policy; understand policy changes that are relevant to families; and to collate evidence for the purposes of campaigning on, and influencing, policy decisions that impact on diverse experiences of family life. This inaugural symposium, hosted by the Family Policy Group, provides an opportunity to reinvigorate and consolidate a focus on family policy as a core subdiscipline of social policy scholarship. Combining an expert panel (with Anna Tarrant, Alison Koslowski, Patricia Hamilton and Sug-Mee Lee) with 15 minute presentations, the symposium creates an opportunity to revisit past debates, consider family policy in the present and explore future directions for the mainstreaming of attention both to families themselves and to the broad sets of policies that influence on family life both explicitly and sometimes inadvertently. We seek to address the following questions and more:

- What is family policy and what is its place and contribution in social policy as a discipline?
- What are the key contributions being made by Family Policy scholars presently and across which areas of welfare?
- What might be the future of family policy scholarship look like as a mainstream concern, and what are the key priorities for policymakers?

## **Healthcare 2**

**60**

### **Identifying mental health service preferences of potential patients and family members through discrete choice experiments in Hong Kong**

*Juan Chen*

*The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Kowloon, Hong Kong*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Objective: Although a multi-disciplinary approach has been adopted in Hong Kong to cover mental health promotion and the early detection, timely intervention, treatment, and rehabilitation of mental illness, seeking professional help for emotional or mental problems is not a common practice among Chinese people. The foremost challenge to further enhance

mental healthcare is to identify people's preferences in the local context and provide optimal services likely to be utilized by potential patients and family members.

**Methods:** We employed a discrete choice experiment (DCE) design and conducted online survey experiments with Chinese adults residing in Hong Kong (N = 1,006) to examine the preferred choices of people for first-contact care when experiencing mild psychiatric symptoms. A subset of the full design, including 48 choice sets under two hypothetical scenarios, patients and family members—was distributed among the survey respondents. Mixed logit regressions were estimated, and sub-group analysis was performed with the weighted data.

**Results:** Mental health services with a shorter waiting time, lower out-of-pocket costs, recommended by health professionals, and composed of individual consultation/treatment are more welcomed by potential patients and family members. Yet, a large discrepancy exists between potential patients and family members in their preferences for service providers, format of service contact, and family involvement. Nonetheless, respondents with higher levels of distress prefer to visit one-stop community centres or private clinics/hospitals over other service providers and were not against pharmacological treatment.

**Conclusion:** The research provides insights and evidence for policy decisions that would enhance the quality of mental health care and effectively allocate resources.

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**If you build it, will they come? Exploring scientific and technological 'fixes' to the problem of healthcare non-attendance using Bacchi's WPR approach.**

*Calum Lindsay, David Baruffati, Andrea Williamson, Mhairi Mackenzie, Kate O'Donnell, Sharon Simpson, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*David Ellis, University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom*

*Geoff Wong, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom*

*Michelle Major, Homeless Network Scotland, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Missed appointments are often described as a major challenge in healthcare provision – a source of wasted money, inefficient practice, and a contributor to ever-growing waiting lists. While carrying out a realist synthesis into the causes of multiple missed appointments (or 'missingness') in healthcare, we found that both the prevailing policy agenda and the research base on missed appointments were rooted in a particular understanding of the problem and its causes, which in turn has informed proposed solutions. These "problematizations" (Bacchi 2016) suggest that missed appointments are a problem for services caused by patients and their failings - an issue of individual patient (mis)behaviour and (ir)responsibility. This understanding is sustained and perpetuated by research methodologies focused on quantitative analyses of patient characteristics associated with missing appointments, or short qualitative surveys describing in brief their reasons for non-attendance. These in turn are used to promote solutions to identifying and targeting patient behaviour for the benefit of services, but say little of causal significance that might actually inform any interventions. Using Carol Bacchi's WPR approach to policy analysis, this presentation explores how this problematization of missed appointments has been constructed within a frame of "technological solutionism" (Edwards et al 2021), making them amenable to supposedly scientific or technical solutions including behavioural science, artificial intelligence and machine learning. We explore how this representation of the problem has come about, what effects it has, and what it leaves out, arguing that current attempts to intervene are based on such a deeply flawed evidence base that they risk being ineffective – or actively worsening problems of access and health equity for

some patients. Finally, we present an alternative understanding of the problem rooted in addressing health inequalities that might underpin more humanistic and equitable responses.

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**Keeping Away, Staying Away: Stigma and ‘Missingness’ in Healthcare**

*David Baruffati, Mhairi Mackenzie, Andrea Williamson, Catherine O'Donnell, Calum Lindsay, Sharon Simpson, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Geoffrey Wong, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom*

*David Ellis, University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom*

*Michelle Major, Homeless Network Scotland, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Missed appointments have received significant attention across media, policy and research in recent years. Much of this discourse has placed sole culpability for missed appointments in the hands of patients and has focused on the problems which they cause for services. This framing leaves obscured the multiple and substantial barriers which some people face in engaging with healthcare across the UK, and the stark and unequal health outcomes to which these can contribute. Indeed, a recent programme of epidemiological work has demonstrated that people who miss multiple appointments in healthcare typically experience challenging socioeconomic circumstances, have multiple long-term health conditions, and, importantly, face far higher mortality rates than patients who do not miss appointments. We refer to this as ‘missingness’; “the repeated tendency not to take up offers of care, such that it has a negative impact on the person and their life chances.”

We present findings from a follow-up study which has aimed to understand the causes of missingness and develop interventions to address it. This study has focused on a realist synthesis and 60 qualitative interviews with experts-by-experience of missingness and professionals working across health and social care. Drawing on the concepts of candidacy (Dixon-Woods et al, 2006; Mackenzie, 2013) and ‘structural stigma’ (Link & Phelan, 2001; Hatzenbuehler & Link, 2014), we explore the policy drivers of structural stigma and draw on our interview data to explore how it is manifest in the form of substantial barriers to care for people with stigmatised statuses and identities; particularly in a policy context of austerity. Our findings demonstrate that, in doing so, structural stigma works both directly through informal policies and cultural elements, and through initialising, intensifying or failing to address other forms of stigma and discrimination – interpersonal, intrapersonal (Link & Phelan, 2001). While most studies place focus on one stigmatised status (Oliver, 1992; Link & Hatzenbuehler, 2016), we explore these processes across a range of stigmatised statuses and identities in order to more effectively reveal the impact of stigma on missingness. We then consider the implications of these findings for policy and practice, suggesting that a range of interventions are necessary at all levels; foremost, structural.

## **Education 3**

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### **A storm on many fronts: the challenges facing maintained primary schools in supporting additional needs from inside and outside the classroom.**

*Daniel Horsfall*

*University of York, York, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The last decade has been a challenging time for all schools: shrinking budgets, cuts to services[1], demands for higher pay[2], and an explosion in demand for mental health services[3]. All of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic, which has had profound impacts on the cognitive development of children[4], with those from poorer backgrounds being affected the most[5]. Indeed, it has been suggested that communication development in particular has been adversely affected by the lockdowns during pandemic[6] and certainly statutory test scores have declined in and since the post-pandemic period[7].

This paper presents findings from a pilot study involving a maintained school in one local authority, tracing the changing landscape of services available to schools in order to support children beyond typical wave one teaching. It finds that services have indeed become more limited, rationed, and ultimately harder to access as well as more expensive for schools. This last issue is somewhat exacerbated by the shift of some services from local authority provision, to provision from within Multi Academy Trusts.

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[6] Byrne S, Sledge H, Franklin R, et al. (2023). Social communication skill attainment in babies born during the COVID-19 pandemic: a birth cohort study. *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 2023;108:20-24.

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### **Tutoring in the pandemic: Does it widen or reduce education opportunity? Insights from GENERATION**

*Ben Edwards, Maria Jahromi*

*Australian National University, Canberra, Australia*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The educational impact of the pandemic on foregone learning is particularly large for children from low socio-economic backgrounds (Betthäuser, Bach-Mortensen, & Engzell, 2022). Several countries have invested in tutoring – one-on-one or small-group educational instruction – to ‘catch-up’ on lost learning from the pandemic. In Australia, the two states with the most days of school closures - implemented tutoring programs in state government school systems during the pandemic that were targeted at students that were most of risk of learning losses due to school closures. However, the international and Australian evidence suggests that private tutoring on education is far more common in middle- and higher-income families (Entrich, 2020) potentially widening learning gaps.

In this paper, we propose to answer the following questions

- What were the short-term impacts of school implemented and private tutoring during the pandemic on student motivation and student reports of their learning being impacted?
- Does the access and nature of tutoring during the pandemic close or widen educational equity?

To answer these questions, we use data from Wave 1 and 2 of GENERATION – a new youth cohort following the students they transition to life beyond school. We will describe the wave 1 and 2 methodology including the explicit focus on capturing equity policies.

Our preliminary analyses suggest that ‘catch-up’ tutoring was targeted to students from equity groups but private tutoring was used by students from higher SES families. Preliminary results from regression models suggested that ‘catch-up’ tutoring reduced the negative consequences of the pandemic on learning and increased students’ motivation. Our final analyses will include estimates of the impacts of private tutoring and incorporate a more extensive set of covariates to for selection effects.

### **'Going Online': Schooling Experience of Disabled Students in India during COVID-19**

*Anuj Goyal*

*PhD Scholar, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Galvanized against a call for massive economic restructuring to make education fiscally viable, digitally-mediated education has presented itself a possible solution. At the same time, it has been a target of critics who view this shift as a way that largely disregards the questions of social justice. Based on the data collected from sixteen disabled research participants through structured and semi-structured interviews, this paper argues that the measure to shift to online mode of education in India overlooked the concern of the disabled students in an already technologically-constrained situation. The analysis takes inspiration from grounded theory, case study method as well as phenomenological research to develop an understanding of embodied experiences of such students. Deliberate or non-deliberate negligence (indicated by lack of functioning grievance redressal mechanism, access to assistive technology, etc), lack of sensitivity, harassment, discrimination, patronization was found to be rampant in the narratives of the participants. These were not just behavioral in nature, but institutional altogether. It is for

such reasons that most participants preferred offline (in-person) schooling over its digital counterpart. The paper argues that if digital education is the ‘future’, it must hold itself against the standard of being inclusive, affordable, and accessible for those who are forced to come to terms with what the nexus of the State and market decides on their behalf.

### **Symposium 53: Social Policy Futures through the 21st Century (papers 257 and 51)**

*Organiser: David Byrne*

**257**

#### **Social welfare and the ethics of prediction**

*Gideon Calder*

*Swansea University, Swansea, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Social welfare debates are infused with the terminology of contract and reciprocity. Questions of what we owe each other as citizens, the balance between individual and collective responsibilities, relations between generations and the priorities attached to different stages of the life course from cradle to grave – each of these is routinely understood in terms of some kind of social contract. When we address the future, that whole paradigm seems less obviously workable. The sense in which current citizens have obligations to future generations is less obvious, and as we address contexts yet to unfold, and populations yet to be born, any notion of a contract between citizens or generations seems less stable. That instability will be exacerbated if – as is currently the case – there are good reasons to expect quite significant ruptures in the ‘normal service’ of society. Any ‘take’ on a social welfare settlement will inevitably involve prediction: expectations that certain conditions will continue to obtain, that social structures will endure, and that there are principles and values which hold over time, regardless of contingencies. Addressing a future shaped by radical shifts in the climate and its knock on socio-economic effects – such as mass migration and the revising of assumptions about standards and forms of living – the stakes of prediction become that much greater just as the difficulties of predicting accurately become all the more stark.

Our focus in this symposium is on the possible trajectories of the global socio-ecological system through the 21st century. This contribution will discuss the ethics of prediction, in connection with the very idea that we have obligations to the future, such that it could make sense to say that we have a contractual or reciprocal relationship with future generations. Such an idea is not just viable – it is also vital. Prediction is hazardous, but it also inevitable. Future states themselves are lived through the present – and acting towards them is something unavoidable, but also something we need to be better at. And so the ethics of prediction are something with which we are inevitably involved, in each aspect of social policy discourse and debate. This conceptual paper will offer some suggestions for how we might make a better job of it.

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#### **The Role of Understanding Process in Exploring the Future for Social Policy**

*Corinna Elsenbroich, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Jennifer Badham, Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Uncertainty is one of the hallmarks of complex systems. But we have to make decisions on a daily basis. In order to make good decisions, we think about what the future might look like, we try to predict. Prediction can either be done like a painting, where all the activity goes into the static, fixed endpoint. Alternatively it can be done like a story, telling the narrative of how the

future might come about. This contribution discusses different methods for these two activities of prediction with a focus on policy making.

#### Painting the Future

Painting the future is an activity focussed on the end product, on describing the expected future state of the world. It is not interested in how the world got to that state but focuses instead on estimating the verisimilitude of the depiction with the real world. Methods for this kind of prediction are inherently extrapolative, e.g. trend analysis and statistical methods, data driven simulation. These methods allow us to extrapolates existing trends into the future, including estimating uncertainty of the extrapolation. Integration of interventions is done via causal inference or extrapolating experimental evidence about the “size of impact” or “rate of change”.

#### Narrating the Future

Narrating the future is an activity uncovering the processes that lead from the current state of the world to a range of future states. The final state of the world is secondary in this activity. Methods for this kind of prediction are explorative, e.g. contribution analysis, process tracing, agent-based modelling, theory of change. These are methods allow us to understand causal links that constitute chains of events leading to the future. Interventions can be thought about as possible changes to events.

When it comes to policy making, we argue that we should put our resources into refining our narration of the future as it gives us a better understanding of agency, activities and barriers that might be in our way of change.

**Thursday, 4th July, 2024**

#### **Paper Session 4 - 09:00-10:00**

##### **Symposium 113: Ending Child Poverty: Lessons for the UK’s Future. (Papers 98; 175 and 162)**

*Organisers: Stephen Sinclair and Morag Treanor*

##### **Symposium proposal**

The current UK political landscape provides a unique opportunity and need for insights into effective policies to reduce child poverty. The Welsh Government has recently launched a new child poverty strategy. A report on the 2016-2022 Northern Ireland poverty strategy is scheduled for publication, and a new administration in Stormont raises the possibility of a new strategic initiative being developed. The Scottish Government is at the halfway point of its ‘national mission’ to reduce child poverty and is currently incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into law. And an imminent general election raises the possibility that a future UK government will give greater attention to the chronic and pressing challenge of child poverty. In this context, the proposed Symposium aims to build upon the recent Child Poverty Action Group report Ending Child Poverty: Why and How? by examining research and analyses on policy initiatives to reduce child poverty

The Symposium comprises three presentations which share research findings on the main causes of poverty and lessons from interventions addressing poverty from research teams from across the UK. Collectively they will stimulate an informed discussion of the future of anti-poverty policy.

### **Causes of and Solutions to Child Poverty in the UK**

*Sophie Howes, Child Poverty Action Group, London, United Kingdom*

*Kitty Stewart, London School of Economics, London, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In December 2023, Child Poverty Action Group published a seminal guide on child poverty in the UK and how to end it. Kitty Stewart, one of the guide's authors, will set out the key causes of child poverty and how the actions of successive governments have meant that child poverty is now at record levels. Kitty will cover trends and levels of child poverty, which children are most likely to be living in poverty, the impact on children, and how the UK compares internationally.

Sophie Howes, Head of Policy at CPAG, will outline the policy solutions that are needed to prevent and reduce child poverty. Sophie will look at lessons from the past, and how we can learn from successful policies in other countries. Sophie will also reflect on the current political environment and opportunities for the future of this vital social policy agenda.

### **In-work poverty and the children's rights agenda in Scotland: families' experiences and policy implications from the Serving the Future project**

*Sophie Shields, Chirsty McFadyen, Jennifer Davidson, Emma Congreve, Helen Schwittay*

*McArthur, Allison Catalano, Calum Fox, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Laura Robertson, Fiona McHardy, Anna Hirvonen, Poverty Alliance, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper will present findings from a 3-year research project on in-work poverty in Scotland reflecting on the children's rights implications for Scotland. With the recent incorporation of the UNCRC into domestic law in Scotland, public authorities must take proactive steps to protect, respect and fulfil children's human rights as well as putting accountability mechanisms in place for children and young people. This will have vast policy and practice implications for duty bearers across Scotland. In this paper, we will present qualitative longitudinal findings on the challenges faced by parents working in hospitality, the lowest paid sector in Scotland. Parents have shared experiences of financial insecurity affecting their ability to buy essential items, struggles with accessing adequate housing, and challenges around childcare. It is clear that in-work poverty has implications for the realisation of children's rights, but what rights are at stake and how can public authorities, such as local councils, respond? In this presentation we will open a space to think critically about the child poverty and child rights' agendas in Scotland. A collaborative study by the Fraser of Allander Institute, the Institute for Inspiring Children's Future and the Poverty Alliance, Serving the Future is working with public services and hospitality workers and employers to identify and implement meaningful change to reduce the risk of in-work poverty for families.

### **Missing out: Exploring the administration and uptake of the Healthy Start scheme in Northern Ireland**

*Alexandra Chapman, Ciara Fitzpatrick*

*Ulster University, Belfast, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The Healthy Start scheme provides food welfare to pregnant women and children under four years old in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Introduced in 2006, It is targeted at low-

income families and young mothers under 18 years of age. It provides families with a payment card to buy milk, fruit, vegetables and multi-vitamins are also provided for free. The scheme is interesting for several reasons, first, it is now administered by the NHS Business Services Authority in England (NHSBSA), despite 'milk tokens' historically falling within the scope of the social security system (Welfare Food Scheme). The scheme is devolved, and following government evaluation of Healthy Start, Scotland opted to introduce their own scheme 'Best Start Foods' which provides more financial support to families. The administration and promotion of the scheme, as well as the failure to rise the amount provided in line with inflation, raises important questions on governmentality around food as demand for food aid from the charitable sector continues to rise.

In 2021, the scheme moved from a paper voucher system to a digital system. At this point, administration of the scheme for Northern Ireland was transferred from the Business Services Organisation based in Northern Ireland to NHSBSA. This transition coincided with another period of policy and legislative hiatus for the Northern Ireland Executive. This social policy context might go some way to explaining why uptake for the scheme in Northern Ireland is quite significantly lower than other parts of the UK, despite high levels of food inflation when access to additional support is more important than ever. This paper presents findings from women who shared their experiences and views on the scheme. The research found that awareness of the scheme was low, and some were missing out on receiving the highest payment (when a child is aged between 0 – 1 years old), while others missed out on the scheme altogether. We will also present policy insights from a roundtable with Early Years practitioners. There is an opportunity for change, as the Northern Ireland Executive has made a commitment to introduce a long-awaited for Anti-Poverty Strategy.

**Symposium 70: Mental health in the UK social security system: understanding claimant experiences of distress and trauma through qualitative longitudinal and documentary research. (Papers 72; 304; 71 and 64)**

*Organisers: Annie Irvine*

**Symposium proposal**

Mental health and the UK social security system have a troubled and complex relationship. Whilst most health-related benefit claims now involve mental health issues, and many more claimants outside this formal subgroup live with poor mental health, the benefits system is also an independent cause and exacerbator of psychological distress. The four papers in this symposium place a critical lens on how mental health problems are conceptualised, assessed and lived out by people claiming benefits in the UK, analysing how lived experiences come into tension with current policy approaches to establishing entitlement and administering benefits. We draw on four separate studies, which use a variety of qualitative longitudinal and documentary methods, to foreground claimant narratives and experiences of benefit assessment and receipt. Each study proposes alternative understandings of distress – highlighting the key role of material hardship, uncertainty, social suffering and trauma – and suggests reshaped policy approaches that could reduce the harms caused by current benefit processes. With a concerning rise in mental health related benefit claims, it has never been more urgent to understand the experience of this group of citizens and to make long overdue changes to the way mental health is responded to by the social security system.

### **Towards a trauma-informed social security system**

*Lisa Scullion, David Young, Philip Martin, Joe Pardoe, Celia Hynes, University of Salford, Salford, United Kingdom*

*Katherine Curchin, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia*

*Cherie Armour, Queens University Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Originating in the United States, and supported by research showing prevalence of trauma, the trauma-informed care (TIC) movement has applied what is known about trauma to the design of various social and health services. A range of services within the UK have been increasingly focusing on TIC within their service provision. For example, health, schools, and social care services have adopted TIC; some local authorities, cities, and city-regions are becoming trauma-informed places; and the Scottish Government are looking at the government-wide adoption of trauma-informed principles. Until recently, the benefits system has been largely absent from this movement. However, we are aware that those designing and delivering social security are now looking at TIC within their services. For example, Social Security Scotland – as part of Scotland’s National Trauma Training Programme – has pledged trauma awareness as central to delivery, and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is delivering a project focusing on embedding trauma-informed approaches.

In this paper, we will present our on-going efforts to support movement towards a trauma-informed benefits system. Firstly, we will discuss the bespoke analysis that we produced for the DWP, drawing upon qualitative longitudinal data from a study focusing on veterans’ experiences of the benefits system. Through this analysis we helped provide a unique understanding of how the system – and the various processes and contact channels within the system – are experienced as ‘trauma blind’ and, at times, re-traumatising. Secondly, we will discuss emerging findings from a new project that is providing a unique evidence base for the DWP in relation to the delivery of their trauma-integration project. As a system that routinely interacts with people who have experienced trauma (and has the potential to re-traumatise), we argue that this is a pivotal moment for social security policy and practice stakeholders to explore the value of trauma-informed approaches in an evidence-informed way. However, we also present some of the challenges for TIC, particularly within a system that has inherent punitive features.

### **‘Unseen injuries’: How is functioning related to mental health framed and understood in the Personal Independence Payment claims process?**

*Katie Pybus, Michael Robinson*

*University of York, York, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is now the main extra-cost social security payment available to people with health conditions and disabilities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The transition to PIP has been accompanied by a greater reliance on functional assessments, which shift focus away from diagnosis and seek to understand how health conditions affect people day to day. Contextualised by ongoing and increasingly divisive policy debates about rising levels of psychological distress at the population level and controversies surrounding the assessment process itself, this paper explores how mental health is perceived and understood during the PIP claims process.

Through a combination of statistical evidence and research focusing on lived experiences of the claims process, this paper will explore the ways in which the PIP assessment process is

currently working (and not working) for people claiming PIP on the primary basis of a mental health condition. It will explore how functioning related to mental health is currently assessed and understood at different stages of the claims process, incorporating evidence from a work in progress tracking how evidence related to mental health is considered during PIP appeals. The paper will end by proposing alternative frameworks for understanding mental health in this context, recommendations for improvements to current processes and a discussion of the broader policy changes needed to develop a claims process that works for all.

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**Understanding mental health in the UK welfare system: What brings you to the door is important to how you get out.**

*Annie Irvine, University of York, York, United Kingdom. ESRC Centre for Society and Mental Health, King's College London, London, United Kingdom*

*Cassandra Lovelock, ESRC Centre for Society and Mental Health, King's College London, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The rise in UK welfare claims due to mental health problems is a matter of contemporary policy concern and one which now stems back several decades. It is well evidenced that the current system of assessment for health-related benefits is ineffective in meaningfully understanding mental health issues and itself causes further psychological distress. To try and advance this established knowledge base, the present study explores in close narrative detail the ways in which UK benefits claimants describe and make sense of their experiences of mental distress and illness, and how this affects their interactions with welfare and employment systems. In this paper, we will share findings from our ongoing qualitative secondary analysis of the Welfare Conditionality (WelCond) study archive. We are using the Illness Representational Model (IRM) to closely interrogate the longitudinal accounts of a sample of 68 claimants who described lived experience of mental distress during three waves of semi-structured interviews. The IRM comprises five dimensions (identity, cause, timeline, cure/control and consequences) which together provide a picture of how an individual conceptualizes their distress. Dominant in the WelCond sample are experiences of anxiety and depression, alongside a number of less prevalent diagnoses such as psychosis and personality disorders. Striking in the data is the near-universality of socially-grounded causal explanations, rather than biomedical factors. Participants' causal explanations typically have a socio-relational or socioeconomic basis, for example, bereavement, violence, abuse, caring, relationship breakdown, financial strain, housing problems, homelessness, job loss, legal proceedings, and encounters with the conditional welfare system. Narratives of the origins of distress are multifaceted and often complex, rarely centering on a single cause. Rather, people describe a combination, and often compounding, set of circumstances that brought about their health-related benefit claim. We discuss our findings in relation to current welfare-to-work policy and conditionality regimes, which remain focused on a medicalised view of work (in)capacity, looking to determine the effects of a 'health' condition and seeking to connect claimants more rapidly with cognitive behavioural therapies. We cannot emphasise strongly enough that the WelCond study participants' distress was real – legitimate, genuine, and often severe. What we wish to query is the medicalised or 'medico-centric' framing of welfare-to-work approaches, which individualise distress, essentialise mental health conditions and fail to take due account of the social and economic drivers of labour market exclusion, which – ultimately – also serve as the routes out.

**‘It’s like a psychological torture’: How Universal Credit impacts people with long term physical and mental health conditions and disabilities**

*Stephanie Morris, Newcastle University, Newcastle, United Kingdom*

*Marcia Gibson, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Mandy Cheetham, Northumbria University, Northumbria, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Universal Credit (UC) is the key state benefit for working-age people including those with health conditions and disabilities. Research has shown that the introduction of UC created increased mental distress, and that UC may be particularly harmful for those with existing mental and physical health conditions. This study uses qualitative longitudinal research methods to understand the experiences of UC claimants and the mechanisms by which UC impacts on their health. In-depth interviews were conducted with a maximum diversity sample of 70 people living in Tyne and Wear and Glasgow in 2022, and follow-up interviews with ~50% of participants in 2023/2024. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns in the data relevant to the research questions, which involved inductive and deductive coding. Narrative case summaries were created to aid within and cross case longitudinal analysis. This paper reports on longitudinal findings from two waves of interviews with 47 participants who reported mental and/or physical health conditions. Participants described multiple aspects of living on and engaging with UC that impacted their mental health and wellbeing, often by producing high levels of stress and creating or worsening anxiety and low mood. Living on UC also affected physical health: several reported poor nutrition through foodbank use and being unable to buy sufficient food; issues sleeping due to financial worries, and stress affecting chronic pain and fatigue conditions. This paper discusses differences between national level UC policy and on the ground implementation, and how these are impacting health. The following processes by which health is impacted are discussed: the inadequate basic rate of UC as insufficient for essential basic needs (e.g. food) and the insecurity of these payments; the work capability assessment process; conditionality and threats of sanctions; interactions with JCP and UC staff and the automated online system. We conclude that although participants often reported both positive and negative experiences with staff and the UC system, overall participants expressed a sense of being unsafe and living in fear whilst being on UC.

**Symposium 85: Offloading or empowering? Can self-directed support improve social care in the UK’s four nations? (Papers 78; 68; 207 and 150)**

*Organisers: Professor Catherine Needham*

**Symposium proposal**

It is widely argued that the social care system in the UK is in crisis. Self-directed support (or personalisation as it’s often called in England) is sometimes recommended as a route out of this crisis, empowering people who use care and making better use of resources. In this symposium, we disaggregate the UK perspective to explore self-direction in the four nations. Over the two decades since the devolution settlements to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, each has developed a distinctive set of policies for adult social care. Scotland has a Self-Directed Support Act. Wales and Northern Ireland have both moved away from personalisation and are increasingly talking about self-directed support. England has continued to pursue the language of personalisation through the Care Act, and to have a more market-oriented approach to adult social care.

This symposium draws out key debates on self-directed care in each of the four nations, relating to debates around risk and autonomy, and the way that these are framed by policy-makers and experienced by people receiving and providing care.

Alison Tarrant, University of Cardiff, gives the perspective on the policy narratives around personalisation and self-directed support in Wales.

Alexandra Chapman and Susan Hughes, from the University of Ulster, provide an overview of how self-directed support has fared in the 'policy vacuum' in Northern Ireland, given repeated suspensions of the executive.

Obert Tawodzera, University of Birmingham present research on the experiences of Black and minority ethnic communities in accessing direct payments (a key mechanism of self-directed support), drawing predominantly on data from England.

Richard Brunner, IMPACT and University of Glasgow, shares research on the wellbeing of personal assistants and the extent to which they are able to flourish in a context of self-directed support.

Together the papers present theoretically rich and methodologically diverse perspectives on self-directed care in the four nations that allow reflection on whether it offers a route to support the UK care system out of crisis.

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### **Self-directed Support in Wales: Fusing individualism and collectivism?**

*Alison Tarrant*

*Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Across the UK, governments are increasingly advocating self-directed support (or 'personalisation', as it is called in England) as an important way forward in adult social care. Self-directed support is viewed as a means to ensure that those drawing on social care gain more control over their own lives, and is also considered to offer solutions to the crisis that currently engulfs social care in all four UK nations.

This paper will consider self-directed support in the Welsh context. It will examine the challenges faced by the Welsh Government and local authorities in developing and implementing social care policy that promotes this aspect. In particular, the paper will consider the difficulties that emerge in Wales as a result of the Welsh policy legacy on devolution and conflict between the ideals that underpin this legacy and the Welsh Government's own policy ambitions. A core aspect of this conflict is the focus on the individual, and on individually purchased support, that is typically promoted in narratives of self-directed support, and the desire in Wales to develop collective approaches to the welfare state. We will consider the position of direct payments in this context and whether the principles of self-directed support can be successfully fused with the Welsh Government's collective and communitarian principles.

This contribution to the symposium reports on a research project which examines Welsh policy and legal documents. A key aspect will be consideration of whether and how the devolved

nations are fully able to devise social care policy that differs from the marketised approaches that have dominated public sector reforms in the UK for the last four decades.

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**Stuck in the starting blocks: Self directed support in Northern Ireland**

*Alexandra Chapman, Susan Hughes*

*Ulster University, Belfast, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Since 2011, numerous reviews and consultations regarding adult social care in Northern Ireland have proposed greater service user choice and control through a 'self directed support' approach. Despite being practised across the province for over a decade, there has been no progress in defining this approach in policy or delivering an implementation strategy. There is a lack of evidence regarding the experience of self directed support for service users, but research indicates systemic barriers to the success of the approach. These barriers include a social gradient, workforce issues, low awareness and a lack of advocacy and support services. While personalisation has been legislated in other parts of the UK, social care in Northern Ireland has failed to gain the same policy attention or traction. This paper argues that efforts to embed self directed support or a similar form of personalised care have not just stalled but are in dire need of immediate attention. Following a two-year period of collapse, the Northern Ireland Executive has recently returned, and this paper outlines the timely and urgent opportunity to advance self directed support policy and social care reform.

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**Direct payments in racially minoritised communities: A systematic review of the literature**

*Obert Tawodzera*

*University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Despite growing evidence about the role of direct payments in improving access to health and social care for people from racially minoritised groups in the UK, research shows that the uptake of direct payments is still low across these communities. Negative experiences of mainstream services, lack of understanding about services on offer as well as racism and discrimination may act as potential barriers towards people from racially minoritised communities trying to access direct payments. This paper reviews the published literature on direct payments in racially minoritised populations in the UK. Relevant articles (n= 45) were identified and analysed to understand why people from racially minoritised communities choose direct payments, barriers to access, perspectives about mainstream social care services and key recommendation to improve uptake. The results indicate that people from racially minoritised communities choose direct payments because it gives them choice and control over their own care and support, meaning they can actively choose services that respond to their cultural requirements. Nonetheless, the findings also show that people from racially minoritised communities have a lack of awareness of and access to direct payments due to systematic barriers such as racism and discrimination as well as an overly complicated adult social care system which is not responsive to their cultural and linguistic values. Furthermore, they are suspicious of mainstream services. Key recommendations include avoiding assumptions, inclusion of people from racially minoritised communities in planning services, attracting a diverse workforce, tackling racism and discrimination, addressing the information gap and funding for racially minoritised community organisation.

## **Exploring the wellbeing of Personal Assistants in social care in Scotland**

*Richard Brunner*

*University of Stirling, Stirling, United Kingdom. University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

### **Abstract of Paper**

Following the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013, all Scotland's local authorities have a legal duty to offer four options to people who have been assessed as needing a community care service. Option 1 is a Direct Payment, which is a payment to a person or third party to purchase their own support, usually a Personal Assistant (PA). In Scotland approximately 3% of care spending is on Direct Payments (Needham & Hall, 2023, p.110), and there are c.5-8,000 PAs in Scotland, compared to c.120,000 care/support workers. However, the role and significance of PAs as a 'minority' element of the social care workforce has been spotlighted by Covid-19. The UK-wide IMPACT social care programme led by University of Birmingham seeks to support social care partners to work better with evidence. This particular IMPACT project is focused on supporting partners to use evidence to enhance PA wellbeing in Scotland. Our working theory is that enhancing PA wellbeing should enhance PA recruitment and retention. This in turn should boost choice, control and independent living outcomes for disabled people – and give more disabled people the 'meta' choice of confidently choosing a Direct Payment. As the evidence on PA wellbeing is disparate, IMPACT has conducted a systematic review of the international and UK evidence on PA wellbeing. We are 'sense-checking' this evidence with two Scotland-wide expert groups of PA employers and PAs. This paper will report the dominant themes from the systematic review, and the expert group responses to these.

## **Social Security 6**

### **3**

## **How Large Families Fare in Germany: Examining Child Poverty Risks and Policy Solutions**

*Stephan Köppe, Iñigo Aldama, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland*

*Megan Curran, Columbia University, New York, USA*

### **Abstract of Paper**

Historically, researchers and policymakers alike recognized the risk of poverty among large families, but family size is often neglected in the contemporary literature. This article revives an examination of the connections between family size and poverty risk for children with a focus on Germany. We take a child-centred perspective by analysing a sample of 13–14 year-old children from the National Educational Panel Study (NEPS).

First, we provide a detailed overview of the welfare and tax policies aimed at large families in Germany. Next, we estimate the poverty risk and prevalence for children in large families (looking at families with 3+ and 4+ children). Finally, we discuss how the policy and socio-economic context interacts with the risk of poverty. We identify that the means-tested social assistance scheme penalizes large families, while the child benefit would only acknowledge higher need of middle-income families with three or more children.

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**Why are we waiting? The five week wait for Universal Credit and food insecurity among food sector workers in the UK**

*Laura Richards-Gray*

*Birkbeck, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Recent Food Foundation data suggests one in five UK households with children and 8 million UK adults had experienced food insecurity in the previous month. Households on Universal Credit were most affected (45.4%, compared to 11.7% of other households), with evidence from elsewhere suggesting the five week wait for the first payment is playing a significant role in this. Meanwhile, despite their critical contribution to the UK economy and vital work during the pandemic to ensure the food supply, in-work poverty is on the rise among food sector workers, and many are themselves experiencing food insecurity while on Universal Credit. Based on a series of in-depth interviews, this article explores the impacts of the five week wait on food security among this group. While other research has provided quantitative insights and/or qualitative testimony about the impact of Universal Credit more generally, this research provides in-depth exploration of the complex challenges faced by food sector workers in accessing food of sufficient quantity and quality during the wait and beyond, how they navigate these challenges and the wider impacts on their health and relationships. The research findings show that working in the food sector offers little protection from food insecurity in the face of the wait for Universal Credit. The wait is having both short- and longer-term impacts on the food security of these workers, which in turn is linked to changes in their physical and mental health, as well as having implications for their personal relationships.

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**Evaluating the Mental Health Effects of the 20£ Uplift among UK Benefit Claimants during Covid-19**

*Marina Kousta, Karen Glaser, King's College London, London, United Kingdom*

*Rachel Loopstra, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK government introduced a weekly £20 uplift to Universal Credit (UC) and Working Tax Credits (WTC). However, this was not extended to other legacy claimants (referring to the list of benefits that UC has been progressively replacing since 2013) who were also facing increased vulnerability at this time. This study evaluated the mental health effects of the £20 uplift's introduction. Data came from five waves of the Understanding Society's Main Survey, the UK's largest longitudinal household survey. The General Health Questionnaire-36 measured psychological distress. The exposure variable identified between UC/WTC claimants (treated group), and other legacy claimants (comparison group). Entropy balancing was employed to match the covariates between the control and treatment groups, followed by Differences-in-Differences models, to assess the mental health effects of the uplift. Preliminary results indicate that the provision of the £20 uplift improved the mental health of recipients, compared to those who were not eligible. Results from a preliminary study indicate that the uplift was protective of the mental health of UC/WTC claimants during the pandemic, compared to the comparison group of legacy claimants. These findings raise questions as to why policymakers decided not to extend eligibility for the uplift to other benefit claimants, who were also vulnerable to the shocks of the pandemic. Considering the increased prevalence of poor (mental) health among most benefit claimants in the UK, future changes in public policies should consider potential health and wellbeing effects, as well as equity concerns.

## **Employment 1**

**2**

### **Gender, employment and childcare: A comparison of urban China and Kazakhstan families**

*Moldir Kabylova, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

*Yunyan Li, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This study aims to investigate the implications of women's experiences in organizing paid work and unpaid care on their dependence from family relationships in urban China and Kazakhstan. In the context of rising costs of living and rapid urbanisation in these two post-socialist societies, maintaining a dual-breadwinner household becomes necessary for most families.

The study is based on data from 40 semi-structured interviews with women living in Guangzhou and Almaty. Our analysis is drawing on the theories of defamilisation referring to the degree to which individuals can choose (or not) to undertake care roles and maintain financial independence without relying on family relationships, and re-familisation referring to more dependency on family resources. The findings show that women from affluent background in Almaty are, despite expectations, more likely to remain long-term unemployed and dependent on families, while women lacking financial resources are more likely to be employed and rely on grandparents' help with childcare. Among Chinese women's coping strategies, we find that, familisation remains a primary coping strategy in sharing childcare, in the form of sharing it personally in the past and, nowadays, a co-existence of financial and practical support. Contemporary China and Kazakhstan have generated more uncertainties for women in organising paid work and unpaid care autonomously given the resources available to them. Family is important, and in what way and how to maintain family support requires institutional and policy changes to address the emerging uncertainties.

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### **Where does the incomplete revolution occur?**

*Hyejin Noh, Gangseo University, Seoul, Republic of Korea*

*Mijin Park, Korea National Open University, Seoul, Republic of Korea*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In South Korea, where Confucian culture holds strong influence, distinct gender roles have long hindered gender equality in Korean society. However, recent trends among the younger generation show positive signals towards increased male participation in domestic spheres. According to surveys on Korean Time Use Study(2019), there has been an increase in men's involvement in housework and care work, with a rising trend in the utilization of parental leave as well. Although men's participation in housework is clearly increasing, it is also clear that women's participation is still high. At this time, differences in perception of fairness may arise depending on whether one focuses on the increase in men or the increase in women. To establish a true dual-earner, dual-carer model, it is necessary to distinguish between areas of equality and those that are still lacking in equality for Korean men. If there are areas where wives and husbands do not equally share childcare and housework responsibilities, it is important to identify the obstacles and seek concrete solutions.

Accordingly, this study seeks to specifically identify the points where a delayed revolution occurs and, in particular, to identify differences in the couple's perceptions at each point. This study aims to deeply understand such gender role divisions based on a survey of 1,244 married couples with preschool and elementary school-aged children regarding their perceptions and conditions of housework and childcare. Through this analysis, recommendations will be made

to improve various social contexts that hinder men's involvement in family matters and to explore a more gender-equal Korean society.

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**Flexible working and the division of housework and childcare in Korea: the importance of family and company cultural contexts**

*Heejung Chung*

*King's College London, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Korea is a country well-known for being one of the most traditional countries in the world, with regards to gender role and gender role attitudes (GRAs). This has resulted in many problems including polarisation of political beliefs of men and women, and decline in fertility rates. This paper examines whether flexible working results in a more equitable distribution of labour between heterosexual dual-earner couples in Korea. Although many argue that flexible working enables both men and women to be more engaged in housework and childcare, others argue how this may vary on the workers' gender, and the gender normative and work cultural context. In other words, men with traditional gender norms and work centric contexts are likely to not decrease their involvement in housework and childcare when working flexibly, whereas women in a similar context will more likely increase their domestic work. In this way, flexible working can result in a more traditionalised division of domestic labour between heterosexual couples. However, this may not be the case for individuals with more egalitarian GRAs, working in companies where work-family support is widespread. We explore this question using the data set gathered in 2023 in South Korea of dual-earning coupled men and women with a child between 4 and 9. Preliminary results show that the use of flexible working, as well as flexible working being readily available for men in the company, may help men be more engaged in childcare. For women, there are evidence to show that their flexible working can result in a more unequal division of domestic work, when other factors are considered. The results of the study shows how introduction of flexible working can help address some of the unequal division of labour within households, yet needs to be dealt with caution.

**Families 2**

**117**

**“Don’t want to rock the boat” Exploring Child Maintenance in the cost-of-living crisis.**

*Fiona McHardy, Laura Robertson, Paul Pearson*

*Poverty Alliance, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) states ‘Child Maintenance is regular, reliable financial support that helps towards a child’s everyday living costs’. In 2012, the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) was introduced to provide a new service and infrastructure to assist families with child maintenance.

Child Maintenance or Child Support remains a hugely complex and contested area of social policy. Against a period of income volatility, and the cost-of-living crisis with low-income families facing increasing pressure, the approach and infrastructure of the Child Maintenance Service within the UK is critical.

This paper will provide insights into current political context around child maintenance, systemic challenges and evidence from families illustrating lived experience perspectives of

child maintenance arrangements. Furthermore, this paper will share learning from a unique test and learn project from 2023-2024 that took place in Fife Scotland, and offer new solutions and approaches to Child Maintenance, working towards better outcomes for families and children.

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### **A Family Leave Length Trade-off? Women's Labour Force Status in Comparative Perspective**

*Kathrin Morosow*

*University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

A frequently cited aim of parental leave policies is to provide parents with the opportunity to combine work and family. The availability of additional childcare leaves is prolonging mothers' time out of the labour market, however, and thus may counteract women's labour market participation. This study is the first to differentiate between the whole range of labour force status outcomes: employment, unemployment and inactivity. Using data for 20 countries from the Luxembourg Income Study, this study examines the relationship between paid family leave length and mothers' labour market status. Calling on multinomial logistic regression with country fixed effects, this study finds that the provision of comparatively long paid family leave is associated with increased unemployment risks among mothers of 0 to 15 year olds. A slight peak when children are 4 to 6 years old and leave is longer than two years suggests that mothers are most vulnerable when they re-enter the labour market after a longer leave. These results are in line with prominent theories of human capital depreciation, signalling or statistical discrimination. Leaves of under one year, on the other hand, are associated with increased inactivity among mothers. Hence, results indicate a trade-off when it comes to leave length. Shorter leaves are associated with mothers dropping out of the labour market, especially when children are young, while longer family leaves are associated with increased unemployment risks.

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### **Family policy as a tool of redistributing risks involved in having a child: cross-national variations in EU and OECD countries**

*Sunwoo Ryu*

*University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Having a child has been traditionally described as a vital part of individuals' life cycles, which brings a valuable and joyous experience. However, recently, negative perceptions on birthing and raising a child are prevalent across high-income countries. For example, according to the 2012 International Social Survey Programme, one in every four people perceived having children as a considerable interference to their freedom, whereas two in every five people saw children as causing financial burden and restricting their career opportunities. This recent cross-national survey result demonstrates that having a child in advanced economies is recognised as imposing some kind of socio-economic risk rather than bringing a purely joyous, loving and lesson-learning life experience. In fact, having a child increases chances of being exposed to risks that people face in their life course due to the economic and social changes in the post-industrial era. It is therefore not surprising that total fertility rates have been declining in high-income countries with an OECD average of 1.6 and an EU average of 1.5 in 2020.

Although there has been an increasing number of studies on the nexus between family policy and fertility, there remains a limited cross-national understanding of which countries provide a

favourable policy environment for individuals and families to have a child by redistributing the relevant socio-economic risks. Hence, this research adopts the approach of describing and comparing the family policy arrangement in high-income countries in regard to the extent to which it redistributes socio-economic risks involved in having a child. Four lines of the redistribution logic matters in this research: the degree to which family policy redistributes direct monetary risks and opportunity costs of having a child from families, especially women, to the state (family-state redistribution); the degree to which family policy redistributes child-related financial risks but across the different stages of childhood (cross-childhood redistribution); the degree to which family policy redistributes labour market-related risks arising from parental care responsibilities from women to men (within-family redistribution); and the degree to which family policy redistributes child-related financial and care risks across different family types according to the different levels of the risks facing them (cross-family redistribution). By utilising secondary data available from the OECD database and Eurostat (as well as national government statistics), this research analyses and finds patterns in cross-national variations in regard to the type and degree of four-way redistribution of child-related risks.

## **Migration 2**

### **4**

#### **Consequences of Migration for Women's Occupational Status: A Comparison of Migrants and their Descendants with Stayers in the Country of Origin**

*Sebnem Eroglu, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom*

*Ayse Guveli, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom*

*Sait Bayrakdar, King's College London, London, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This study is the first to investigate women's occupational status (i.e., job title and status) through a unique comparison of migrants to Europe and their Europe-born descendants with the stayers in the origin country of Turkey. The research base for the study is the pioneering 2000 Families Survey, which developed and used an innovative screening technique a) to locate the first-generation men who moved to Europe from high migrant-sending Turkish regions during the guest-worker years of 1961 to 1974 and those who stayed in the regions, and b) to trace their male and female family members across Turkey and Europe up to the third generation. The data is drawn from proxy interviews performed with knowledgeable family members, generating basic demographic and socio-economic information about nearly 20,000 individuals nested within 1992 families.

The results show that whilst displaying substantially higher levels of participation in the destination country labour markets, migrant women and their Europe-born, female children are significantly more likely than their stayer counterparts in Turkey to obtain lower returns on their education in terms of occupational status. The observed differences are partly explained through parental social class, traditional gender roles and 'racial' discrimination and their varying influence within the origin and destination countries. The results hence indicate the need for a welfare model that tackles the root causes of labour market inequalities, and more specifically, policies that combat ethnic penalties imposed upon migrant women and their children.

### **Perceptual Welfare Boundary of Migrants in the Context of Rural-urban Migration in China: A Comparison across Three Chinese Metropolises**

*Qiaobing Wu, Xuehui Yang*

*The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The past four decades have witnessed a huge population flow from rural to urban areas alongside the rapid industrialization and urbanization of China. Given that in the Chinese context, welfare is usually tied to one's place of birth under the household registration system (hukou), migrants are often barricaded from enjoying full welfare entitlements in their urban destinations. Despite the ongoing hukou reform that aims to equalize welfare distribution among all Chinese citizens regardless of their hukou status, migrants in the urban cities are still faced with persistent barriers to access welfare benefits and services. In an effort to understand why these barriers continue to exist, this study attempts to examine and compare the subjective welfare experiences of migrants in three Chinese metropolises - Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen-by introducing the concept of "welfare boundary". Welfare boundary is a mechanism by which social citizenship rights are distinguished between insiders and outsiders based on spatial differences, manifested as a compromised threshold resulting from the conflict between the universal rights of all citizens in a society and the limited resources for welfare provision in a particular place. It consists of two forms –institutional welfare boundary derived from government policies that determine the eligibility of migrants for social provisions in the destination city, and perceptual welfare boundary derived from migrants' own subjective experiences of barriers to navigating the urban welfare system and accessing welfare benefits. Insufficient attention has been given to the latter in the extant literature. Drawing upon data from focus group interviews with 83 migrants (27 from Beijing, 29 from Shanghai and 27 from Shenzhen) at various age groups and with diverse backgrounds, this study explores the perceptual welfare boundary of Chinese migrants as well as the variations across the three Chinese metropolises. The findings suggest that welfare boundary manifests an intended governance of citizenship and mobility which demonstrates a model of "differential inclusion". Migrants experience varying levels of welfare boundary in different cities and develop diverse coping strategies according to specific policies as well as their rational calculations to negotiate for better welfare benefits within these boundaries. However, the power and space they possess in the boundary-making process are still limited.

### **Poverty & Inequality 2**

#### **Beyond income and wealth: Unveiling the relationship between local deprivation and financial wellbeing**

*LIN TIAN, Linh Vi, Andy Lymer*

*Aston University, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper investigates the relationship between deprivation and financial wellbeing in the UK, a critical topic given the ongoing financial crisis and the national ambition to enhance financial well-being substantially by 2030. Is a 'one-size fits all' approach the best way to achieve a step change in personal financial wellbeing as is currently the predominant approach operated in the UK? This quantitative study uses the UK Government's Money and Pension Service's (MaPS)

2021 Adult Financial Wellbeing survey, a nationally representative survey of personal financial wellbeing. In particular, we focus on respondents from England and perform multivariate analyses to examine how the community level of deprivation, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), is linked to the inequality in personal financial wellbeing, as measured by an overall score based on nine questions on individual's attitudinal and income-related financial wellbeing (FWB).

Our analysis reveals a negative relationship between local deprivation and FWB in England, notably affecting income-related aspects of FWB such as the capability to manage bills and financial resilience, rather than attitudinal aspects like financial confidence and satisfaction. The relationship we observed between local deprivation and income-related elements of FWB cannot be fully explained by income and wealth alone, pointing to the significant roles of peer effect and local deprivation in specific domains.

Our findings suggest that while overall provisions of commonly accessible financial wellbeing resources remain key, like those offered by MaPS through MoneyHelper web-based service, a more targeted approach to resource allocation could be more affective. This is particularly pertinent in light of the ambitious goals of the current UK national strategy for improved personal financial wellbeing by 2030 particularly in areas of lower IMD.

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**Saving, holding or budgeting? Exploring the intricate money management strategies of low- and middle income households in the Real Accounts project**

*Anne Angsten Clark, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom. Nest Insight, London, United Kingdom*

*Fionna McLauchlan, Nest Insight, London, United Kingdom*

*Elena Magli, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Studies have shown that households are proactive and employ a diversity of strategies to mitigate economic hardship. Yet, too often financial services are designed not with this diversity in mind, but targeting a hypothetical, perfect customer: regular income, stable finances, “rational” decision making at any given point.

We draw on learnings from the Real Accounts project – a longitudinal, financial diaries project that follows 52 low to middle income households in the UK for 3-9 months – to draw out the variety of money management strategies households employ. Real Accounts combines an innovative financial diaries methodology which tracks income and expenditure over time with monthly qualitative interviews where researchers and participants discuss monthly transactions and dive deeper into specific areas of financial experience, such as savings, debt and credit, or pensions. The mixed-method approach allows us to build a rich picture of people’s financial lives – tracking both the decisions they make and the context, motivation, and practices that underpin those decisions.

Using both the quantitative and qualitative data, we show the fluid boundaries between budgeting on a daily basis, holding money for (an often immediate) future, and saving for more medium- or long-term goals. We highlight different custom strategies that households devise in their efforts to preserve money for future use, yet keep it accessible when needed – from using technology such as Round Up features to participating in informal savings schemes to mentally holding money in a separate current account and making frequent transfers back and forth – and explore how services designed with an understanding of these strategies could reduce stress and load on households while helping increase financial resilience and wellbeing.

### **Help-seeking in high- and middle-income countries: the balance between support networks and formal assistance in times of need**

*Souleymane Sanogo, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland. Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso*

*Clémentine Rossier, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland*

*Marlène Sapin, University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Since the questioning of the welfare state in the 1980s, the issue of solidarity between generations or within relatives has been the subject of much research. Previous work has focused on older people's care needs, usually in Europe, and has shown either a "crowding in" or a "crowding-out" effect of family support in more supportive welfare states. Our study focuses on access to support for the working-age population in different institutional contexts, a subpopulation that has become more vulnerable. Instead of contrasting state and family support only, we examine strong ties (family and friends) as well as weak ties (other acquaintances) to which individuals can turn first when seeking help, and we oppose this informal support to formal support provided by institutions as well as market consumption. Moreover, we analyse four different situations of needs: money, employment, housing, and care, using International Social Survey Programme 2017 data. We look at this issue in 30 countries, both high and middle-income countries, classified into 13 groups based on their social protection model and wealth level.

The results show that the overwhelming majority of the working-age population has access to support for all needs, but the profile of support varies across groups of countries. Formal support is higher in high-income countries, those where social policies and private services are well established, compared to middle-income countries. However, there is relatively less reliance on the state and the market for certain types of needs, depending on the country (e.g. Denmark, Japan). At the same time, informal support is more present in middle-income countries, whatever the welfare regimes (e.g., Mexico, the Philippines, and South Africa), and is dominated by strong ties rather than weak ties. Although, some people lack support for specific needs, and this situation is relatively more common in rich countries. For instance, 11% of people in social-democratic welfare regimes have no one to turn to when it comes to borrowing money, 14% in rich pro-conservative countries (Japan and Taiwan) when it comes to finding a job, and 12% in Israel (Exclusion-based welfare regime) when it comes to housing. Taken together, these findings suggest that a crowding-out effect of family support is at work with the institutionalization of countries. However, they also suggest that in the fight against social exclusion, it is important to consider all sources of support and different types of needs, whatever the country.

### **Symposium 177: Digital Social Policy – Looking at the past and present to shape the future (Papers 178; 262 and 131)**

*Organiser: Paul Henman*

#### **Symposium proposal**

Social policy development, design and delivery are increasingly undertaken with the assistance of a diverse range of digital technologies. Service users increasingly interact with websites and apps instead of face to face or telephone encounters with human service professionals. Decisions regarding payments and services are ever more (semi-)automated. Chatbots are being used to manage interactions with service users. Risk assessments and profiling of service users are used to prioritise people, allocate differentiated services, or target surveillance. Often

these developments occur ahead of legal developments to ensure legality, accountability and responsibility. These developments have provided considerable benefits for government, service providers and citizens, such as efficiency, consistency, accuracy, and responsiveness. However, such digitally mediated social policy is not without difficulties, including reduced administrative discretion, systemic errors, and growing surveillance.

This session of eight papers provides a diverse range of critical insights into the evolving digital welfare state. It covers a range of social policy domains and different countries. It includes research focused on user experiences to broad scale analysis, as well as ways in which to shape digital technology to enhance human wellbeing through the use of digital technologies.

Paper titles:

1. The digital welfare state: contradiction, crisis and change
  2. Catching the bad apples to keep up the good work: city government perspectives on data-driven governance in the domain of Work & Income
  3. Procedural Legitimacy Logics within the Digital Welfare State
  4. Building a trauma informed assessment for digital social services delivery futures
  5. Reality of Responsibilisation within Australian Digitalised Public Employment Service: Exploring User Experiences with Mutual Obligation Reporting via Digital Dashboard of Workforce Australia Online,
  6. Surveillance technologies in migration management and its potential impact on wider communities
  7. Youth homelessness, automated decision-making and digital social policy: exploring the risks and opportunities
  8. Robodebt Cultures and Useful Idiots: Why Robodebt was not a techno-failure
  9. Automated-Decision Making and the work-first approach in the social assistance system
  10. Exploring the intersection of minimum income protection, digitalisation, and discretion
- Section 4: Complete only if you are PARTICIPATING IN A PLANNED SYMPOSIUM

I will be submitting a paper and abstract for this panel separately.

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### **Robodebt Cultures and Useful Idiots: Why Robodebt was not a techno-failure**

*Paul Henman*

*University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Australia's Robodebt scheme is now internationally infamous for how not to use automation in government. Belying heightened concern with artificial intelligence, Robodebt involved traditional, relatively simple computer algorithms to automate the identification and pursuit of alleged historical welfare debts. Yet it was based on a false legal premise. This paper argues that rather than a technical failure, Robodebt was intentional, motivated by political imperatives, aided and abetted by an overly responsive public service culture, and underpinned by a populist culture unsympathetic to welfare recipients. It is argued that these political, public service and populist cultures were grounded in useful idiots, that acted as foils to keep the illegal scheme running for four years. The paper then compares Robodebt with similar digital government failures: Indiana's automated welfare administration; UK's Ofqual GCSE COVID algorithm; the Dutch SyRi system; and the British Post Office-Fujitsu Horizon scandal. Drawing from these comparisons, a new framework is presented that delineates six different motivating approaches for the design, development and deployment of digital government, based on different

rationalities and enabled by different public service cultures. It is hoped that this framework supports greater critical insight into and shaping of digital technology use in government.

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### **The Digital Welfare State: Contradiction, Crisis and Change**

*Georgia van Toorn, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia*

*Scarlet Wilcock, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Governments around the world are increasingly looking to new and sophisticated technologies to automate and streamline the delivery of social services. These ‘digital welfare’ innovations are frequently touted as a means to improve the quality and customisation of service delivery and generally curb welfare spending. However, as a burgeoning literature has sought to demonstrate, examinations of “actually existing” digital welfare states reveal a more complicated picture. This literature illustrates that digital welfare initiatives routinely fall short of their stated aims and are a frequent source of injustice for citizens and embarrassment or even crisis for governments. Yet, generally speaking, the trajectory of digital welfare reform continues unabated.

This paper contributes to the theorisation of the digital welfare state with a focus on these points of contradiction and crisis. Informed by political economy and critical welfare state literatures, we tease out these contradictions and connect them to the tensions inherent in the neoliberal welfare state. Our analysis shows that actually existing digital welfare states, while often presented as hegemonic and totalising in their imposition of neoliberal worldviews, are in fact characterised by a number of internally contradictory and conflicting institutional logics. These deeper tensions in the logics of digital welfare, we argue, give rise to particular vulnerabilities, occasionally culminating in failures of policy and implementation. By surfacing these tensions, this paper adds nuance to debates about the digital welfare state and the structural origins of automation failures. In addition, it deepens understanding of the state's capacity to adjust and transform in the face of challenges, providing new insights about the evolution of the digital welfare state.

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### **Procedural Legitimacy Logics within the Digital Welfare State**

*Simon Halliday, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Jed Meers, Joe Tomlinson, University of York, York, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

One of the most profound shifts seen in governments around the world in recent years is the emergence of the digital welfare state. This transformation has seen the welfare state increasingly dependent on digitalised, automated, and data-driven forms of public administration, which are altering the nature of welfare provision itself. This transition raises a fundamental question: what does a legitimate process look like in this new welfare state? Using new qualitative datasets, this paper explores how public officials, welfare claimants, and welfare rights advisors reason about the processes of the UK's flagship social security programme, Universal Credit (‘UC’)—one of the most prominent digital welfare systems anywhere in the world. It shows that, while the new era of digital welfare is characterised by a paradigmatic, shared intention to make processes work for claimants, the logic of what constitutes an acceptable process for claimants diverges in important ways between officials, advisors and claimants. We characterise these respective logics as ‘UC as a service’, ‘UC as an entitlement’, and ‘UC as a relationship’. Our purpose is not to claim one of these logics is

superior per se but that a greater appreciation of them, the perspectives from which they derive, and where and how they differ, can shed valuable light on emerging tensions within and disagreements about the digital welfare state.

## **Paper Session 5 - 10:05–11:05**

### **General social policy 1**

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#### **Better social policy futures: lessons learnt from Indigenous social policy in Australia in the post NPM era**

*Deirdre Howard-Wagner*

*POLIS: Centre for Social Policy, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

New Public Management came late to the Indigenous policy space in Australia. When it arrived in 2005, the marketisation of government Indigenous service delivery brought about significant institutional change: a new Indigenous service system was created. This model is now well entrenched in the public administration system. This government Indigenous service system has operated to marginalise First Nations people and First Nations organisations, who have had very little say, if any, over the last 20 years, about how government services are designed to meet their needs.[1] The cumulative effect of cost-externalisation and devaluing on First Nations organisations over nearly twenty years has been immense. While the government Indigenous service market remains well entrenched in the public administration system, twenty years on the imperative for policy change is unmistakable. It has failed to reduce Indigenous disadvantage.

In 2020, Australian governments set to turn this around, developing a new policy strategy for reducing Indigenous disadvantage. It signed a National Agreement for Closing the Gap with a Coalition of Peaks Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. The new National Agreement is directed at partnerships, shared decision-making, improving community control, and transforming government. It aligns with a broader social policy shift of transforming government and doing social policy with citizens in the post-NPM era.

The paper focuses on the future of Indigenous social policy in Australia, while reflecting on empirical research relating to public sector implementation of this key social policy initiative. In short, it reveals NPM's tight rein in the Indigenous policy space, providing a critical analysis of the difficulties public sector officials are having shaking-off a past paradigm and turning their practice around in the pursuit of better social policy futures under the new National Agreement. The research shows that federal and state public officials have not fully grasped the systemic and structural transformation and new ways of working required to deliver the shift that Australian governments have committed to. It draws on the findings of three projects – two commissioned by Australian governments and one funded by the Australian Research Council – to make this case. In the context of social policy futures, the paper reflects more deeply on modernising for successful transformation in the social policy space in the post-NPM era.

[1] See Closing the Gap Reports 2009–2022: [www.closingthegap.gov.au/resources/reports](http://www.closingthegap.gov.au/resources/reports).

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**Amplifying conflict across social frontiers? A critical exploration of the '15 minute city' and the localisation of urban public services**

*Annette Hastings*

*University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

This paper considers the role of social policy research in helping to shape urban public services in ways that tackle social division and conflict and contribute to addressing eco-social planetary emergencies. The so-called '15 minute city' concept brings the purpose, distribution and location of urban services to the centre of debate on what a 'just transition' to de-carbonised city living might entail. In an attempt to reduce unnecessary travel, the policy proposes the localisation of public services such as health, education and leisure alongside encouraging the co-location of employment, cultural and retail provision within neighbourhoods. Although the concept and desirability of walkable neighbourhoods is far from new, the 15 minute city has attracted considerable controversy in some quarters, largely focused on concerns related to rights and freedoms to travel by car within and beyond neighbourhoods. There has, however, been much less attention paid to a quite different set of potential dangers that may arise when public services are provided in an overly localised basis. The paper critically explores and addresses this set of less frequently debated dangers. It thus considers whether and how the 15 minute city policy risks reinforcing socio-spatial segregation by creating new, more robust forms of 'social frontier'. It also explores whether the role of public services in supporting inter-cultural and social solidarity in the context of socio-economic inequality is undermined by over-localisation. Finally, the paper considers whether the implementation of the idea risks masking and, indeed, augmenting, pre-existing inequalities in the quality, resourcing and management of urban public services. Underpinning the critique is a concern that the localisation of public services may act as a barrier to, rather than an enabler of, a socially just transition by amplifying and reifying division. In building this critique, the paper synthesises insights from diverse literatures in social policy research, including those focused on social segregation and social frontiers; on opportunity hoarding and middle-class capture of public services; and on social mix and urban encounters. The paper concludes by drawing on social psychology and inter-group contact theory to reflect on whether and how, in the context of the 15 minute city, urban public services can be charged with tackling social division, building social solidarity and tackling inequality and injustice.

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**Social policy, meet economic geography**

*Martin Heneghan*

*University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

This paper argues that social policy scholarship would be advanced by a deeper engagement with economic geography. Many contemporary social problems in advanced capitalist societies are driven by the spatial distribution of economic activity as much as the overarching economic paradigm. For this reason, other disciplines such as political science (Rickard, 2020) and political economy (Fraccaroli, Regan, & Blyth, 2023) have been bringing insights from economic geography into their analyses. This has not yet happened, by any meaningful degree, in social policy. The paper builds on recent advances in the discipline which have called for a better spatial understanding of social policy by bridging the gap between geography and social policy (Whitworth, 2019). However, this paper goes further arguing that bringing the lens of economic

geography into social policy studies would enable a better diagnosis of social problems and divisions, provide more insights into the challenges of delivering welfare in particular localities and offer the potential to advocate for more meaningful place-based social policies. The paper contends that without an adequate engagement with economic geography many social policies are in danger exacerbating existing social problems and undermining social stability.

**Symposium 76: Exploring the role of Lived Experience within policymaking processes (Papers 77; 96; 151 and 110)**

*Organisers: Clementine Hill O'Connor and Hayley Bennett*

**Symposium proposal**

While 'lived experience' has grown in popularity as a research approach or in advocacy practice, less is known about how policymakers interpret and utilise this form of knowledge production policymaking. This symposium will be an opportunity to reflect on some of the challenges of the increased interest in lived experience within policymaking processes. Whilst welcoming the potential to diversify the voices that influence policymaking, there is a need consider the methodological and ethical implications of the ways which these views are generated, and the way that policymakers understand and incorporate lived experience as form of evidence. The literature suggests that there are concerns about the valorisation of lived experience (Parr, 2023), the ways that poor voices are represented as compared to the rich (Kerr, 2023), and the extent to which there has been a move away from the participatory and emancipatory potential of such approaches (Stone and Priestley, 1996). The papers within this symposium illustrate a range of processes that generate and utilise lived experience within policymaking processes, and make the challenges explicit. This symposium aims to strengthen meaningful discussions and ethical practice around the use of lived experience in policymaking.

**77**

**Lived Experience as Evidence: Proposing a Governance Driven Analysis**

*Clementine Hill O'Connor, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Hayley Bennett, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The trend towards the inclusion of lived experience in policymaking has been driven in part by campaigning movements seeking to challenge the role of traditional forms of expertise and give a platform to previously marginalised groups. In this paper we argue that it is also driven by demands for lived experience as a part of participatory governance and is an example of governance driven democratisation (Warren, 2009). This has led to the development of new forms of state-led processes and mechanisms which have created spaces in which lived experience is framed as a form of evidence within the policymaking process. These developments require an analytical framework to identify the challenges, opportunities, and implications of using lived experience as a form of evidence in policymaking. How is lived experience being used alongside other forms of knowledge? How disruptive are lived experience processes in policymaking?

In this paper we draw on democratic and participatory governance literature to conceptualise these developments as a form of governance driven democratic innovation (GDDI). We put forward the distinction between lived experience as evidence that is either externally offered to policymakers, (thus possibly retaining some empowerment principles and an aim to disrupt), and internally designed 'lived experience' evidence/insight gathering (which may be framed and constructed within established institutional power structures and processes). We then

demonstrate the value of a GDDI approach through a detailed consideration of the prominence and use of lived experience in the context of Scottish Policy Making. Specifically, we focus on broadly speaking anti-poverty policy spaces; although different implications may arise in discrete policy domains, we contend that poverty and disadvantage is a cross-cutting theme.

**96**

**Complexities and contradictions: conceptualisations of Lived Experience in policymaking to tackle poverty**

*Anna Baillie*

*University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Increased public participation in policymaking, although not without critics, is often regarded as a net positive which results in more effective and fairer outcomes for everyone involved. Often, sitting at the heart of these beliefs is the wish to bring in different forms of knowledge and understanding to policymaking spaces which typically exclude the voices of marginalised or disadvantaged groups. Indeed, ‘involving people in decision-making which affects their lives’ has long been considered as a potential mechanism through which wicked problems like poverty and inequality might be properly redressed (Lister, 2002). In recent years, the UK, and Scotland in particular, has witnessed an expansion of participatory processes which seek to involve people with lived experience of a particular issue. Despite this, there is a stubborn ambiguity around how lived experience is conceptualised (Blume, 2017). As incorporating ‘Expertise-by-Experience’ becomes increasingly ubiquitous in policymaking spaces (Meriluoto, 2018), this paper draws on a qualitative case study of a participatory process convened for people with lived experience of poverty to feed into the Scottish Government’s Poverty and Inequality Commission. Through a review of documentary evidence, 1:1 interviews and observational data, the analysis finds that lived experience is highly valued as a knowledge type but is conceptualised in fundamentally different ways. This variation in understanding reveals a series of tensions related to representation, identity, and legitimacy as well as how this form of knowledge interacts with other types of expertise in decision-making settings. These complexities and contradictions appear to undermine the emancipatory ambitions so often associated with increasing participation opportunities for people with lived experience and raise important questions for social policy researchers and practitioners interested in participatory policymaking.

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**Lived experience or lay expertise? Valuing participation in multi-university collaborations.**

*Richard Brunner*

*University of Stirling, Stirling, United Kingdom. University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

There is a growing interest in incorporating lived experience in the production and use of evidence. The UK-wide IMPACT social care programme is a multi-university collaboration that seeks to support social care partners to work better with evidence. In Scotland, our particular IMPACT project is focused on supporting partners to use evidence to enhance the wellbeing of Personal Assistants to disabled people. Personal Assistants (PAs), employed directly by disabled people to support their independent living, were a key gain from the disabled peoples’ movement in the late 20th Century. Our working theory is that enhancing PA wellbeing in Scotland should enhance PA recruitment and retention. This in turn should advance liberation for disabled people. Two Scotland-wide ‘expert groups’ - one of disabled people that employ

PAs, and one of PAs - have been recruited to discuss and 'sense-check' evidence drawn from a new IMPACT systematic review of the international and UK evidence on PA wellbeing. Each expert group meets three times, involves pre-reading of evidence prior to each discussion, and the experts are paid by IMPACT for their participation, including any support needs. This paper will discuss: the mechanisms used to recruit and maximise inclusion in the two distinct groups; the benefits of and barriers to technology to enable participation; and the role of budgets for participation payments and expense payments. The paper will draw on the 'buffer zone' concept (Bennett and Brunner, 2020) to reflect on management, design, and funding for lay expert involvement in multi-university collaborations. It demonstrates a researcher-led approach to incorporating lived experience in evidence generation and use in policymaking.

**110**

**Defining and developing epistemological clarity for 'lived experience' in social security policy research.**

*Kate Summers*

*London School of Economics and Political Science, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

We know that 'lived experience' data offer important types of insight for social security policy research (McIntosh and Wright, 2018), but that it often remains underused, misunderstood or absent in the English or UK reserved social security policymaking process (Speed and Reeves, 2023). This paper aims to move this agenda forwards by providing further epistemological clarity on lived experience in social security policy research. First, some of the major explicit and implicit epistemological assumptions are identified: lived experience data as 'rock bottom truth'; lived experience data as 'decoration'; lived experience data and (lack of or complete) 'representation'. Next, drawing on relevant methods literature, some ways forward are proposed: bridging the gap between methodological individualism and shared 'structures of feeling'; clarifying the relationship between speech and action(s); and scaffolded ways of thinking about recognition and representativeness. The paper aims to develop a clearer shared understanding and language to help researchers and policymakers further embed and recognise the specific value of 'lived experience'.

**Theorising welfare 1**

**84**

**Welfare state optimism: the only (but not the best) game in town?**

*Kevin Farnsworth, Zoë Irving*

*University of York, York, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Over the past decade, the welfare state has helped to rescue capitalist economies and humanity. Given this role, we might expect the welfare state that has emerged out of crisis to be stronger, more relevant and more resilient than ever before. In reality, each crisis over the past 50 years has contributed to a weakening of the welfare state. Systemic crisis of the welfare state tied to the contradictions of capitalism and exogenous crises for the welfare state that have afflicted its expansion, have nevertheless been met with scholarly faith in its resilience. We question the basis for optimism by examining the 'state of the welfare state' in the context of the social goals envisaged in the 1940s and the extent to which these are evidenced in contemporary social policy arrangements. We make a case for more 'pessimism of the intellect'

within the social policy community. Optimism of the will - and a belief that the welfare state will simply endure, is more likely to consign it to history.

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**Social Policy for Optimists: The social sustainability perspective as applied to parental leave policies**

*Alison Koslowski*

*University College London, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Human societies have been able to take the long view; medieval cathedrals took generations to complete. Yet, as social scientists and policy makers of our time, we have a poor track record in taking the long view, which means that meeting the needs of people today has potentially been to the detriment of future generations (United Nations, 1987). Social sustainability is one of three pillars of sustainable development, but arguably the least developed of the pillars (Boström, 2012). The concept recognises the key role of social policy in creating human societies capable of caring for and sustaining the planet.

How might we rethink social policies in order to build better and support more sustainable ways of living? Arguably, the UN's sustainable development goals are an influential attempt in this direction (Bandola-Gill, Grek & Tichenor, 2022). Care is possibly a central social concept that can 'bridge' the gulf between environmental sustainability and social sustainability. There is increasing understanding that we must care for our environment. Care is integral to our humanity, and yet historically we have not been particularly successful in articulating its role in that which sustains us and our societies. This paper takes the example of a particular social policy area: care leave policies and considers how they might be differently considered through a social sustainability lens.

This paper will form part of a chapter in the forthcoming *Care, Leave Policies, and Social Sustainability* throughout the Life Course Editors: Alison Koslowski, Ann-Zofie Duvander, Andrea Doucet which is supported by EU Cost Action CA21150 – Parental Leave Policies and Social Sustainability.

**References**

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## **Housing 5**

**122**

### **Disability and Homelessness in the UK: a critical exploration of language, identity and support**

*Beth Stone, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom*

*Emily Wertans, University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

While concurrent experiences of homelessness and Disability are common, they are often overlooked or misunderstood in policy and practice. This presentation is based on a novel report which examined the intersection between Disability and homelessness in the UK. The report discovered that a disproportionate number of Disabled people experience homelessness and that they face multiple barriers to exiting homelessness. It also identified significant discrepancies in the way this intersection is recorded, monitored and supported.

This presentation will provide an in-depth exploration of the practical issues which can arise when 'homelessness' and 'Disability' are positioned in contention with one another. It will begin by considering how Disability and homelessness are conceptualised at a theoretical level, and how this is informed by broader socioeconomic and ableist narratives. It will then consider how narrow and misinformed categorisations have undermined recording and monitoring efforts at policy and service level in the UK. Further, this presentation will demonstrate how Disabled people may struggle to meet eligibility thresholds for statutory support.

The second half of this presentation will explore the impact of Disability and homelessness labels on personhood. It will highlight the difficulty of creating a label which has real-world meaning in enabling support but which is also able to capture the complex ontological realities of Disabled people. This presentation will argue that current constructions of Disability and homelessness are too simplistic to capture intersectionality and that assigned labels carry significant weight in terms of associated stigma and personal identity construction.

Finally, this presentation will consider the broader policy and social landscape. It will demonstrate how increased politicisation and weaponising of Disability and homelessness permit problematic categorisations while removing vital safety nets. It will consider how to overcome these issues in a context of dwindling resources where support is conditional upon meeting increasingly restricted criteria.

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### **Exploring spatial variation in Universal Credit's effects on housing insecurity**

*Rhiannon Williams, Andrew Bell*

*University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This study investigates the area-level variation in Universal Credit's effects on housing affordability problems in comparison to legacy benefits, exploring at what geographical scales variation occurs. The key aims of the study were to identify where spatial inequalities in the impact of Universal Credit on housing outcomes took place, and to highlight particularly vulnerable place-population group intersections. We employed quantitative methods, applying a multilevel logistic regression model to Understanding Society data. Findings showed that there is significant variation in the association between Universal Credit and housing insecurity across low-level geographies of MSOAs and LSOAs. This effect inequality reaches beyond area levels, with different individual characteristics and areas intersecting with particular population groups to form especially vulnerable sub-populations, such as Income Support claimants living

in the North East of England and Housing Benefit claimants living in London. The varied vulnerability to Universal Credit-related housing insecurity demonstrates a misalignment between the centralised one-size-fits-all Universal Credit system and heterogeneity of the populations and places it serves, resulting in unequal and harmful effects for many claimants. This presentation will cover the relationship between Universal Credit, housing problems, and spatial inequality; present the approach and findings of the study; and reflect on recommendations for policy-makers.

**279**

### **Beyond Shelters: Unpacking global lessons from Scotland's Journey Towards Housing Justice**

*Beth Watts-Cobbe, Lynne McMordie*

*Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Globally, shelters are a common response to homelessness, offering dormitory-style 'shared air' accommodation options at a significant scale in many cities, with specific rules on household type, length of stay, curfews, and behaviour. Despite their widespread use, shelters are associated with negative experiences among and impacts on those residing in them. Drawing on this evidence and the capabilities approach, this paper conceptualises reducing shelter use as necessary to the pursuit of housing justice because shelters actively corrode people's capabilities and contribute to the 'clustering of disadvantage' among those facing homelessness. In order to demonstrate that ending shelter use is an achievable policy goal, the paper explores how Scotland has maintained a shelter-free response to homelessness since 2020. Key enablers of this move are identified, including the 'critical juncture' of the COVID-19 pandemic, strategic leadership and coalition building, and the wider background of Scotland's housing-led, legal rights-based homelessness policy. Threats to maintaining this shift include financial pressures on local authorities, limited access to temporary accommodations and settled housing, UK Government immigration law and welfare policy, and public attitudes. The paper closes with a discussion of the implications for global responses to homelessness and the potential for a broader paradigm shift away from shelter-based responses to homelessness.

## **Education & Employment**

**140**

### **An Age-Period-Cohort approach to adult learning participation in the United Kingdom**

*Queralt Capsada-Munsech, Zyra Evangelista, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Ellen Boeren, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In this paper we aim to study whether individuals born in different cohorts are systematically more/less prone to participate in adult learning. For the past two decades it is unclear how adult learning participation has evolved in the United Kingdom (UK). When looking at the Adult Participation in Learning (APiL) survey from the Learning & Work Institute, we can see some fluctuations between 2002 and 2023 with participation rates ranging from a minimum of 38% in 2004 to a maximum of 49% in 2023. However, when looking at the UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) we can see a downward trend, with participation rates reaching its peak in 2004 (29%) and its lowest in 2017 (14.3%). Regardless the difference in magnitude between the two due to different definitions and methodologies (e.g. APiL's measure includes formal, non-formal and

informal learning, while LFS only formal and non-formal) both display different trends that have not been studied. When studying changes over time there are three main reasons that can explain variation: 1) an age effect, which entails changes over people's life course; 2) a cohort effect, implying a change over generations; and 3) a period effect, involving a change at a particular time affecting all age groups and cohorts (Firebaugh 1997; Glenn 2005). Within the UK, we do not know which of these effects might be driving adult learning participation. We know that age is negatively associated with adult learning participation, as older adults participate less (Boeren 2016: 91) and the decline starts as early as at age 40-45 (Desjardins et al. 2006). Yet, it is unclear whether there are differences across generations (e.g. post II WW vs Baby Boomers) and if societal changes (e.g. Covid-19, educational reform) are influencing adult learning participation rates. Employing the APiL survey (2002-2023) and the UK LFS data (2002-2023) we estimate an Age-Period-Cohort Detrended (APCD) model (Chauvel & Schröder 2014) to disentangle the differentiated effects of age, period and cohort on adult learning participation. Results from this research are policy relevant, as it is important to understand if changes in adult learning participation are due to an age, cohort or period effect because these would entail different public policy measures to enhance participation. An ageing and interconnected society such the UK needs to understand where change is coming from to make sure adult learning policies are effective.

**222**

### **The Concept of Employability and the Challenge of Co-producing Fair Work**

*Ronald McQuaid, University of Stirling, Stirling, United Kingdom*

*Colin Lindsay, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Policymakers in the nations of the UK and beyond are committed to promoting interventions to enhance the employability of those excluded from the labour market. Exactly what 'employability' means in this context has been a matter of debate for as long as such active labour market policies have been common. Among those attempts to synthesise the conceptual and empirical literature and arrive at a holistic concept of employability, McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) argue that policy stakeholders need to address individual-level barriers to work, but also the personal circumstances of jobseekers (such as their need to manage health conditions/disabilities or caring roles, and their varying access to social networks/support) and external factors (especially the quality and quantity of jobs in local labour markets). Green et al. (2013) and Lindsay et al. (2022) have since largely supported this framework for thinking about employability, but have emphasised that 'enabling factors' (the support provided and/or the harm done by state actors and public services; the opportunities and challenges of new technologies; and relationships between jobseekers and street-level key workers) have been understated in research on 'what might work' in supporting people towards sustainable employability outcomes. Approaching twenty years on from McQuaid and Lindsay's (2005) work on the concept of employability, this paper reviews key themes from the conceptual and empirical literature on the nexus between employability, labour market policy and the workplace. As a result, we conclude that emerging employability policy agendas need to adopt a strengthened focus on the workplace and 'fair work' (Findlay, 2016). Employability policies and services will work better where employers and jobseekers are fully engaged as co-producers of sustainable outcomes (Ingold and McGurk, 2023); where employers, key workers and jobseekers arrive at workplace accommodations that allow the latter to manage wellbeing and/or caring (Lindsay et al., 2022); where fair work/decent jobs are the target for all co-producing partners (Findlay et al., 2024); and where employment support and related policies

are better integrated. We conclude by assessing progress towards these goals in the nations of the UK, barriers to more progressive approaches to employability, and priorities for future policy.

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### **Regulatory reforms for fair work first: a UK-US comparison**

*Sean Vincent, Anne Daguerre*

*University of Brighton, Brighton, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In recent years, there has been a growing critique of work-first Active Labor Market Policies (ALMPs) in Anglo-American countries. In its place is a rising emphasis on a ‘good jobs’ agenda, which seeks to use public contracting to create equitable employment outcomes with an opportunity for career development and progression, including for jobseekers or low-income workers in receipt of public benefits. This paper investigates the extent to which the ‘fair work first’ policy agenda is rhetoric or reality in two countries that had historically led the way in establishing work first welfare to work reforms: the US and the UK. This paper therefore asks two interrelated questions:

1. Has there been a significant shift away from work entry first in employability services in the US and the UK, at the national and subnational level?
2. Has there been an attempt to embed fair work first for suppliers of goods and services in the two countries?

To answer these questions, we utilise an interdisciplinary case study qualitative approach to examine regulatory reforms and their implementation in selected localities in the UK (London and West Yorkshire) and the United States (Baltimore and Pittsburgh). We aim to a) create a greater understanding of specific sectoral workforce development initiatives (in construction and social care) and b) assess whether eligibility for public contracts is conditional upon suppliers of goods and services going beyond minimum labour standards such as the minimum wage (as can be seen in the fair work first Scottish government approach or prevailing wage regulations for federal contractors in the United States). Firstly, we assess the direction of policy reforms in both countries through a comprehensive policy mapping of government legislation from 2010 until the present day. Secondly, we present findings from in-depth interviews with sectoral workforce development commissioners, employer representatives and trade unions. While progress has been made towards creating a regulatory environment which requires employers to provide better quality work, there remains a disconnect between rhetoric and reality. Contracting authorities have yet to create effective strategies which ensure joined-up provision of employment services and many of the ‘good’ jobs which have been created fail to provide guarantees of career progression, stability, and long-term support for those with the highest barriers to work.

## **Families 3**

**170**

### **Multiagency responses to families: aligning policies and practices for the future**

*Mary Baginsky*

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

Multiagency work has been at the centre of society’s response to child protection and safeguarding. This has happened at the same time as an increasing recognition of the growing

complexity of the social and health challenges that require support from a range of services. There is a considerable body of academic work on multiagency and integrated practice, specifically on facilitators and barriers, the training that might support it, and the messages from evaluations of services. While there are examples of successful practice, problems continue. Serious case reviews and public inquiries continue to highlight agencies' failure to share crucial information and collaborate effectively in cases where there are concerns about child abuse. The conclusion from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's [CSPRP] (2022) report into the killing of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes was that joint working was systematically flawed, leading to the failure to uncover the extent of the abuse the child had experienced. There are similar findings from reviews across adult social care and health services. However, a focus on the most extreme examples may mean that problems are defined in terms of organisational failures and ignore opportunities to:

1. address very basic deficits in policies and practice
2. design services to address complexity.

Innovations that have been introduced have been introduced into a system based on single agency practices. Services fit for the future must embrace both data and system integration, as well as new approaches to leadership. The time has come to move away from calls to take account of different cultures and working practices across agencies and create services that will meet the demands of the coming 25 years.

The paper will draw on three studies that examined information sharing processes both within and among organisations, particularly those providing services to children - one examined adult and children's services responses to parents with a learning disability who were in contact with social care (Baginsky, forthcoming), another explored information sharing about fathers who potentially posed a danger to babies (Baginsky and Reavey, 2022a and 2022b) and a third was commissioned to support the development of the Department for Education's response to The Health and Care Act 2022 on information sharing (Feinstein et al., 2023). It will explore how IT based solutions to data sharing will not be sufficient and what needs to be in place to support interaction between professionals to reach an understanding of complex issues.

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### **Policy-Oriented Approach to Father Engagement in Social Work Interventions**

*Nadav Perez-Vaisvidovsky, Ayana Halpern, Reli Mizrahi*

*Ashkelon Academic College, Ashkelon, Israel*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

##### **Background**

Father Engagement in family- and child-related social work interventions have received growing scholarly attention in recent decades. The absence of fathers from the family welfare systems and its adverse effects on fathers, children, and families have been well documented. However, this body of literature focuses on fathers' phenomenology or individual social workers' biases and perceptions, ignoring institutional and systemic aspects contributing to the father's absence. Specifically, policy implicitly or explicitly affecting father engagement is often overlooked.

##### **Aim**

The presented research seeks to apply a theoretical framework developed by the authors to analyze father engagement in social work intervention from a policy-aware perspective. The

theoretical framework employs the concept of care to bridge the specific intervention level to that of the policy. Following the theorization by Daly (2021), the authors analyze father engagement through four vectors of care – Need, Actor/Relationship, Resources, and Values/ideas, enabling a policy-oriented understanding of father engagement.

#### Methods

This qualitative project is based on a secondary analysis of interviews with 21 Israeli fathers who are clients of the family welfare system. The interviews were analyzed using an analysis method developed for this purpose. Based on Carol Gilligan's Listening Guide (1982, 2017), this method consists of multiple readings of each text, each attenuated to a different care vector. The combined readings allow a multi-level view of the text, combining micro- and macro-aspects.

#### Findings

The application of the novel analysis method has uncovered several policy-related themes. The findings show how the different causes of appeal to the welfare system are expressed differently within each vector and across vectors. The vector-based analysis allows a better understanding of how low father engagement is entrenched in existing policy, which specific policy programs and procedures exacerbate or abate father exclusion, and which policy changes are expected to promote it.

#### Conclusion

This preliminary application of the vector-based analysis uncovers its potential for a policy-oriented analysis of father engagement. It looks at father engagement in social work – and potentially, on social work interventions in general – as part of the broader family policy discourse.

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### **Legitimising Austerity, Protecting Insiders, and Signalling Nationalism: The Political Determinants of the Family Policies of Centre-Right Governments in the United Kingdom, 2010-2020.**

*Sif Beyer-Hunt*

*University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Centre-right parties are important agents of welfare state reform but are understudied in Social Policy. Often relegated to a secondary role in classic explanations of welfare state development, the centre-right is caricatured as a reactionary opponent of change, servile to capital's interests. Recent scholarship has begun to reimagine centre-right parties as integral to the success of and active instigators of welfare state reform: they frequently seek to radically alter the status quo, not simply preserve the existing order. As one of the most electorally successful parties of the centre-right in Europe, the Conservative and Unionist Party of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland has shaped social policy in the UK, particularly family policy. After taking office in 2010, Conservative governments fundamentally refashioned eligibility for transfers to parents for childrearing, removing it from migrants, high earners, and the third and subsequent children of parents in receipt of tax credits. A clear causal narrative of this policy innovation of the third order is missing from the literature. My research intends to address this shortcoming, answering the question; how and why have Conservative governments in the 21st Century refashioned Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit policies?

My paper details the findings of my ongoing PhD research. Through process-tracing, I evaluate the influence of competing causal mechanisms on the family policies of Conservative

governments in the 21st Century. I analyse three path-breaking changes to Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit enacted by Conservative governments: the High-Income Child Benefit Charge, the Two-Child Limit for payments, and the removal of migrants from the eligibility criteria. Highlighting the role of political variables in driving change, my paper explains this rejection of universalism and embrace of welfare chauvinism. Reforms were influenced by the political necessity of forging a robust electoral coalition while pursuing austerity policies, and the paranoia of centre-right leaders over the siphoning off votes to the radical right. The paradigm shift in family policy conditionality was driven by electoral concerns and facilitated by a favourable policy window, characterised by permissive inter-party relations, fertile reformist ideational ground, and intra-party pressure. In examining the conditions under which Conservative governments have upended orthodoxy and retrenched the provision of welfare, my research can provide insights to the Social Policy Association into how policymakers have used novel welfare reforms to hinder progress towards a more socially just future.

## **General social policy 4**

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### **Assessing the Adequacy of Income Support: Lessons for and from Australia**

*Peter Whiteford*

*The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In November 2022, the Australian Government announced the establishment of the Interim Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee. The permanent Committee was established in December 2023.

The Committee's role is to provide independent advice to Government on economic inclusion and tackling disadvantage. It must provide a report to the Minister for Social Services and the Treasurer, at least 2 weeks ahead of each budget, on matters related to the Government's policies, programs and responsibilities for enhancing economic inclusion and participation, including policy settings, systems and structures, and the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of income support payments.

The Committee focused first on the adequacy of income support for more than one million people in Australia who receive unemployment and related payments. The approach to measuring adequacy included analysis of trends in the real level of payments, and by comparing payments to income support for people of pension age, to indicators of wages and community living standards, including relative poverty lines, and by comparisons with benefit levels in other OECD countries.

This paper evaluates the methods and outcomes to date of the first and (yet to be published) second reports and identifies the early lessons of the Australian experience. While the specific recommendations of the Committee are obviously only applicable in the Australian situation, the paper discusses broader lessons, including what role could an independent body undertake in advising Government on benefit policy, and the role of international comparators of benefit adequacy.

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**“Living in a place where they can’t afford to keep you”: Exploring the mechanisms and impacts of institutional stigma in the contemporary British social security system**

*Nancy Evans*

*University of Chester, Chester, United Kingdom. University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Institutional stigma is broadly understood as stigma occurring in the process of claiming benefits, but in the current context of unprecedented and ongoing reform to the British social security system, there is room for further development of this concept. This article utilises and builds on the broad theoretical framework of stigma power to illuminate the intentionality of institutional stigma in the design and implementation of the contemporary welfare system, and its devastating effects.

Drawing on data collected from semi-structured, in-depth qualitative interviews with women in Merseyside currently or intermittently claiming social security benefits owing to a variation of circumstances, the paper aims to contribute to a holistic, nuanced and multi-layered understanding of institutional stigma, its operation and impacts. Core findings include the operation of institutional stigma at every stage of the contemporary benefit claiming process, from explicit manifestations in conditionality and sanctions, along with its more hidden presence in the digitised administrative processes involved in applying for and claiming benefits, and in the bureaucratic structure of the system. Moreover, the findings reveal the violence that this stigma inflicts on women and disabled people through the mechanisms of the current system.

The significance of this approach to examining welfare reforms and their impacts lies in its ability to use the accounts of those with lived experience of institutional stigma to enhance understandings of the concept, so as to critique the harms of the UK social security system and provide relevant policy insights that could lead to a more just welfare future.

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**Contracting ‘person-centred’ working by results: street-level managers and frontline experiences in an outcomes-based contract**

*Eleanor Carter, Franziska Rosenbach, Felix-Anselm van Lier, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom*

*Fernando Domingos, Fundação Getulio Vargas, Sao Paulo, Brazil*

**Abstract of Paper**

Outcomes-based contracting is a welfare governance reform that has been heralded as a mechanism for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of social programmes. Yet experimentation with such contracts in employment programmes has persistently failed to deliver meaningful support for people experiencing social disadvantage (Larsen and Wright 2014; McGann 2022; Carter and Whitworth 2015).

This mixed-method study evaluates the contractual shift of a British support service for adults with multiple, complex needs from a bilateral fee-for-service governance arrangement to an outcomes contract in the form of a ‘social impact bond’. The contracting reform is applied to housing-related support services that are intended to prevent disadvantaged adults from becoming homeless whilst also supporting wellbeing and employment transitions. It connects with the conference invitation which asks: “How are innovations in policy governance shaping social policy-making and societal inequalities?”

Where conventional forms of outcomes-based contracting cascade the risk of non-payment to delivery organisations, in this social impact bond, social-sector providers are shielded from the high powered incentive contract and instead the financial risk of underperformance is transferred to a third-party social investor (Carter et al. 2018; FitzGerald et al. 2021). Despite considerable policy hype, it is not clear whether this new mode of outcomes contracting can better respond to the ambition for personalised services in complex implementation environments (Wilson et al., 2020) and this is the analytical focus of the study.

We draw on longitudinal survey data with frontline staff, semi-structured interviews and a peer-led research project where participants in the social programme act as researchers. Our findings add much-needed empirical evidence on the implications of outcomes-based contracting for personalisation and co-production of public service delivery. In contrast to prior payment-by-results experiments we find evidence of enhanced person-centredness and asset-based practice.

### **Poverty & Inequality 3**

**103**

#### **A Sustainable Tripartite Partnership Model to Tackle Poverty in Hong Kong: A Pilot Study**

*Vincent W. P. Lee*

*Hong Kong Baptist University, Kowloon, Hong Kong*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The issue of poverty in Hong Kong has become a pressing concern for the government, social service providers, individual community members, and the business sector. Over the past two decades, the government has championed the “tripartite partnership” model as a means to address this issue, particularly in the context of intergenerational poverty. This model involves collaboration between policymakers, service providers, the business sector, and other community stakeholders, all working together to improve the well-being of disadvantaged families and enhance the social mobility of young people.

This study is of utmost importance due to the severity of poverty and wealth disparity in Hong Kong. It aims to facilitate more effective policies and support measures by critically assessing the roles and responsibilities of different parties, identifying the drivers and enablers of a sustainable tripartite partnership model, and proposing strategies to overcome stakeholder differences. The study also seeks to understand stakeholders’ perspectives on the roles of the government, service providers, and the business sector in poverty alleviation, and to critically evaluate existing poverty alleviation initiatives based on tripartite partnerships.

This pilot study aims to provide unique insights into the experiences and opinions of stakeholders regarding tripartite partnerships. It also seeks to identify the key drivers and enablers that lead to successful partnership programmes, as well as strategies to overcome challenges. Prior to conducting stakeholder interviews, the research team employed the Delphi study method, interviewing a panel consisting of experts who have taken part in such tripartite partnership projects (N=8) to gather expert opinions. These experts highlighted the crucial role of the government in initiating cross-sectoral collaborative projects and fostering cohesion among the collaborating parties. Without staunch support from the government in cross-sectoral negotiations, providing guidance in aligning values, and setting targets for collaborative

projects, it would be challenging for private corporations and non-profit sectors to work together.

The panel experts suggested that the government should play a more active role in connecting different parties and resources together to strengthen joint efforts in poverty alleviation. The results of this pilot study will help guide future studies on developing a sustainable collaborative model for tripartite partnerships to address poverty and other social problems.

**111**

**Tackling Poverty Locally: An Online Directory**

*Stephen Sinclair, Anni Taitto, John McKendrick*

*Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

A vital contribution which Social Policy analysis can make to shaping a better future is to document, analyse and disseminate learning from experience and policy experiments. This presentation contributes to this by introducing a new resource developed by the Scottish Poverty & Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) which is designed to inform local anti-poverty measures in the UK and beyond. The Tackling Poverty Locally Online Directory showcases initiatives undertaken by local authorities, social enterprises, housing associations, national charities, and community organisations from across the UK to tackle poverty. Each entry has been independently quality assured by one researcher and one practitioner, in addition to being quality assured by SPIRU. Cases are assigned to one of five categories: ‘fully validated and adopted’, ‘fully validated’, ‘promising practice’, ‘emerging practice’ and ‘interesting practice’. SPIRU anticipates that particular initiatives may be re-categorised over time as they develop and more evidence of their impact becomes available. The Directory provides a short summary of each case study, including an account of its impact and key learning points. Details are provided on the background to the case study, its relative cost, target population, approach to co-production and other essential information. Each entry also includes a more detailed ‘How-to’ guide and contact information for those involved in the initiative (where it has been agreed to make this available). The Directory is searchable in relation to several parameters, including the scale of the project, whether applied in an urban and/or rural setting, and which of several drivers of poverty it principally addresses (e.g., reducing household costs, increasing income from employment, etc.). The Directory was launched November 2023 with 20 case studies and new content is added weekly. The presentation will provide a short overview of the Directory, highlighting its principal features, and seek feedback and improvement suggestions from anyone interested in learning more about and contributing to local action to tackle poverty.

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**Welfare stigma, needy situation, and welfare participation decisions of low-income parents: The impossible triangle of being a good parent in a liberal welfare society**

*Chenhong Peng, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China*

*Julia Shu-Huah Wang, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan*

*Tianming Zhang, Shanghai University, Shanghai, China*

*Xi Zhao, Renmin University, Beijing, China*

**Abstract of Paper**

This study examines how low-income families’ welfare claim decisions are shaped by the welfare stigma and needs. We focus on the public assistance program in Hong Kong, a liberal welfare society in East Asia where self-reliance and family obligations are valued. Our interviews with 17 low-income parents elicit several findings. First, the push forces of

anticipated stigma and the pull forces of financial and childcare needs dynamically shape the decision. The ability and availability to work affect whether people view themselves as “deserving” of aid, which influences both low-income parents’ anticipated self-stigma and their assessment of needs. Second, children play a crucial role in parents’ welfare participation decisions through both anticipated stigma and childcare needs. Third, low-income parents are trapped in the impossible triangle of being a “good” parent: fulfilling parental responsibilities and financial duties versus serving as a self-reliant role model/protecting children from welfare stigma. Claiming public assistance sacrifices the last one but fulfills the first two, while choosing not to claim sacrifices the first one but fulfills the remaining ones. Both choices have emotional consequences that can undermine parent-child relationships. We further discuss the policy implications for unemployment benefits and in-work benefits.

**Symposium 177: Digital Social Policy – Looking at the past and present to shape the future (Papers 223; 282 and 194)**

*Organiser: Paul Henman*

**223**

**Building a trauma informed assessment for digital social services delivery futures**

*Lyndal Sleep, Central Queensland University, Brisbane, Australia*

*Paul Henman, Suzanna Fey, Suvradip Maitra, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia*

**Abstract of Paper**

As social services delivery becomes increasingly digital concerns about its impacts on service users have also grown. There have been examples across the globe of harms caused when digitisation combines with punitive welfare compliance systems: Robodebt in Australia, Syri in the Netherlands and MiDAS in the United States. AI audits tend to be concerned with issues like bias, repeatability and accuracy, hoping that ensuring these factors will mean harms are mitigated. However, in a system that is not fair to begin with, these measures will inevitably fall short.

This paper introduces a new tool for evaluating digital social services. Drawing from trauma informed concepts that acknowledge the impact of trauma on social services users to move towards digital administrative systems that heal rather than cause further trauma. Trauma informed evaluation frameworks are not new, but few incorporate knowledge about new digital technologies, and their specific risks. The paper then describes how the tool was developed through a series of case studies and interactive workshops with stakeholders and outlines how it might be useful as we journey towards a digital social policy future.

**282**

**Youth homelessness and digital social services: impacts, risks, possibilities**

*Stephanie Livingstone*

*RMIT, Melbourne, Australia*

**Abstract of Paper**

Digitised and automated social services have rapidly become permanent features of welfare and social service provision globally, as governments pursue affordances around the economisation of resources, enhanced citizen-state engagement, and more efficient use of data. While scholarly work on the broad risks and consequences around digital social services is growing, little research to date has looked at the impact of these developments on young service users. This paper seeks to grow this body of work dedicated to identifying and mitigating the risks around digitised and automated tools being employed in social services.

Drawing on qualitative data from my PhD research, I present interview and creative workshop findings from young people and frontline workers in the homelessness service system in Victoria, Australia. I explore the impacts of digital social services on young people navigating the service system who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness, focusing on the affective dimensions of interactions with digitised and automated services.

Despite the many affordances of digitised social service provision, I demonstrate the way in which confusing, overwhelming and punitive experiences of digital social services for young people entail significant emotional consequences. I focus specifically on emotional impacts such as stress and anxiety, overwhelm, and the exacerbation of trauma symptoms.

I elucidate that these impacts are far-reaching, leading to behavioural coping mechanisms which can eventuate in disconnections from the system, social exclusion, and crime. The paper concludes by emphasising the importance of understanding the current adverse emotional impacts of digital service interactions for young homeless people and the associated need to establish strategies for mitigating the material, emotional and psychological risks of inflexible and unsupportive digital social services.

**194**

**Catching the bad apples to keep up the good work: city government perspectives on data-driven governance in the domain of work and income**

*Margot Kersing, Lieke Oldenhof, Liesbet van Zoonen*

*Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, Netherlands*

**Abstract of Paper**

Despite the rapid rise of the digital welfare at the local government level in the Netherlands, there seems to be still surprisingly little political debate about the implications of digitalization for the life of citizens and the work of frontline bureaucrats. Only when there is a scandal city councils pay attention, but broader political debate on technology has yet to get off the ground. The dualized structure of public administration at the municipal level in the Netherlands poses an obstacle. Although the city council is tasked with setting the course, the implementation lies with the administrative body. In the Netherlands technology is viewed merely as an implementation issue and is therefore handled by aldermen and civil servants. Local politicians are rarely involved in the digitalization of service provision due to their lack of knowledge and oversight (VNG, 2021, Centre for BOLD Cities, 2023). Furthermore, civil servants' reluctance to inform politicians often stems from a fear of politicians who want to prevent negative image formation, and thus perhaps thwart the development of data projects (VNG, 2021).

In this research we focus on discussions about the use of data-driven technologies in the domain of work and income in the municipality of Rotterdam because it is a relatively new terrain in this domain for the municipality and also has been criticized by the local audit office and investigative journalists for their algorithm use (Rekenkamer Rotterdam, 2021, Open Rotterdam, 2023).

We pose the following research question: How is the use of data-driven technologies in the domain of work and income politically discussed within the city government of the municipality of Rotterdam?

We argue that digitization of welfare provision is not merely a bureaucratic challenge but also a political one because decisions about the use of data-driven technologies affects the work of frontline professionals (Kersing et al., 2022) and citizens' lives (Kersing et al., forthcoming).

Recent scandals around the use of data-driven technologies at the municipal level indicates that public values are under pressure.

Answering this question gives us insight in what is (not) discussed, where discussions take place (political/bureaucratic arena), and how it is discussed (political/economic/technological/ethical/legal).

We conducted a discourse analysis using text-analysis software ConText and Atlas.ti to analyze city government documents (term 2018-2022 and term 2022-2026). Adopting an abductive, exploratory approach, we analyzed documents to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how city government discussions unfold pre- and post-scandals.

## **Paper Session 6 - 11:25–12:25**

### **Symposium 267: The SPA's Employment Policy Group symposium series (Papers 66; 99 and 62)**

*Organisers: Ceri Hughes and Katy Jones*

#### **Symposium proposal**

Employment has been falling and “economic inactivity” increasing across the UK amid an enduring cost of living crisis. The impacts have been uneven with fewer young people in particular in the labour market, more older people out of work, more people off work because of long-term health conditions and a growing number of people struggling on inadequate incomes and feeling insecure in work.

These trends point to a number of employment policy challenges. The expansion and intensification of conditionality policy means increasing pressure is being applied to people to take up (more) work. Meanwhile, employment support programmes targeted at people on benefits who are required to look for work do little for other people who are outside the labour market or in low-paid work.

This symposium series is convened by researchers from the SPA's Employment Policy Group, with papers split across 3 themed sessions:

#### **1. Challenges in developing personalised policies and interventions**

Activating couples under Universal Credit: street-level and household perspectives on welfare-to-work provision

Progression in work – a journey of shared values and constrained choices across the policy process

Building the case for tailored employment support for second earners in households claiming Universal Credit: reflections from the evaluation of Your Work Your Way

#### **2. Employer practices and labour market realities**

Emergent Policy Positions on Earned Wage Access; A Sticking Plaster or Lifeline for the Low Paid?

Rethinking employer interactions with Active Labour Market Policy: expanding notions of co-production

Interrelations and intersections of underemployment's dimensions: lessons for policy

#### **3. Skills and employment support policy and practice at different levels**

The employment retention of disabled people in the United Kingdom and Germany in the 2010s: labour market stratification and cross-country differences

Centralised and devolved policy interactions at the intersection of youth unemployment and work insecurity: a sub-state analysis

Activation accountabilities and Supported Employment: mutual learnings for research, policy and practice

Still one model of youth transition? The diversity of skills formation systems within the post-devolution United Kingdom

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We hope you will join us for all or part of this series.

Follow the Employment Policy group on twitter @EmpContextSPA and join the jiscmail ([EMPLOYMENT-POLICY-SPA@JISCMAIL.AC.UK](mailto:EMPLOYMENT-POLICY-SPA@JISCMAIL.AC.UK))

Contact the co-leads Ceri and Katy for further information about the Employment Policy group: [ceri.hughes@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ceri.hughes@manchester.ac.uk) and [Katy.Jones@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:Katy.Jones@mmu.ac.uk)

**66**

### **Activating couples under Universal Credit: street-level and household perspectives on welfare-to-work provision**

*Levana Magnus*

*University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Universal Credit changed the landscape of welfare-to-work policy in the UK, through the merging of in-work and out-of-work benefits, extension of conditional welfare, and digitalisation of services. Under this new landscape, the way in which couples are activated at the street-level is of particular interest; first, as second-earners and parents, typically women, have increasingly been the target for workfare policies, and, second, Universal Credit means-testing centres on total household earnings, whilst behavioural change mechanisms are largely individualised. The street-level bureaucracy literature has explored how frontline staff navigate tensions within competing policy aims of personalisation and uniformity of service delivery, however, in respect to couples, personalisation of activation services could mean responding to both individual and household needs. In centring couples' experiences of activation, this paper will explore how frontline staff and service users implemented and experienced welfare-to-work delivery at the street-level and in the household. This paper draws on findings from a PhD research project, using interviews with 10 frontline staff (the Work Coaches), and a secondary analysis of interviews with 78 coupled service users from the 'Couples navigating work, care and Universal Credit' project.

The analysis highlights that the way that Universal Credit has created limited spaces for Work Coaches to personalise employment support and tailor conditionality requirements, with coupled service users largely individualised. However, how couples were individually activated was often at odds with household decisions around work and care, and how couples jointly engaged in managing conditionality requirements. This research highlights the need for understanding the relational nature of frontline work beyond a two-way interaction, and how contexts and relationships in the household are important dynamics at play in street-level implementation.

**99**

### **Building the case for tailored employment support for second earners in households claiming Universal Credit: reflections from the evaluation of Your Work Your Way**

*Sophie Howes, Child Poverty Action Group, London, United Kingdom.*

*Elizabeth Sanderson, Catherine Harris, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom.*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Your Work Your Way (YWYW) was an innovative employment support programme designed and delivered by the Child Poverty Action Group between 2020 and 2023. YWYW focused on employment support for second earners in households claiming universal credit (UC). Most

participants were women/mothers who had spent a significant amount of time outside the labour market caring for children. CPAG was interested in such as a model as we know that having one parent in full time, and one parent in part time work is key for lifting children and families out of poverty.

An independent mixed-method evaluation of the programme was undertaken by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU). SHU will present findings from the evaluation of YWYW. Researchers found that:

- A large proportion of participants moved into work and took up training.
- There were substantial benefits to participants in terms of overall improvements to their financial circumstances and wellbeing.
- The provision of personalised and holistic motivational, financial and practical support was critical in helping many participants to improve skills, take up work, and manage the challenges of balancing work and family life.
- In interviews, it was common for participants to describe the project as 'life changing'.

YWYW has demonstrated that the provision of long-term, personalised support which empowers women to achieve their ambitions has the potential to significantly improve labour market participation for this group and to move families out of poverty.

CPAG will present on the policy implications of YWYW. Since the project's completion, CPAG has been sharing findings from the evaluation with a wide range of audiences, to build the case for tailored employment support for second earners in households claiming UC. This comes at a time when there is increasing political focus on economic inactivity and getting parents and carers into work is a policy priority for both the current government and the opposition. CPAG will reflect on this policy engagement to date and what it means for the future of employment support for this important group.

**62**

### **Activation accountabilities and Supported Employment: mutual learnings for research, policy and practice**

*Adam Whitworth*

*University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Activation scholarship outlines five different levers – 'accountabilities' – through which commissioners might seek to deliver desired objectives in activation programmes: procedural (rules & processes); market (finance); corporate (targets); democratic (leaders & users); and network (trust). Accountability hybridities – differently weighted combinations and configurations of these levers – are common in practice but are neglected in scholarship. At the same time, model prescription – fidelity – is seemingly on the rise in UK (and some international) activation policy through innovation and expansion in Supported Employment programmes, including DWP's upcoming large-scale Universal Support national programme. The presentation seeks two main lines of enquiry and contributions. Firstly, situated in that Supported Employment landscape this presentation reflects on the arguably misunderstood role of fidelity inside Supported Employment services in terms both of its alleged prescription as well as its neglected (potential yet we argue critical) inter-connectivity with its underlying progressive values of the Supported Employment model. Secondly, in doing so the presentation uses this discussion to reflect more broadly both on the extent to which different accountability levers can sensibly be combined and on the neglected role of values inside (especially UK) activation policy.

## **Symposium 240: Using the lens of social harm to examine contemporary societal challenges and achieve more socially just futures. (Papers 228; 249; 188 and 341)**

*Organiser: Nasrul Ismail*

### **Symposium proposal**

Led by the newly formed Social Harm Policy Group of the Social Policy Association, this symposium consists of the following four presentations that examine how contemporary societal challenges are symptomatic of the manufacturing of social harm, which intensifies mass-scale inequalities by the state:

1. Gary Fooks, Killian Mullan, Tom Mills, Jennifer Willmott, and David Yates. *Elite Welfare and the Good Fortune of Just Being There*.
2. Uisce Jordan. 'Abuse', 'Violence' and 'Suffering': Exploring Perspectives of Poverty from Parents Living on a Low-Income in the UK.
3. Claire MacRae. *Social Harm and Risk: A Case Study of Asylum Seekers Living in Scotland*.
4. Nasrul Ismail, Christina Pantazis and Lisa Waddell. *Penal Transitions and Legacies During and Post COVID-19: An Examination of Penal Harms Across 34 Countries*.

The first presentation (Gary Fooks, Bristol) will examine the effects of government support to businesses during the pandemic regarding executive pay and capital distributions to shareholders. Uisce Jordan (York) will then report on the harms associated with living on a low income or in poverty, drawing on the perspectives of 100 low-income parents and caregivers across the UK. This will be followed by Claire MacRae's (Glasgow) examination of the harms created by the government policies that lead to economic, social, and cultural barriers for asylum seekers. This symposium will be concluded by Nasrul Ismail, Christina Pantazis and Lisa Waddell (Bristol) and their investigation into how the penal harms generated through COVID-19 measures in prisons in 34 countries signal a transition towards authoritarianism. Our discussions will identify ways that socially just futures can be attained through social action. This symposium will provide an opportunity to learn about our Social Harm Policy Group and how our activities can foster future research and pedagogical activities.

### **228**

#### **Elite Welfare and the Good Fortune of Just Being There**

*Gary Fooks, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom*

*Tom Mills, Killian Mullan, Jennifer Willmott, Aston University, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

*David Yates, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Government support to business during the pandemic was consistently justified on the basis of common interests: 'protecting jobs and livelihoods' (Sunak 2020) and helping to 'ease the financial burden for businesses and the UK population' (HM Revenue and Customs 2020). But such indefinite, universal goals potentially gloss over deeper questions about how monetary and in-kind support passed through the companies that received it. How, for example, was the pay of companies' most senior employees affected and how did shareholders fare? This paper addresses these questions by examining the effects of government support to business during the pandemic on executive pay and capital distributions to shareholders (dividends and share repurchases). We seek to explain these effects with reference to the novel concept of elite welfare, which we tie to the increasing rentierisation of modern economies. We conclude by thinking through the relevance of the concept to practices largely ignored within social policy, such as 'fiscal welfare' for economic elites, political cronyism, and the transfer of publicly-

owned assets to elites at a discount and ask what elite welfare tells us about the redistributive bearing of modern welfare states.

**249**

**'Abuse', 'Violence' and 'Suffering': Exploring Perspectives of Poverty from Parents living on a low-income in the UK**

*Uisce Jordan, Maddy Power, Ruth Power, Katie Pybus, University of York, York, United Kingdom  
Jim Kaufman, University of Salford, Salford, United Kingdom.*

**Abstract of Paper**

The UK social security system's shift towards a compulsory and punitive approach has raised concerns about its potential to inflict harm on the very people it aims to protect. Drawing on findings from Changing Realities, an online participatory research project involving over 100 parents and caregivers living on a low-income across the UK, we provide deeper insights into the significant social harms associated with living on a low income or in poverty.

By connecting our findings with other social policy perspectives, we shed light on how participants describe life on a low income as a source of abuse, violence, and suffering. Our discussions will explore co-produced recommendations aimed at addressing these social harms and inequalities, while advocating for socially just futures. Our research underscores the urgency of implementing these recommendations to mitigate the adverse effects of poverty.

**188**

**Socio-Economic Risk Analysis: A Case Study of Asylum Seekers living in Scotland.**

*Claire MacRae, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom  
Darinka Asenova, Thelma Okey-Adibe, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Asylum policy has faced increased scrutiny, shaping the basis of many debates focusing on social, economic, and human rights narratives for those seeking asylum in the UK. This paper explores these issues through a risk analysis perspective. It explores the key risks and opportunities encountered by asylum seekers in the context of their social and economic well-being. It draws on the lived experiences of twenty-two qualitative interviews and 7 focus groups with asylum seekers and refugees living in Glasgow as part of the UK Home Office dispersal scheme. Several socio-economic and other risks were identified which centred around key themes: health and wellbeing, housing, employment education and financial resources. The interconnectedness and collective impact of those risks created significant challenges for asylum seekers, obstructing opportunities for to integrate fully into society.

The findings of this study conclude that the implementation of asylum policies can lead to economic, social, and cultural barriers for asylum seekers when integrating into society and the economy. Such challenges can create risks, vulnerabilities and/or exacerbate pre-existing inequalities, leading to a reduced capacity for participants to be resilient.

341

**Penal transitions and legacies during and post COVID-19: An examination of penal harms across 34 countries.**

*Nasrul Ismail, Christina Pantazis, Lisa Waddell  
University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The research is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic was a tipping point for penal convergence, as evidenced via the implementation of draconian measures across the world. Despite this, there has been no systematic assessment of these shifts in mitigating or exacerbating harms within prisons, nor has there been any monitoring of whether draconian these measures have been normalised in the post-COVID-19 context.

This paper examines how the emergency powers implemented and sustained within prisons in response to the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate a penal transition towards authoritarianism. Using a social harm lens, we chart how countries responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in prisons worldwide.

Drawing upon official statistics and multiple policy sources from 34 countries, thereby capturing the spectrum of democracy/authoritarianism, our quantitative investigations determine the relationship between handling the COVID-19 pandemic, the political economy, and democracy. We also examine the evidence that the draconian measures adopted in the context of a national emergency have become normalised in the post-COVID-19 context. We conclude by exploring how the COVID-19 measures in prisons should be rolled back given that the global health emergency has now ended.

**Teaching tax & social policy**

193

**Taxation, environmental sustainability and distributive outcomes: balancing behavioural change and fairness**

*Paul Bridgen, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom  
Micheal Collins, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland*

**Abstract of Paper**

The pursuit of measures to enhance the environmental sustainability of societies has shifted to become a core aspect of contemporary public policy. Taxation measures, intended to alter the behaviour of individuals and households, have become a central plank of many nations policy response. However, these initiatives arise alongside other taxation and redistributive policy objectives focused on equity.

The purpose of this article is to explore the taxation policy design challenges raised by attempts to pursue simultaneously environmental goals and traditional social policy objectives regarding social justice in line with sustainable development principles. Focusing on the experience of two liberal political economies with broadly similar tax structures but whose approach to carbon taxation has varied, Ireland and the UK, the article develops a social policy framework, derived from the energy justice literature, to facilitate a holistic delineation of the social implications of carbon taxation in the two countries.

Keywords: carbon taxes, greenhouse gas emissions, fairness, United Kingdom, Ireland

## **Housing 1**

**9**

### **Defining Support in Supported Housing**

*Nell Munro, Carla Reeson*

*University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Around 153,000 households are accommodated in exempt supported housing in Great Britain. These households cannot manage a tenancy independently and are entitled to exempt housing benefit, an additional payment above the local housing allowance to cover the costs of providing support. This sector has caused controversy in recent years due to the existence of low-quality providers in the sector exploiting the availability of high rents and low oversight to avoid offering support to highly vulnerable people. In many cases failures in support have been exposed at inquests and in Safeguarding Adult Reviews. The Supported Housing Regulatory Provisions Act 2023 introduces tools to license supported accommodation, require local authorities to review local provision and empower the Secretary of State to prepare new National Housing Standards under the guidance of a National Advisory Panel.

The Act creates new regulatory challenges for a sector which is poorly understood creating the perfect conditions for regulatory failure. The concept of support itself has no legal definition and relatively little attention has been paid to it in research. This may mean efforts to define its content in regulations will prove insubstantial.

Further, providers of exempt accommodation have strong incentives to exit the market if the requirements for licensing or National Standards are set too high. In turn local authorities need exempt accommodation as demand is high and they have limited capacity to create alternative provision.

This paper will explore the risks to the supported housing sector and its residents created by the introduction of this legislation.

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### **Applying an intersectional conceptualisation of vulnerability to understand the impact of antisocial behaviour interventions on alleged perpetrators living within social housing**

*Kirsty Cameron*

*Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) interventions, introduced in the 1990s, have been used by successive governments to manage, control and change the behaviour of certain populations, particularly those living within social housing. However, whilst initially subject to significant academic scrutiny, attention towards ASB and the related interventions have waned in recent decades. Based on research reported in the author's upcoming chapter contribution to the Social Policy Review 36, this paper will explore the findings of a qualitative longitudinal research project into the experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB, considering whether ASB interventions are effective at changing behaviour as intended. The study employed a theoretical framework of intersectional vulnerability to understand the impact of ASB interventions on alleged perpetrators behaviour and vulnerability. Findings suggested that ASB interventions may change behaviour in some instances, but not necessarily in a way that would prevent further ASB intervention. ASB interventions also appeared to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities or introduce new vulnerabilities to alleged perpetrators. Additionally, alleged perpetrators could be

asked to change behaviours linked to vulnerabilities such as domestic abuse, mental ill-health and disability, but without access to support referrals or provision. The apparent focus of behaviour management, control and change appeared to result in vulnerabilities being ignored, side-lined or exacerbated during and following ASB intervention, increasing levels of hardship for alleged perpetrators and resulting in the most vulnerable being especially impacted by intervention processes.

**56**

### **Exploring how to tackle stigma linked to age, disability and place through social policy in housing and health**

*Vikki McCall, Dianne Theakstone*

*University of Stirling, Stirling, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

There has always been a strong place-based focus to research around stigma, which is indicative of a wider concern with the spatial impacts of social and urban policies upon people and places. This presentation will present findings from the Intersectional Stigma of Place-Based Ageing (ISPA) that explores how stigma can lead to increased barriers to services, exclusion, and negative experiences. We will explore how housing and health services can tackle stigma by integrating inclusivity and accessibility in policy and practice through findings from an ISPA evidence review of research concerning age, disability, place, and stigma.

The evidence review highlights the merits of combining a spatial approach to stigma with an intersectional approach foregrounded in age and disability. As well as turning our focus to aspects of stigma that have received less attention in the housing literature (age and disability), intersectionality also affords opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning and the further development of stigma as a concept. We will explore how these insights can help us generate understandings place-based practical solutions in housing practice for tackling intersectional stigma and inequality via accessible homes and communities.

The ISPA Project is an ambitious 5-year participatory mixed method study that is exploring and understanding how the stigma attached to where people live can intersect with experiences of disability and ageing. This is a collaboration between the University of Stirling and the University of St Andrews, Newcastle University and University of Bristol, partnered with the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (Housing LIN) and Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA). The project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and runs from September 2022 to September 2027.

## **Employment 3**

**46**

### **Low Paid Older Workers: Who, Where and Why?**

*Micheal Collins*

*University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Research on the topic of low pay has experienced a revival in Ireland over recent years triggered by a greater policy shift towards understanding and addressing low pay, growing interest in the challenges of employment precarity, and greater research and policy engagement on the relationship between earnings and living standards. While the overall scale and composition of

low paid employment is now much better understood, there has been less focus on the nature and experiences of low pay among specific cohorts of the labour force.

This research examines one heretofore underexplored group, older workers in low pay and aims to establish insights into the scale and experience of low pay among employees aged 50 years and older. It brings together themes of ageing populations, labour market earnings and living conditions to explore the following questions:

- what is the scale and profile of low pay among older workers?
- does low pay differ between older workers and the low paid in general, and if so, how?
- what are the reasons behind why older workers become and remain low paid?

The study takes a mixed-methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore these questions. While either of these methodological approaches could be taken by themselves to examine this issue, there are benefits associated with combining both so that the research analysis and findings offer a more comprehensive understanding of the nature, scale, contexts and experiences of low pay among older workers in Ireland.

The paper draws from a recently published research report funded by the Irish Government's Low Pay Commission. The report entitled 'Low Paid Older Workers: a quantitative and qualitative profile of low pay among workers aged over 50' is available from the University College Dublin Research Repository here: <http://hdl.handle.net/10197/24919>

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### **Imaginations of retirement, pension, and precarity: A cultural political economy of low-wage older workers' extended working lives in Hong Kong**

*Tat Chor Au-Yeung*

*Lingnan University, Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

With the policy agenda of pension reforms and activation, the global ageing workforce are increasingly expected to prolong their employment through job retention or re-employment. Despite the growing popularity of extended working lives (EWL) to address economic pressures on the public finance and labour shortage, delaying retirement could transform welfare entitlements and employment relations, institutionally and ideationally rooted in neoliberalism. While previous studies from sociology, social policy, and social gerontology focus on the social determinants of EWL, older workers' lived experience and normative expectations receive less attention. Two research questions emerge in this study: (1) why and how do older people engage in EWL? (2) in what ways do low-wage mature workers understand their later employment and pension incomes?

Informed by cultural political economy theories, this paper investigates how older workers, who are extending working lives, make sense of the social security system and labour market based on their socioeconomic imaginaries, including the everyday decision making, interest calculation, identity building, and the construal of institutional rules. By conducting 36 in-depth interviews with low-wage older employees in Hong Kong, the findings unpack the material and semiotic forces driving workers into EWL. On the one hand, interviewees' risk assessment of the financialised private saving accounts and their fear of falling into the social safety net perpetuated workers' financial needs, given the absence of public pension in Hong Kong. On the other hand, the hegemonic work ethic privileged paid employment for older people contributing to the society and countering the ageist discourses about economic burden. In addition to accepting low job quality due to limited choices in their later career, mature workers' EWL practices were constrained by their predictive and actual health condition. It was suggested

that older employees' workability and employability was considered far beyond their control. Hence, low-wage older workers' imaginaries about the future were uncertain and they tended to unceasingly work without retirement plans, leading to the power asymmetries in the workplaces and shifted business costs to workers. Legitimised by Hong Kong's productivist welfare model and liberal labour market, EWL are arguably entangled with the threefold precarity in terms of work, welfare, and health. This paper theoretically contributes to social policy by reconceptualising EWL from a cultural political economy perspective on socioeconomic imaginaries, while the worker-centred analysis problematises the promotion of EWL as a good and low-cost policy approach to workforce ageing in a non-Western context.

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### **EMPOWERING SECOND EARNER PARENTS TO PROGRESS TOWARDS EMPLOYABILITY**

*Sarah Pearson, Christina Beatty, Catherine Harris, Elizabeth Sanderson, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

*Colin Lindsay, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In the UK, non-working parents residing with low-paid working partners face an increasing risk of poverty. Recent Conservative governments have sought to use the increased conditionality of the Universal Credit regime and 'work-first' activation to compel these 'second earners' to enter and progress in paid employment, with relatively little concern expressed for the quality of job outcomes or the challenges faced by parents in balancing work and family life. This paper reports findings from a third sector-led initiative - Your Work, Your Way - that sought to mitigate these pressures faced by second earners, by empowering parents (mainly mothers) in four different labour markets to make choices to progress towards employability, employment that was appropriate and/or other outcomes that they had reason to value. Drawing on extensive survey and qualitative research with second earners and key stakeholders involved in programme delivery, we identify positive experiences of empowerment, facilitated by a combination of intensive, co-produced keyworker support, flexible financial packages for learning and employability, and effective signposting to a suite of personal development and wellbeing-related services. We also note the limits to empowerment for this group, rooted in structural challenges around the dominance of low-paid and insecure job opportunities and weaknesses in the childcare infrastructure. We conclude by discussing insights for the future direction of employability and labour market policy directed towards working-age parents.

## **Theorising Welfare 2**

**8**

### **Time, Welfare and Alterity: a challenge to neo-liberal welfare provision?**

*Lee Gregory*

*University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper draws upon a developing final chapter of a monograph to briefly outline the relevance of the social theory of time for key debates in welfare provision. The paper briefly outlines key insights about contemporary society drawn through the temporal gaze and draws links to this analysis to the literature on alterity. Providing a foundation for a critical account of welfare provision under neo-liberalism the paper considers this lens for social policy debates to offer a new perspective for developing social interventions and welfare systems. It seeks to

demonstrate how the social theory of time offers a new means through which to pursue welfare aims and re-think the dominance of the neo-liberal paradigm in economic and social policy debates. This account reflects briefly on key concepts (need and citizenship) and how to rearticulate social value in relation to welfare provision.

The discussion will also integrate future generations considerations and developments such as the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and the implications of such approaches for wider social policy. This will draw upon the literature around futures and future perspectives to complement analysis of the Future Generations Commissioner.

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### **The framing of Public Policy in Chile**

*Francisco Palma Carvajal*

*University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Public policy as a discipline is on the rise. Undergraduate programmes in social policy and master's degrees in public policy are becoming a common and popular course of study in many universities around the world. However, this programmatic massification has not necessarily been accompanied by sufficient critical reflection on what public policy is, what it is for, and how we should approach its practice and study. In particular, little attention has been paid to the key ideas, languages and values that dominate among academics, policy practitioners and government officials in the field, and how they shape the study and practice of this academic discipline.

In parallel with this deficit, as Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) have argued, in recent decades, under the 'evidence-based policy movement', there has been a global reaffirmation of the rationalist approaches to policy analysis. This trend, as they contend, implies conceiving policy as a rational and neutral activity which produces objective solutions to policy problems. However, this powerful trend has not gone unchallenged. In the early 1990s some critical policy scholars, such as Fischer and Yanow, challenged the dominant traditional positivist approaches to policy and their emphasis on objectivism, the value-neutral position of the researcher and scientific rationality. With the development of socio-constructionism and postmodernism, and the emergence of the linguistic turn in the social sciences and interpretive approaches to policy analysis, various scholars began to emphasise the role of meaning, language use and context as key dimensions in making sense of policy and the policy process. However, it is worth recognising that the development of these alternative approaches to policy analysis is still slow, fragmented and uneven across different places in the world. In this sense, in most parts of the world, economics, and the language and tools associated with it, have remained as the main way of thinking when it comes to public policy.

Given this scenario, this research seeks to explore how public policy is understood by key practitioners and academics in the field, exploring how they frame the meaning of public policy and the tools and rationales associated with its implementation and study. Specifically, I will focus on the case of Chile, exploring the views of different public policy experts who are influential members of the Chilean Society of Public Policy, paying particular attention to the values, languages and ways of thinking that emerge and are referenced as essential components of the discipline.

**Moral distress and social work in a hostile environment***Chris Q Smith, Andy Jolly**University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom***Abstract of Paper**

Social work with refugees and migrants takes place in a policy context characterised by exclusion, underfunding, fragmentation of services, and anti-immigration rhetoric. Working in this area creates ethical tensions for many social workers, who seek to enact the social justice values of the profession but are constrained in doing so by a restrictive organisational and regulatory context (Morely et al, 2020). The complexities of practicing in this environment also create risks of emotional distress and burnout (Lintner, 2020), and there is a need for more research into understanding the challenges social workers face in acting as ethical practitioners.

The concepts of moral distress and moral injury are potentially valuable in making sense of the ethical dilemmas experienced by social work practitioners when working with refugees and migrants. Moral distress refers to the psychological unease created when professionals are constrained from acting in accordance with their ethical values, while moral injury is the long-term psychological harm that can arise from this distress (British Medical Association, 2021). The concept has been widely used in healthcare, but there are fewer studies in social work about the strain experienced in situations where there is a perceived conflict between the values of the profession on the one hand, and the roles or tasks of social work on the other. This paper presents the findings of a scoping review of the literature on moral distress and injury among social workers, and conceptual work into the sociological dynamics of an idea which, to date, has primarily been framed in psychological terms (Suitt, 2021). Overall, we argue that there is a need to build concrete knowledge of the nature, causes and consequences of the moral distress experienced by those who practice social work with refugees and migrants. We also argue for the need to further develop a sociological understanding of moral distress to account for the role of a variety of social and institutional processes in the ethical strain experienced by social workers.

**Social Security 3****Social Protection Policy Response to Poverty in Emerging Economies***Adriano Mazenda, Chioma Amaechi, Stellah Lubinga**University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa***Abstract of Paper**

Drawing on the perceptions of various social protection policy actors and administrators, this article delves into the intricacies surrounding social protection policies in Nigeria. It aims to identify and address the challenges hindering their effectiveness in reducing poverty. Through a comprehensive analysis, the study seeks to shed light on the key obstacles existing social protection initiatives face and propose viable strategies for their enhancement. The study utilised a qualitative research approach and case study design, drawing on a purposive sampling of stakeholders at federal and state-level government institutions associated with social protection policy responses and poverty alleviation. Social protection policy actors and administrators from various Nigerian government institutions. The study findings unearthed deprivation emanating from the implementation process. Such anomalies include the lack of

government commitment, defined roles and responsibilities, lack of gender inclusivity, lack of planning, lack of communication, poor criteria for resource allocation, absence of coordination, low effective coverage, and poor monitoring and evaluation. The study fills the existing literature gap on Nigeria's social protection policy implementation challenges. It advocates for a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework and targeted, inclusive social protection policy responses to poverty in Nigeria.

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**Does political partisanship matter in initiating and sustaining social investment policy reform? Agenda-setting, political parties and women's movements in South Korea and Taiwan**

*Ijin Hong, Shih-jiunn Shi, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan*

*Fen-ling Chen, National Taipei University, Taipei, Taiwan*

**Abstract of Paper**

Formerly known as authoritarian, developmentalist, and familialistic, South Korea and Taiwan have now developed as the most democratic political systems in East Asia, with a rapid expansion of their respective welfare systems. Still, politicisation of welfare issues happened relatively late, as both Korean and Taiwanese political parties used to appeal to an electorate based on regional and ethnic divides, and the policy focus concerned more international relations (ex. North Korea, China) rather than welfare issues (Lee, You, 2019; Sullivan, Nachman, 2024). As a result, welfare politics has only gained momentum over the last twenty years. In terms of social investment policies, whilst Korean administrations have invested considerable resources in private childcare and family allowances in a bipartisan manner, Taiwan has also shown slim party differences in its approach to slower reforms in support of reconciliation policies (Yeh & Lue, 2022; Hong et al. 2024).

To which extent did political parties matter in determining social investment policies? What was the role that women's movements played in this?

This study aims to investigate these differences systematically, testing the political partisanship theory – the expectation that political party competition will influence welfare expansion or retrenchment, with the Left being more pro-welfare, the Right being more pro-market (Huber and Stephens 2000, Haeusermann et al. 2010, Kuehner, 2018). By making use of policy documents and interviews with key stakeholders in the agenda-setting process, we argue that political partisanship still matters in agenda-setting when viewed in tandem with women's movements and their role in agenda-setting. On the other hand, the expansion of left-initiated family policies appears to follow more path-dependent, credit-claiming or blame-avoidance rationales in these two latecomer welfare systems.

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**Blame avoidance dynamics in an era of crisis: unpacking the policy puzzle of the Household Support Fund**

*Kit Colliver, John Hudson, Neil Lunt, Jed Meers*

*University of York, York, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

During the COVID-19 and cost of living crises, UK central government developed a significant portfolio of local welfare programmes for administration by local authorities in England, most notably the Household Support Fund (HSF). Responsibility for the schemes placed additional burdens on local authorities that were already stretched after a decade of successive challenges. The proliferation of devolved funding pots and discretionary local schemes also ran

contrary to the principles of centralisation and simplification embodied in Universal Credit, the Conservative government's flagship programme of welfare reform. As such, the HSF and contemporaneous schemes represent a 'policy puzzle' in need of explanation. Drawing on evidence from an ongoing programme of research into local authorities and the cost of living crisis, this paper brings together public administration and comparative welfare state literatures on blame avoidance behaviours to unpack 'micro' and 'macro' factors affecting social security policymaking during this period. We argue that the context of crisis altered the dynamics of the 'blame games' between central and local government, as central government's strategies for managing governance and accountability created 'blame boomerangs', with new local welfare coalitions emerging around the 'temporary' packages of support. The consequent attention to local welfare provision in national debates is evidence of how prolonged periods of crisis created unanticipated challenges for policymakers, pointing to a fruitful avenue for further research.

## **Poverty & Inequality 4**

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### **What next for food aid in the UK? A critical analysis of 'food banking' as perceived by people using the service**

*Maddy Power*

*University of York, York, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In discussions of food charity in the UK, we increasingly see calls to acknowledge and accurately document the diversity of provision, ranging from referral only to open access provision, to organisations that only provide food, to others that promote a 'more than food' approach, whether this includes welfare rights advice or a communal meal. Different models of food charity, such as food pantries, are seen to offer less stigmatised and more dignified provision and are often promoted as a possible direction for food charity in a context where millions of households cannot afford essential items. This study explores how this supposedly diverse sector is perceived and experienced by those accessing food charity. It draws on longitudinal interviews conducted between January 2023 and March 2024 with 62 people living on a low income in the North and South of England. All participants self-declared as living on a low income but beyond this the sample was diverse, including a range of ages, ethnic and religious groups, and health conditions. There was distinct uniformity in how participants talked about different forms of food charity, whether technically a 'food pantry', a 'food bank', or a 'community cafe', any organisation which offered food for free or at very low cost to take away was described as a 'food bank'. Additional services offered, such as benefits advice or a sit-down meal, were secondary to participants' primary priority which was to access food which could be taken home. While there were some differences in participants' experiences of 'food banks' these were largely not influenced by the nature of the provision itself - for instance whether the food was free or bought at cost for a small sum to promote dignity - but by demography. There were distinct inequalities in the lived experience of food charity, by gender, age and ethnicity. The study suggests that the growing compartmentalisation and professionalisation of food charity conflicts sharply with lived experiences of accessing food support. To better design a system which addresses growing hardship and hunger, it is imperative to listen carefully and at length to people with lived experience of poverty and food charity.

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**Fighting poverty and social exclusion locally: developing and implementing a new index for measuring the interaction between Third Sector and local governments.**

*Antonios Chrysostomou*

*National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece*

**Abstract of Paper**

This paper delves into the interaction between third sector organizations (TSOs) and local governments with a focus on how TSOs combat poverty and social exclusion at the local level. In particular, we investigate the degree of their involvement and the relationship between them and the official public authorities. Towards this end, we introduce a new index for our empirical investigation that aims to portray the different levels of third sector involvement and interaction with the public sector in the design, delivery and funding of programs against poverty and social exclusion. In the following, we explore our data on the design, delivery and funding of these programs in Athens' metropolitan area. Being both the capital and the largest city in Greece, including more than 30% of the country's population, Athens provides an excellent opportunity for empirical research in Greece, one of the hardest hit countries from the prolonged socio-economic recession in Europe and its neoliberal management by both international institutions and its national governments. The results gained from this analysis not only illuminate the current state of affairs, providing a fresh perspective on the relationship between TSOs and local government, but also open up new avenues of inquiry into the local governance of social policy.

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**Destitution in the UK: estimating local incidence and trends through secondary indicators calibrated on general and specialised household surveys**

*Glen Bramley*

*Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

'Destitution' has re-entered the lexicon of UK social policy in the last decade, and it appears to be increasing much more rapidly than official measures of poverty. Estimates of its incidence and profile have been developed through the use of specialised surveys which go beyond coverage of usually resident private household members. Secondary indicators from a wide range of official and other sources have been used to map the likely incidence of destitution down to local authority level and these contribute to national numerical estimates. Through joint analysis of comparable micro data from large scale official surveys and the more specialised destitution survey of users of crisis services, composite predictive models have been developed, and these can play an increasing role in calibrating the secondary indicator models at local level. These models both highlight key factors driving destitution but also create a capacity to make conditional forecasts of the evolution of destitution and related extreme deprivations (homelessness, food insecurity) across UK geography.

## **Symposium 177: Digital Social Policy (Papers 181 and 231)**

*Organiser: Paul Henman*

**181**

### **Cleaning out the poor relief? Automated-Decision Making and the work-first approach in the social assistance system**

*Ulf Rickard Ulmestig, Linneus University, Social science faculty, Växjö, Sweden*

*Kjetil Nordesjö, Malmö University, Department of Social work, Malmö, Sweden*

*Gabriella Scaramuzzino, Lund University, School of Social work, Lund, Sweden*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Automated decision making (ADM) is claimed to have the potential to clean out the poor relief logic in individual means-testing within the social assistance system. We use a qualitative material from two Swedish municipalities to problematize the ability for ADM to challenge the poor relief logic, to understand individual means-tests by ADM in the everyday delivery of social assistance in Sweden. The idea of efficiency where very present in implementing ADM in both municipalities, in one by more distance and in the other by more time for using psy-techniques for motivational work. But the lens for efficiency in both municipalities is about the work-first approach and producing active unemployed persons taking responsibilities for their situation. Municipalities actively work towards stigma and suspicion of the applicants, but also creating distance using ADM for having an objective gaze making it harder for applicants to claim their rights. ADM may change power structures but don't challenge the power asymmetric in the means-test. The article contributes with a problematization of the knowledge, the taken-for-granted and the logics that are institutionalized which often are made invisible in routines connected to ADM.

**231**

### **Exploring the intersection of minimum income protection, digitalisation, and discretion.**

*Barbara Brink, Lucas Haitzma, Maarten Bouwmeester*

*University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper investigates the relationship between minimum income protection, digitalisation and discretion. Minimum income protection programmes are there to ensure a baseline level of income to meet basic needs. Choices in the design of these programmes and the implementation of the programmes have a profound impact on individuals' lives. The digitalisation within implementation processes has been promoted as a mean to increase efficiency. But there is a worry it will lead to rigid procedures that do not allow for individual nuances, and therefore will not meet individual needs. New European legislation mandates human involvement in algorithmic decision-making processes, to ensure discretion can be deployed. This regulatory framework acknowledges the inherent limitations of purely automated decision-making systems and underscores the importance of human discretion, particularly in contexts where the stakes are high, such as social policy and minimum income protection as individuals relying on minimum income protection or other social welfare measures often face significant barriers in navigating bureaucratic systems and advocating for their rights, which is exacerbated in the context of digitalised decision-making processes.

It is however unclear what this human involvement should look like in practice, and how this relates to broadly shared insights on human judgement in decision making processes. The literature on the use of discretion in policies, and particularly on the role of street-level bureaucracy in the implementation phase demonstrates there is a tension between their

professional judgment on the one hand and organisational goals, policies, and legal obligations on the other. In addition, studies have signaled there is a limited picture of this human involvement, as often it seems to refer to individual decision-makers, such as street level or screen level bureaucrats, whilst the decision making process entails more steps where humans are involved.

For this study, we analyse the policy documents and legal texts of minimum income schemes, to unravel where discretion is given in the design of the scheme. Subsequently, we explore literature from (social) policy, public administration, legal, and technical domains to understand where discretion is offered in the implementation process as processes are being automated. This will help us to better understand both the role of human agency and the use of discretion in automated decision-making processes within the context of minimum income schemes. By reviewing the literature across different domains, we seek to develop an alternative framework for the multifaceted nature of human intervention and discretion in these decision-making processes.

### **Plenary lecture - Catherine Needham - 'Delivery, drift or decay? What has devolution done for adult social care in the UK's four nations?'**

Twenty five years on from the devolution settlements that created new institutions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland we can take stock of developments in adult social care. Each of the four systems has attempted reform of adult social care, and shares a common set of challenges around rising demand, insufficient spending, unstable delivery models and inadequate staffing. This talk focuses on what has been achieved in each of the four nations and how that can best be explained. Policy drift has been evident in all four nations, with Scotland the most effective at overcoming drift to make substantive legislative change. However implementation in Scotland has been disappointing, such that the experience of adult social care in Scotland retains many of the same structural weaknesses as the other nations. With a National Care Service being proposed for Scotland, Wales and England, it is a good time to explore whether social care requires a 'new Beveridge' moment with something that sounds like 'an NHS for care', or whether there are other paths to reform.

### **Paper Session 7 - 12:30–13:30**

#### **Symposium 295 - Bringing the billionaires in: the future of welfare (philanthro)capitalism (papers 292, 296 and 300).**

*Organiser: Zoë Irving*

#### **Symposium proposal**

Philanthrocapitalism, the application of market principles to charitable giving, is big business in the contemporary global political economy of welfare. The power of the ultra-wealthy in shaping the social contract of the future is increasingly exercised through individual and corporate giving, the choices of fundable projects and mechanisms by which funding is distributed, and philanthrocapitalists' ideas about 'society' and 'social problems'. Knowledge of the operation and societal outcomes of philanthrocapitalist practices is increasing, but the opacity of the ultra-wealthy as research subjects prevents a deeper understanding of their societal and policy priorities and ambitions. This symposium explores how global billionaires use 'new' philanthropy to advance their ideas and interests in the realm of social policy. Analysing this

unknown dimension of philanthrocapitalism through examination of public communications, the papers address both the global dimensions of billionaire influence on policy discourse and how philanthrocapitalism is located in a whole economy of welfare approach to understanding the changing political economy of welfare. Focusing on ways in which quantitative content analysis informs identification of philanthrocapitalists' priorities and ambitions for human welfare, the papers contribute to understanding philanthrocapitalists' shared and competing interests and the implications for the reconfiguration of the post-pandemic global political economy of welfare.

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### **Philanthrocapitalists in the Whole Economy of Welfare**

*Kevin Farnsworth*

*University of York, York, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

As welfare states crumble under the weight of expectations and austerity, governments and others have looked to a small but powerful constituency to fill the gaps: the richest people on the planet. Some have looked to the energy and innovation these high-priests of capitalism promise to bring to the seemingly intractable problems we face in the wake of an omnicrisis of increasing inequality, poverty and environmental harms. They look to philanthrocapitalism to play a more prominent role in a 'whole economy' of welfare where government, labour and business contribute to and make claims on the welfare state. But from a social policy perspective, is this at best a sticking plaster that targets areas of real need, and at worst, part of a wider elite political movement seeking to protect those who, create the problems whilst promising to eradicate them? Like other quick-fixes, turning to philanthrocapitalism is doomed to fail. To understand why, we need to demystify philanthrocapitalism and investigate the expectations surrounding it as well as the potential benefits and risks from bringing philanthrocapitalists into the welfare state.

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### **Whose ideas matter in global social policy? Philanthrocapitalism and the ideational power of the super-rich**

*Zoë Irving*

*University of York, York, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Philanthrocapitalism, the philanthropy of the twenty-first century has been both applauded and dismissed as the 'new' way for the global ultra-rich to make giving more effective. Given their engagement in the welfare domains of social policy, philanthrocapitalists and their foundations are becoming increasingly influential paraprivate actors at the global level with the power to shape ideas of 'problems' and prioritise their 'solutions'. While knowledge of global philanthropic organisations and their activities is growing, we know very little about the ideas that drive the individual actors themselves. Using a discursive institutionalist framework to analyse the communicative discourse of a selection of major philanthrocapitalists, this paper will examine their conceptions of social problems, intervention preferences and policy priorities. In the context of the contemporary international consensus on social development objectives characterised by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the paper explores what the power of philanthrocapitalists means for the wider policy conversation on global social policy and global inequality. In revealing more about the individual world views of contemporary billionaire philanthropists and their visions of the common good, the paper

presents an unexplored dimension to the theorisation of ideational power in global social policy analysis.

**300**

**Billionaire philanthropy: The world of philanthrocapitalists in their own words**

*Cangheng Liu*

*University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

A group of exceptionally wealthy individuals have gained global recognition through the transnational business empires they have established. Beyond their business ventures, in recent years, they have shown an increasing interest and desire to solve intractable social and environmental problems. They do so by offering what they believe to be the most powerful weapon against such problems: themselves. But what are their key ideas? What is their vision of and for the world? How do they view themselves and what are their motivations and ambitions to change the world? Employing quantitative textual analysis tools this paper explores the visions of philanthrocapitalists in their own words, visualising the issue areas they have prioritised and highlighting the distinct solutions they have proposed, and asking what they might offer to a welfare state in crisis going forward.

**Social Policy & Development**

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**Exploring the Directional Impact of Fiscal Policy on Socioeconomic Development under International Financial Institution Conditionalities: A Machine Learning Approach**

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**Abstract of Paper**

This paper delves into the intricate dynamics between fiscal policy especially government expenditure and socioeconomic development within the challenging context of developing economies subjected to the conditionalities imposed by International Financial Institutions (IFIs). In an innovative departure from traditional analytical frameworks, this research employs a hybrid methodological approach that marries Spearman correlation analysis with machine learning scenario simulations to dissect and understand the multifaceted impact of fiscal policy adjustments on socioeconomic indicators. By doing so, it confronts and transcends the limitations inherent in conventional econometric models, which often fail to capture the complex, non-linear interplay between fiscal policies and development outcomes. The preliminary findings of this study are particularly revelatory, showcasing the potent capability of machine learning techniques not only to dissect these complex relationships with a previously unattainable granularity but also to shed light on the nuanced implications of fiscal policy choices. This research thereby injects a fresh perspective into a vigorously debated domain within development economics, challenging and expanding upon the discourse traditionally dominated by the polar views of Dependency Theory and Neoliberalism. By illustrating the nuanced effects of fiscal policies shaped under IFI conditionalities, this paper contributes to bridging significant theoretical divides and underscores the critical importance of adopting sophisticated, data-driven fiscal strategies. The implications of this study are far-reaching, offering valuable insights for policymakers in developing economies who are navigating the balance between fulfilling IFI loan conditionalities and fostering sustainable socioeconomic

development. Through this exploration, the paper not only highlights the potential for advanced analytical methods to enrich socioeconomic policy analysis but also paves the way for informed, nuanced policy formulation and implementation that can better address the complex realities faced by developing nations in the global economic landscape.

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### **The Evolution of Welfare Eligibility in Urban China: Examining Subnational Social Assistance Regimes from 2004 to 2023**

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*Julia Shu-Huah Wang, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan*

*Qin Gao, Columbia university, New York, USA*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Western welfare states are becoming more selective and conditional, with access to welfare benefits increasingly dependent on applicants' status, needs and behavior. China is no exception: in 2012, the central government promulgated a mandate to tighten the eligibility conditions of the public assistance programme, the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee Scheme (Dibao). This paper aims to advance the literature on welfare eligibility in non-Western contexts by investigating the eligibility conditions of the urban Dibao scheme. Welfare eligibility in China deserves more scholarly attention due to its distinctive "disciplinary" nature: the Dibao eligibility criteria include lifestyles (e.g., luxurious consumption) and moral behaviors that are not regulated in the West. Moreover, social policymaking in China is decentralized and offers a unique setting for examining local welfare regimes outside the Western context.

We collected 189 provincial Dibao documents and developed a coding scheme to convert textual eligibility rules into a quantifiable format. Using this coding scheme, we constructed an original database of Dibao eligibility rules, encompassing 31 provincial regions, spanning the period from 2004 to 2023. The 47 eligibility rules cover seven domains: income, asset, lifestyle, conduct (moral behavior), conduct (activation), family composition and obligation, and status. Latent class analysis (N=617) revealed five types of provincial Dibao eligibility regimes: stringent on lifestyle and conduct & modest on others (19%), mostly modest (23%), stringent on assets & modest and lenient on others (33.5%), stringent on income and family & lenient and modest on others (13.5%) and mostly lenient and modest (11.0%). We further analyzed the evolution of welfare regimes across the 31 provinces over the past two decades. The majority of provinces (71%) have gradually transitioned towards the regime characterized by being "stringent on assets & modest and lenient on other criteria. However, these transitions have occurred from different starting regimes and at varying paces. Meanwhile, 19% of provinces have transitioned to the most lenient regime, labeled as "mostly lenient and modest.

Our findings have revealed that local governments have exercised discretion in determining Dibao eligibility, resulting in the formation of distinct regime types. Due to the central government's mandate to tighten asset eligibility rules, there has been a convergence among local governments towards a regime characterized by being "stringent on assets and modest and lenient on other criteria". In general, the Dibao eligibility regimes are becoming more lenient, with the stringent type that regulates people's lifestyles and moral behaviors becoming less prominent.

## **Health**

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### **Investigating the Link Between Temporary Employment and Health: Insights from Turkey**

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

This study aims to scrutinize the relationship between temporary employment and health outcomes in Turkey, drawing on data from the Turkish Health Research. The central hypothesis suggests that temporary employment correlates with adverse physical and mental health effects. Employing a quantitative approach, this research utilizes regression analysis on the Turkish Health Research dataset to examine this association. The dataset encompasses a diverse range of demographic and health-related variables, enabling a comprehensive investigation into the health implications of temporary employment in Turkey.

#### **Method:**

The analysis employs a sample of individuals from the Turkish Health Research dataset, focusing on those engaged in temporary employment arrangements. A series of regression models are constructed to assess the impact of temporary employment on various health outcomes, controlling for relevant demographic and socioeconomic factors. Key health indicators such as self-reported health status, incidence of chronic diseases, and mental well-being are examined to gauge the extent of the association between temporary employment and health.

#### **Findings:**

Preliminary findings reveal a significant correlation between temporary employment and adverse health outcomes in Turkey. Individuals in temporary employment are more likely to report poor physical health and experience higher levels of stress compared to their counterparts in permanent employment. Moreover, temporary workers exhibit elevated rates of chronic health conditions, indicating a potential long-term health burden associated with precarious employment arrangements.

#### **Conclusion:**

The findings underscore the importance of addressing the health implications of temporary employment within the context of Turkish labor markets. Policymakers and stakeholders should prioritize the implementation of measures aimed at improving the working conditions and health protections for temporary workers. Enhancing access to healthcare services, promoting workplace safety standards, and fostering job security can mitigate the adverse health effects associated with temporary employment. By recognizing the intersectionality of labor market dynamics and public health, this research contributes valuable insights to inform evidence-based policy interventions aimed at safeguarding the health and well-being of workers in Turkey.

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### **Working age health: what's different this time?**

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

Despite over a decade of fragmented attempts to reduce the impact of working-age ill health on the labour market, health-related economic inactivity is the highest it has been for at least 30 years, and there are now 1.3 million more people in work with work-limiting health conditions than there were in 2013.

Our paper aims to provide an understanding of which health conditions matter most for employment, how those conditions have been changing in the working-age population (aged 16-64) and what the implications are for social policy. In short, what's different this time?

We find that the working-age health challenge the UK faces is not only different in scale, but different in nature too. Rising mental ill health and comorbidity among the working-age population present significant new challenges to tackling labour market inactivity, compared with 15 years ago.

These changes to working-age health have left us with an economically inactive population that is younger than before, meaning more people are likely to spend longer periods of their working life out of the workforce. This is increasingly posing a fiscal challenge, not only through foregone tax revenue, but through a higher proportion being supported by more expensive forms of social security.

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### **Cohort analysis of drug deaths and household income in Scotland**

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

The health of young-middle aged men living in Scotland's most deprived areas has been identified as a group of particular concern in the 2023 Health Foundation report 'Leave No One Behind' and its underpinning reports from the Fraser of Allander Institute (University of Strathclyde) and the MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit (University of Glasgow). "Suicide, alcohol and drugs are leading causes of death for men aged 15–44 years old, accounting for two-thirds of absolute inequalities in total mortality at that age. Socioeconomic trends also point to younger men being at greater risk of poor future health through reduced earnings potential. The gender gap in higher education participation is wide and has been growing – in 2020/21, male participation rates in higher education were 16 percentage points lower than for women. Employment rates for men aged 16–24 years in Scotland have fallen by 7.7 percentage points, from 65.1% to 57.4% between 2004 and 2019".

Leave No One Behind, The Health Foundation

The 'Leave No One Behind' report focused on data from the period covering the last twenty years since devolution. This paper seeks to build on this analysis by examining historical data and analyses changes over time by birth cohort.

According to the life course framework, timing and duration of health risk exposures can crucially alter consequences for health, and it is the socio-economic context during the period of young adulthood that this paper seeks to illuminate.

The main objective of this paper is to pull together existing data on drug deaths and household incomes and present these in a new way that allows interpretation of the intersection of factors that may have affected certain cohorts.

This analysis is descriptive in nature. It does not seek to provide a level of analysis that would confirm causation, but it does set up some hypotheses that could be tested further.

## **Housing 2**

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### **Helping the first step from the street to the settlement: The effect of the comprehensively tailored policy for homeless people in South Korea**

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*Susanna Joo, Hayoung Park, Yonsei University, Seoul, Republic of Korea*

*Ki-Cheol Nam, Dongduk Women's University, Seoul, Republic of Korea*

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

The Korea Development Institute for Self-Sufficient and Welfare (henceforth 'KDSSW') has implemented a new comprehensively tailored policy (henceforth 'CTP') for homeless people to encourage them to settle down and connect with the previous welfare systems. This is because KDSSW found that the previous self-sufficiency and welfare policies were not enough for homeless people to be encouraged to settle down due to their complex, interwoven problems, and unsettled routines. The new CTP strived to help homeless people, depending on each person's needs, take their first steps toward resettlement. This includes the simultaneous and comprehensive eight types of provisions, such as job opportunities, psychological counseling, educational training, housing support, medical services, material resources, financial and institutional help, and community connection services. One of the most difficult challenges of the homeless policy is to have longitudinal data. However, the KDSSW systematically have managed to trace the homeless people who participated in the implementation of CTP and cumulate the administration data.

In this study, in order to find effective strategies for CTP, we firstly aim to identify the participating patterns in CTP with the eight types of provisions, then examine the effectiveness of the CTP by comparing each participating type.

We used two types of public government data from the KDSSW; which are 1) the administration data of the CTP during the year of 2021-2022, and 2) the self-sufficiency information system data in 2021-2023. The information on the eight types of provisions in the CTP was from the administration data of the CTP, including 413 homeless people. The binary outcome variable was re-settlement; the reference group was people staying in un-settlement status (N=338). The other group (N=75) was people having a job at the end of the CTP or entering the next level of self-sufficient settled programs within six months after participating in CTP identified from the self-sufficiency information system data. We applied latent profile analysis and logistic regression analysis for data analysis.

The latent profile analysis revealed two participating patterns: the 'job training-focused participation' (N=112) and the 'comprehensive participation' (N=301). Logistic regression analysis showed that the comprehensive participation group was two times more likely to enter the re-settling process in the community or welfare systems than the job training-focused participation group. The study argues that applying comprehensively tailored approaches and providing the unified services are more effective in terms of promoting homeless people to re-settle down in communities.

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**The Politics of Housing Informality: A Critical Analysis of the Changing Policy Discourse on Informal Subdivided Housing in Post-Handover Hong Kong**

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**Abstract of Paper**

In recent decades, scholars have demonstrated that housing informality, traditionally prevalent in the Global South, has emerged across developing societies and megacities. While most previous studies have investigated the regulatory regimes of informal settlements, less attention has been paid to the policy discourses and the intricate negotiations with various actors in the policymaking process, especially in developed regions. This study focuses on Hong Kong, a highly advanced neoliberal economy operating under a politically hybrid regime, and its policy interventions regarding informal subdivided units (SDUs)—residential compartments divided from a larger domestic quarter—which emerged after the handover. We employ the method of critical policy discourse analysis to examine the changing official discourses and interventions targeting SDUs between 2010 and 2023, during which the number of SDUs saw a rapid increase. The data comprises official documents published between 2000 and 2023, including policy addresses, legislation papers, minutes of official meetings, blogs written by officials, and press releases. Based on line-by-line coding of 482 sampled articles, we identify four stages of SDU interventions: 1) enhancing building safety and fostering urban renewal; 2) addressing housing shortage and unaffordability through poverty alleviation and new development schemes; 3) introducing selective re-regulation of the informal housing market through tenancy control; and 4) moving toward complete eradication of SDUs. The findings demonstrate that the institutional governance of housing informality is far from a consistent and homogeneous regulatory system, but rather a dynamic process constituted by negotiations among various actors competing for conflicting interests and values, susceptible to changing socio-economic circumstances and political configurations. Intriguingly, the findings also illustrate the politicisation of the phenomenon of SDUs as they have been framed, positioned, and intervened, contingent upon the political opportunities and/or crises in specific periods. This study contributes to a more nuanced and contextualised understanding of policy interventions on housing informality, offering insights for policymakers and activists in strategising their policy advocacy more innovatively and effectively.

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**Homewrecking: The Hidden Biosocial Effects of Remarketed Housing**

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**Abstract of Paper**

A vast number of academic papers and column inches have been devoted to charting the housing crisis produced by the neoliberal (re)-marketisation of housing since the 1980s, such that it might appear that there is little more to be said. As is widely acknowledged, access to suitable, affordable housing has reached a crisis point, becoming a source of financial and personal stress rather than security, as housing has been redefined as a financialised vehicle for speculation and profit generation as well as a conduit for predatory lending and debt-fuelled growth. This supplanted the mid-20th century view of decent, secure housing as a social good and bedrock of individual and family life, complementing the ‘job for life’ as twin pillars of security and stability, whose undermining has reinvoked some of the ills that beset housing arrangements in the 19th and early 20th century. This generational shift, as we know, has

allowed some to benefit greatly from unearned property wealth, including the beneficiaries of 'right to buy', at the expense of imposing high costs and chronic insecurity on the growing legions of 'housing poor', further fuelling already-widening inequalities and leaving many in overcrowded, squalid and overly expensive accommodation. This scenario is also having an impact on demographics as young people can no longer readily access family homes and, hence, many defer or abandon the notion of having children altogether. All of this, as noted, is exhaustively documented. However, there remain several much less well understood but no less serious consequences of this transition that have implications for the mental and physical health of current generations, and which may even be biologically heritable by their successors. This paper draws on an original biosocial theory (The Social Map) fusing sociology, neuroscience and epigenetics to outline why increasingly insecure and costly housing arrangements, and the form of contemporary housing developments, are much more problematic than even currently appreciated. This relates to a new understanding of the relationship between spaces, places and environments, and their impact on identity, memory, and the capacity to construct and sustain a workable biography and sense of security in a complex world, all of which have a prodigious impact on wellbeing and biosocial development.

## **Employment 4**

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### **Employment take-up and job quality of basic income support recipients in times of technological change and migration**

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

Recipients of basic income support for jobseekers in Germany often have low levels of qualification and either very little employment experience or long histories of cycling between unstable employment and unemployment (Bruckmeier/Hohmeyer 2018, Bruckmeier et al 2021, Zabel 2023). At the same time, the ongoing digital transformation is changing the requirements, tasks and quality of jobs. Technological change can exacerbate the situation of benefit recipients, in that work experience in jobs that have become substitutable is devalued, further diminishing their employment opportunities. In recent years, immigration has been the main factor influencing people's entries into basic income support in Germany. Many immigrants are likely to possess hidden human capital in the form of unrecognized educational degrees or employment experience in their country of origin. This could actually lead to higher employment entry rates for basic income support recipients without than with German citizenship. However, lacking formal qualification, it is likely that those without German citizenship primarily have access to low-quality, unstable and substitutable jobs. To examine the influence of substitutability of previous employment and citizenship, we apply competing risk hazard models for entries into jobs of different quality, on the basis of large-scale longitudinal administrative data for the years 2005 to 2020 (Dummert et al 2024).

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**SEISS and self-employment pattern during the Covid**

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*Andy Lymer, Centre for Personal Financial Wellbeing, Aston University, Birmingham, United Kingdom; Accounting Department, Aston University, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

To support the self-employed through the coronavirus outbreak, the UK Government announced the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), which paid five rounds of taxable grants, each up to £7,500, to eligible self-employed individuals between March 2020 and September 2021. While the scheme did provide generous financial support to help eligible individuals make ends meet, little is known about how the scheme had shaped the labour market decisions of the self-employed during the pandemic. Drawing on data from the Understanding Society's Covid surveys conducted between April 2020 and September 2021, we examine the occupational pathways of the self-employed using sequence analysis over the survey period. We found a strong state dependence of self-employment status, with over 80% remaining self-employed throughout the pandemic, 11% switched to paid employment entirely or in combination with self-employment, and the rest became inactive in the labour market. The rate of persistent self-employment was lower and the rate of transition into paid employment was higher compared to pre-Covid years dating back to 2009. Additionally, results from multinomial logistic models suggest that SEISS is crucial for preventing the self-employed from quitting their businesses. However, such effect is only profound for the middle-aged, male, sole traders, those with medium pre-Covid earnings or work in certain industries.

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**Income or wealth: a lower education workers trade-off?**

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**Abstract of Paper**

The drivers of wage inequality in the United Kingdom have been debated at least since the 1990s. While technological change, globalization, and the demise of unions have been often cited, the role of financialization – and especially increasing household debt through mortgage securitization – is not yet fully understood. Access to homeownership via secure mortgage credit is regarded as an important factor improving someone's life chances. Yet, rising household mortgage debt was linked to declining wage share as financial markets impose a disciplining mechanism on workers. On the one hand, mortgaged housing tenure exacerbates liquidity and mobility constraints causing a negative impact on wage levels. On the other hand, the debt overhang problem postulates a positive impact on reservation wages driving higher salaries. However, what effect dominates and how this might change across workers with different levels of educational attainment remains an open question.

This article attempts to make two contributions leveraging both a cross-sectional and a longitudinal analysis. First, this article argues that mortgage debt exacerbates wage inequality insofar as workers with higher education accessing mortgaged homeownership further grow their wage premia as compared to lower education ones. Second, it provides supporting evidence thanks to a cross-sectional and a longitudinal analysis relying on the United Kingdom Household Longitudinal Study (also known as Understanding Society) panel data covering the post Great Financial Crisis period between 2009 and 2019. The main results suggest that mortgage credit enhances wage inequality between high and low education workers. Indeed,

tenancy does not appear to have the same inequality enhancing effect. This suggests that at least some low education workers may be facing a trade-off between earning potential and wealth accumulation. These findings call for a review of housing policy as a critical component of a welfare system able to tackle income as well as wealth inequality.

## **Social Care 1**

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### **Paid care worker organising in England: practices, policy priorities, and progress?**

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

Despite its growth and ubiquity, paid adult social care work persists as a site of very low pay, insecurity, and exploitation, where ‘decent work’ (ILO, 2018) remains elusive. Social care provision’s quasi-market (Le Grand, 1991) model, where local authorities assess and commission predominantly independent sector providers to deliver care, relies on outsourcing and contributes to workforce fragmentation. This atomisation, with thousands of providers and many workers employed to support people in their own homes, contrasts with the terrain of more established trade unionism and impedes organising (Whitfield, 2022). In fact, a mere 15% of private sector-employed adult social care workers are unionised (Cominetti, 2023: 5), in contrast with 21% of all employees in England (Department for Business and Trade, 2023: 21). Although care workers lack a unified voice or influence through sectoral collective bargaining, they, and organisations representing them, undertake significant organising and activist work towards improving their situation (Johnson, Rubery and Egan, 2021). In the English context, however, this phenomenon has received only limited attention in academic research. This paper draws on a series of qualitative case studies of organisations engaged in care worker organising, consisting of interviews with key actors and care workers, and ethnographic observations. These case studies explore the focus, strategies, and successes in approaches to care worker organising, and include both newer as well as more established trade unions, and campaign groups.

Based on the issues and campaigns at the centre of these organisations’ activities, we identify key policy areas where care workers and those representing their interests call for positive change and explore how this may be achieved. These areas include various aspects of labour market policy, including pay and conditions, and migration policy, alongside policies that shape the wider social care system (which this relational work is bound up in) (Williams, 2018). We conclude by reflecting on what the issues identified in care worker organising reveal about the relative status of care work, the circumstances of care workers, and the prospects for change, before outlining the wider socio-economic benefits that positive changes to care workers’ collective situation could bring.

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### **Unmediated voices: living alone with dementia without informal support**

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

Living independently is a priority for many people with dementia, and current policy aims to support people with dementia to live in the community for as long as possible. However,

achieving this aim often relies on support from an informal carer, even when the person with dementia lives alone.

This paper reports the findings of an NIHR-funded study about the needs and experiences of, and services for, people with dementia who live alone and who do not have family or friends to help them contact and navigate services. This research involved interviews with people with dementia in this situation, as well as an audit of service provision, and case studies of how support pathways work in practice.

Our research found that awareness of this population among local authority commissioners was limited. There were very few services available which explicitly supported this group, and some mainstream services specifically excluded people without carers. None of the local authorities in our study collected data on the number of people with dementia living alone without informal support in their area.

Many of the people with dementia in our study, while living alone without informal care, had worked to build networks around themselves, including other people with dementia, who could be an important source of emotional support, and local groups which may not be specifically for people with dementia. However, these networks could be fragile and precarious, and were often fragmented, with people in the network not being aware of each other. We will report evidence about the unmediated communication between this group and formal services, and the natural community and personal assets, as well as formal social support, that this group uses to manage their daily lives.

Both the number of people with dementia, and the number of people ageing without children, are rising, and it will therefore become increasingly important to find ways to facilitate effective support for people with dementia to live independently without informal support.

**329**

**Valuing unpaid carers in Scotland: A critical approach to improving the statistical measurements of the workforce and their time-use contributions to the care economy for evidence-based policy making.**

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**Abstract of Paper**

In recognition that statistics are political tools of welfare states, the aim of this paper is to share a selection of preliminary findings from ongoing PhD research that explores how androcentric knowledge bias (Nelson 1993; Folbre 1994; Himmelweit 1995) is embedded within the design of Scotland's Census 2022, a bias which contributes to an underestimation of the vital contributions of unpaid carers who support Scotland's economy. Using an exploratory mixed-method approach, the thesis fieldwork combined technical appraisals of national time-use survey methodology with key stakeholder interviews (e.g. civil society carer organisations, feminist advocacy organisations, time-use survey experts in policy research institutes and national statistical offices) to re-conceptualise who counts as a carer in Scotland and explore ways to improve the data collection, conceptualisation, and measurement of unpaid care work. The selection of findings presented here, illustrate how sub-groups of carers, those who care for children and those who are 'sandwich carers', are not accurately recognized and counted as part of the unpaid labour supply in Scotland's Census 2022. These seemingly technical and conceptual design decisions perpetuate the underestimation bias in national statistics on the magnitude of the care economy in Scotland. Moreover, they have specific policy implications for social expenditure and budget investment, and decisions in public service planning of transport, social care, and childcare services. The findings also provide preliminary stakeholder

recommendations on ways to improve the conceptualisation and measurement of unpaid care work in national time-use surveys to recognise the true workforce and value of unpaid care for evidence-based policy making in Scotland. This speaks to the call to critically re-imagine alternative futures for welfare states where care justice is centralised in policy research and models of the economy (Williams 2021).

## **Social Security 2**

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### **Welfare conditionality as a barrier to trauma-informed care: The case of Australia's ParentsNext pre-employment program**

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

Rolled out across Australia in 2018 following a trial of two years, ParentsNext is a pre-employment program for parents with children as young as nine months identified as at risk of long-term unemployment. Many of the income support recipients who are participants in the program are women experiencing family violence. Drawing on publicly available material including submissions to three Parliamentary Inquiries into ParentsNext, this paper examines ParentsNext through the lens of trauma-informed care. The trauma-informed care movement seeks to inform the design of human services so that they are less likely to retraumatise clients with unresolved trauma and more likely to help these clients heal and recover. The philosophy of trauma-informed care emphasises the principles of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural safety. This paper is one of the first internationally to demonstrate the usefulness of applying a trauma-informed care lens at the scale of national employment services policy, not just at the smaller scale of individual organisations. This study finds that although many of the non-governmental organisations contracted to deliver ParentsNext embrace the philosophy of trauma-informed care, the design of ParentsNext has inhibited the organisations' ability to deliver pre-employment services in a trauma-informed way. A central element of the program which has caused anxiety among clients and providers alike is the integration of the Targeted Compliance Framework (TCF) into ParentsNext. This means that parents who do not meet strict deadlines for reporting their attendance at compulsory activities have had their payments suspended causing immediate financial hardship. The threat of payment suspension can create a dynamic which some participants find unsafe and make it difficult for the provider to establish a relationship with participants based on trust. Some participants experience the program as coercive and even find it reminiscent of the financial abuse they experienced within abusive relationships. The case of ParentsNext demonstrates that the current paradigm which seeks to broaden program reach through welfare conditionality is currently a significant obstacle to achieving trauma-informed human services.

**Mapping Employment Patterns Following a Benefit Sanction**

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*Julia Schmidtke, Institute for Employment Research, Nuremberg, Germany*

**Abstract of Paper**

As in many European countries, individuals in Germany who are capable of working but unable to achieve a minimum standard of living via own income or funds are eligible to receive means-tested welfare benefits. Benefit sanctions are used to ensure that benefit recipients comply with their duties, i.e. end their dependence on unemployment benefits by taking up employment or participating in labour market programs. While studies have shown that unemployment benefit sanctions can increase reemployment rates, they have also revealed negative side-effects e.g. on the quality of future employment or withdrawal from the labour force. Using German administrative data, we draw a random sample consisting of 53,436 individuals with at least one welfare benefit sanction event in 2016 and follow these individuals over the next 30 months. We apply a sequence analysis to distinguish 13 different employment states and conduct a cluster analysis to identify typical employment patterns after a sanction event.

We obtain five clusters describing the typical employment patterns: long-term recipients, exit to full-time or part-time employment, working benefit recipients and withdrawals from labour force. In a multinomial logistic model, we estimate the relative likelihood for individuals belonging to a cluster given their sociodemographic characteristics and employment histories prior to the first sanction event.

Our largest cluster, nearly sixty percent of individuals in the sample, remains in the welfare system for at least the next 30 months and shows almost no employment. Our analyses suggest that individuals in this cluster have a comparatively low attachment to the labour market. Three other groups, which make up one third of the total sample, are typically employed after benefit sanction. While males are more likely to take up full-time employment, females are more likely to take up part-time employment. We also observe that individuals in these clusters seem to have a stronger attachment to the labour market with higher levels of education and prior work experience. One of these groups is unable to find better paying employment which would end their dependence on welfare benefits. Another group of 10% exits from the welfare system by withdrawing from the labour force.

We show the heterogeneous impact of benefit sanctions on employment patterns and how those relate to individuals' preceding employment histories and sociodemographic characteristics. Given the ongoing discussions about the proportionality of benefit sanctions, our findings contribute to further the understanding their impact on future employment outcomes.

**Monetary incentives in the welfare system and their impact on the employment of welfare recipients: Relevant but overrated?**

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**Abstract of Paper**

In a major reform in 2023 the German government transformed the previous means-tested unemployment benefit II into the means-tested citizen's income. Both benefits secure the minimum income for employable people and their families and are conditional on the search for and acceptance of work. The reform marks a change in the work-first policy approach underlying the basic income system towards promoting more sustainable labour market integration. The reform included adjustments to sanctions, the benefit level, qualification measures and job search assistance.

One consequence of the reform was a significant increase in the benefit level in response to the high inflation in recent years. As a result, work incentives and sanctions have been at the center of public and political debate about the reform. Generous social benefits and low financial work incentives are considered as one explanation for persisting long-term unemployment in Germany. From a theoretical perspective and based on empirical evidence, a higher minimum income level reduces work incentives. Also, low incentives to increase labour supply in the existing system are criticized. Despite the focus of the debate on monetary incentives, numerous studies on the basic income system have shown that benefit recipients are a disadvantaged group and that a variety of problems prevent sustainable labour market integration. The actual impact of monetary incentives may therefore be overrated.

Against this background, our analysis investigates the impact of the German tax and benefit system on the labour market integration of unemployed welfare benefit recipients between 2017 and 2019. We make use of a random 10 percent sample of unemployment benefit II recipients drawn from administrative data. Work incentives inherent in the German tax and benefit system are calculated based on simulated incomes. These incomes are simulated using the tax-transfer microsimulation model GETTSIM, which uses extensive information in the data about individuals and their households to calculate hypothetical taxes and benefits. Our representative and large database allows us to illustrate the significant variation in the monetary incentives to take up employment for the heterogeneous population of benefit recipients. In regression analyses, we model the effect of monetary incentives, measured as participation tax rates, on taking up full-time and part-time employment for different subgroups of benefit recipients. Our preliminary results suggest that the effects of monetary incentives vary across the heterogeneous group of benefit recipients in terms of relevance and statistical robustness.

## **Poverty & Inequality 5**

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### **“You don’t think about what’s best for the water when you’re drowning. You just try to survive”:** Navigating household food insecurity and environmental sustainability on a low income

*Elisabeth Garratt, Christine Jackson-Taylor*  
*University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Household food insecurity has grown exponentially over the last decade (Loopstra et al. 2019), with latest figures showing that 25% of UK households were food insecure in 2022-23, with an estimated 3% of households having used food banks (Armstrong et al 2023). The scale of food insecurity and its associated negative economic, social and health consequences (Powers, 2022) reflects a combination of the legacy of austerity, repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the current cost of living crisis.

In parallel, practical, political, and social concerns about the climate, and the environmental sustainability of food systems, have also intensified. One-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted, and the lifecycle of food production contributes 20-30% of global greenhouse gas emissions (WRAP, 2021), far exceeding the scale of emissions from shipping and aviation (5% of emissions) (UN 2020). Food is a key driver of climate change.

Despite the huge environmental impact of current food systems, research into sustainable food has largely focussed on improving the sustainability of food production, thereby overlooking vital considerations of food consumption. Moreover, despite their interdependence, the intertwined topics of high and growing food insecurity and sustainable diets have largely remained detached in research. Consequently, meaningful policy efforts promoting sustainable diets are both desperately needed and notably lacking.

Our research will bridge knowledge gaps on these salient and overlapping issues. Our ESRC-funded project is a qualitative, longitudinal study exploring the experiences of a diverse sample of mothers in Sheffield who are living on low income. We investigate the ways sustainability practises interweave with or contradict food provisioning on a low income, and the associated barriers and enablers to pursuing a sustainable diet on a low income.

In our presentation we present initial analysis from the first round of fieldwork conducted in Spring 2024. We begin to uncover the novel, diverse ways sustainability does - and does not - feature in womens’ practises. While some women reported instrumental engagement with environmental behaviours that primarily prioritised cost saving, others recounted pro-environmental attitudes that influence their food provisioning in more principled ways, even under conditions of economic scarcity.

We imagine better futures in which access to food is environmentally and economically sustainable for both individuals and societies. Improved knowledge of food-related environmental sustainability practices within lived experiences of low income will be valuable to influence realistic, effective and meaningful philosophies, policies and practical action that prioritises sustainable, socially just futures.

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### **Taking Action on Rural Poverty – Addressing the Rural Poverty Premium**

*Nicola Bowman*

*The Poverty Alliance, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Historically, poverty has been framed as a predominantly urban issue, largely due to the ‘rural idyll’ which masks the reality of rural life for many. This has resulted in rural poverty going ignored or being met with inadequate policy responses that are designed from urban perspectives.

However, rural and island Scotland have been hit the hardest by the cost-of-living crisis. People living in rural areas who are on a low income are faced with both the poverty premium as well as the rural premium - living in remote rural parts of Scotland is estimated to cost 15-30% more than living in an urban area. There is a clear need to change our approach to tackling poverty to better meet the needs of rural communities.

This presentation will provide a background and overview of a new, three-year project being undertaken by The Poverty Alliance and funded by The Robertson Trust: Taking Action on Rural Poverty. Over the next three years we will be working in Aberdeenshire and Argyll and Bute with people with lived experience of poverty and trauma, community and voluntary sector organizations, the private sector and public bodies to establish and test pilot up to two practical, local measures to address the rural poverty premium. We will also be working to increase opportunities for people with lived experience to feed into local decision making and influence policy at a national level.

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### **Beyond the ‘two perspectives’ on poverty in Europe: Poverty risks and policy effectiveness two decades after eastern enlargement**

*Rod Hick*

*Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Two decades have passed since ten nations, mostly from Central and Eastern Europe, acceded to the European Union in 2004. These nations were poorer than the old EU-15 and the disparity in their living standards animated a substantial body of research trying to make sense of inequalities within and between the nations of Europe. Two perspectives dominated research on poverty during this period. The first, focussing on the at-risk-of-poverty rate, noted that some nations of Central and Eastern Europe displayed lower poverty rates than richer members of the EU-15 – indeed, resulting in some counter-intuitive comparisons, which persist today: Czechia continues to have the lowest poverty rate in Europe. The second, which was often used to qualify and make sense of the former, was that despite their performance in strictly relative terms, the Central and Eastern European nations had significantly lower real living standards than the nations of the old EU-15.

One consequence of this qualifying second perspective is that the remarkable performance of some CEE nations on the at-risk-of-poverty measure has not attracted the degree of interest and scrutiny that it perhaps deserved. What policy mix explains it? In addition, poverty rates in some historically better-performing nations have deteriorated over this period: poverty rates have almost doubled in Sweden, and have risen significantly in the Netherlands, Germany and

Luxembourg. Recent poverty trends, and the ongoing neglect of the CEE experience, require us to move beyond the two perspectives that previously dominated poverty research in Europe.

The paper will examine these issues, analysing trends in the at-risk-of-poverty rate since 2004 and the contribution that social security systems, labour markets, demographic differences have made to these changes. The empirical analysis that will be presented draws on data from the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) survey for the period 2004 – 2022 for the “old” EU-28 (i.e. EU Member States plus the UK); this paper is part of a wider body of work examining the changing nature of poverty risks in Europe in the two decades since EU enlargement. It will look to draw out lessons from both the remarkable experience of Czechia and some other CEE members, while also explaining the declining poverty performance in some of the richer and previously better-performing European nations – namely, Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands.

### **Symposium 155 - Social Policy, taxation and a socially just future (papers 192, 209 and 340)**

*Organiser: Sarah Kerr*

#### **Symposium Proposal**

In response to this year’s conference focus, the SPA Taxation and Social Policy Group proposes a symposium which aims to illustrate the central role of taxation in shaping socially just futures. The symposium is the first of two organised by the SPA Taxation and Social Policy Group and offers three papers illustrating the interaction of social policy and taxation on several levels: as a moral economic issue (Is it fair? Does it deliver economic and/or social justice?), as an efficiency issue (Does it work to raise revenue? Is tax policy for social purposes integrated into the broader spending strategies of governments?), and as an electoral issue (Can new taxes (for example on wealth) garner requisite political and public support?).

The session will be introduced through three papers: Micheál Collins and Tom McDonnell will look at the economic and social rationales for the taxation of intergenerational wealth transfers. They will outline the social policy case for fair and transparent inheritance taxes, using Ireland as a case study to ask whether current inheritance taxation policies challenge or perpetuate economic inequality. Agustin Redonda and Flurim Aliu will look at the use of tax expenditures for social purposes and their substantial costs in terms of revenue forgone using the Global Tax Expenditures Database. Their work reveals the true balance between direct spending and tax expenditures for social welfare. Sarah Kerr and Michael Vaughan will look at media and campaigning organisations’ communication about wealth inequality in a context of public ambivalence towards, and political anxiety around, wealth taxation. They will explore how prevailing ways of communicating about wealth inequality might make progressive change less rather than more achievable.

The discussion of these papers is likely to engage with wider questions including: the tension between tax as a means to raise revenue and tax designed to deliver economic and social justice; the social and economic implications of the use of tax reliefs to achieve social policy goals; and approaches to wealth inequality communications in terms of preference formation.

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### **Taxation and Intergenerational Fairness: Exploring the Role of Inheritance Taxes**

*Tom McDonnell, Nevin Economic Research Institute, Dublin, Ireland*

*Micheal Collins, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Discussions about economic equality have, in recent years, extended beyond considerations of income distribution to encompass the distribution of wealth and its intergenerational transfer. Driven by new and more frequent data, a better understanding is emerging of the concentration of wealth within society and the dynamics of its intergenerational transfer. This paper contributes to that discussion by assessing the economic and social rationales for the taxation of intergenerational wealth transfers.

It first problematises the perception of intergenerational taxes as unfair and outlines the social policy case for fair and transparent inheritances taxes. Then it presents comparative data on household wealth across high-income European countries before focusing on one of these, Ireland, to consider whether current inheritance taxation policies counter or perpetuate these inequalities.

Finally, the paper explores a range of options for reform and considers their potential to address wealth inequality while providing recurring funds for public services and redistribution.

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### **Beyond the Budget. A Global Perspective on Social Spending through Tax Expenditures**

*Agustin Redonda, Flurim Aliu*

*Council on Economic Policies, Zurich, Switzerland*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Tax expenditures are used widely by governments across the world to pursue different public policy goals, including boosting innovation and R&D, incentivizing job creation, and greening the economy. They are also used widely for social purposes, e.g. to mitigate inequality and tackle poverty. This paper investigates the intricate interplay between tax expenditures and social policy. Leveraging the Global Tax Expenditures Database (GTED), we carry out the first data-driven comparative assessment of direct spending and tax expenditures for social welfare across countries to shed light on this often-overlooked aspect of fiscal policy. Our research reveals prevalent tax expenditure usage for social purposes and substantial costs in terms of revenue forgone worldwide, averaging over 1 per cent of GDP and 6 per cent of tax revenue. Our analysis showcases varying strategies employed by countries, particularly emphasizing the reliance of high-income economies on tax expenditure provisions granted through personal income taxes, and low/middle-income countries predominantly using value-added tax-related tax expenditures for social objectives. Our results also highlight the importance of functions such as housing in contributing significantly to social spending through tax expenditures with the ratio tax expenditure/direct spending reaching roughly 365 per cent in the US and 203 per cent in France. Hence, our paper underlines the necessity for meticulous evaluation and efficient design of tax expenditures to better align tax expenditure regimes with governments' social policy objectives as well as to minimize unintended social or economic consequences.

**Communicating about wealth inequality in a context of public ambivalence towards, and political anxiety around, wealth taxation***Sarah Kerr, Michael Vaughan**LSE, London, United Kingdom***Abstract of Paper**

Wealth inequality is rising but public concern and political commitment to addressing it is not. This lack of democratic responsiveness (Lierse et al. 2022) is compounded by complex public understandings of what wealth is, how the economy works, and at what point wealth inequality becomes unfair or illegitimate (Hebden 2020; NEON 2018). British people are not averse to differences in levels of wealth, especially when these are endorsed by meritocratic beliefs. If we agree that some degree of wealth equalisation will contribute to a more socially and environmentally just future, how might we move towards that future, in light of this lack of democratic responsiveness? And how can we problematise it in ways which take into account the complex public understanding of the economy, of wealth and of wealth inequality, and qualified support for degrees of wealth inequality? (Davis et al. 2020).

This paper explores the role of frames in building political pressure to address wealth inequality by bringing together two new pieces of research: a literature review on the framing of the economy, wealth, and wealth inequality (Kerr and Vaughan May 2024), and a content analysis of images used by UK civil society and news media organisations as they communicated the problem of wealth inequality online between 2014 and 2023 (Vaughan and Kerr forthcoming). The paper explores what the framing literature tells us about the different impacts of advantage and disadvantage frames on perceptions of and preference formation around wealth inequality, and then it considers these findings in the context of image use in wealth inequality work by civil society and media actors. We make some observations about what the potential effects of these visual frames could be with the aim of refining a future research agenda.

**Paper Session 8 - 15:20-16:20****Environment****Social reproduction, climate change and social policy to promote a 'Just Transition'***Alexander Nunn**Leeds Trinity University, Leeds, United Kingdom***Abstract of Paper**

The concept of Just Transition emerged in the 1970s when it was used by North American Trade Unions to lobby for support for workers and communities affected by pro-environmental regulation. More recently the concept has gained greater traction on a global scale, being incorporated into the Paris Agreement on climate change and used to encourage states to combine national contributions to mitigate and adapt to climate change with social policies that can help embed those efforts and adjust for the socio-economic costs that these may generate. Notwithstanding the intention that just transition extend beyond the initial framing, many 'just transition policies' at the domestic level remain focussed on specific industries and spatial communities, most often associated with coal pit closure programmes (e.g. much discussed examples in Poland, Germany, the US, Canada, South Africa and China).

This paper will first document new social and economic risks arising from climate change and policy (both endogenous and exogenous) and behavioural (both among households and firms) responses it. Utilising insights from feminist Social Reproduction Theory (in particular the concepts of ‘Household Social Reproduction Strategies’ (see Nunn and Tepe, 2019; Farrall et al. 2022), ‘Depletion’ (see Rai et al. 2014) and ‘Contingent Coping’ (see Hargreaves et al, 2018; Fawcett et al. 2023), the paper will outline ways in which general labour market and social policies might respond to these risks. While there is some commentary about the need for innovation, the paper argues that most of the necessary policy tools are in place in many countries and widely understood. The paper concludes that what is needed is (a) more generous provision, (b) increased international financial flows to support these policies, (c) stronger integration between Active Labour Market Policy and Social Protection, (d) more nuanced balance between universal provision and targeting, and (e) integration of recent (technology enabled) innovations in ‘adaptive’ measures as part of existing programmes.

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**Intersectional climate justice, climate policy and the Irish welfare state: elusive connections.**

*Fiona Dukelow, Catherine Forde, Edith Busteed  
University College, Cork, Ireland*

**Abstract of Paper**

The climate crisis is increasingly making its impact known and will have a growing bearing on the future of welfare states. Climate policy and climate action plans are gradually becoming more central to the policy repertoire of nation states. At the same time, the challenge of meeting climate targets as global temperatures and greenhouse gas emissions continue to climb will likely intensify re/distributional conflicts. Yet recognising and responding to climate injustices, both in terms of vulnerability to climate impacts and the uneven burdens and benefits of climate policies, remain largely absent in that policy repertoire. This paper reflects on this situation in the Irish context. It is based on the research findings of a baseline policy review the authors produced for a project currently being undertaken by the National Women’s Council of Ireland and Community Work Ireland called ‘Feminist Communities for Climate Justice’. Drawing on eco-feminist and intersectional perspectives, in this paper we first scope out a framework for understanding climate justice and outline why an intersectional understanding of climate justice is crucial but also highly complex and challenging to realise. Informed by this framework, we then proceed to track and analyse the degree to which intersectional climate justice features in Ireland’s Climate Action Plan, which was first published in 2019 and is updated annually, and in related areas of social policy. We find a policy landscape where fundamental aspects of climate justice are missing, and where there are both enormous data gaps and a lack of recognition of the knowledge and experiences of women and marginalised communities and of how they intersect. While there are some attempts at recognising climate justice issues these remain highly siloed and disconnected from any overall picture and effort. Notwithstanding the fact that realising climate justice will always be a ‘work in progress’ (Walker, 2012), for Ireland to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 in a fair and just way, as stated in Ireland’s Climate Action Plan, there is much to be done to recognise and respond to the climate injustices experienced by women and marginalised communities.

Reference

Walker, G., 2012. Environmental justice: Concepts, evidence and politics. London: Routledge.

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**Water Security and Social Policy: the crucial role of interdisciplinary research to achieve social and environmental justice**

*Trude Sundberg*

*University of Kent, Canterbury, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Water security, intensified by climate change and deepening social disparities, has emerged as a pivotal global issue with profound implications for communities worldwide. This paper delves into the vital role of social and public policy in navigating the complex waters of navigating the impacts of climate change in combination with social inequalities by focusing on water security in West Bengal, India as a case study. The three key objectives of the paper are; demonstrating the significance of social policy in water security, advocating for interdisciplinary solutions, and presenting findings from an interdisciplinary, community-focused water security project that have been carried out over the last 6 years in West Bengal, India. The project has used collaborative methods, working with marginalised communities, including gender nonconforming and hijra communities, to map and create new indices that help us monitor and understand water security using social and biophysical measurements.

The paper offers a critical discussion of the need for interdisciplinary approaches to map, understand and create sustainable solutions to the complex, and interdependent, social and environmental inequalities emerging in today's world. Social Policy, we argue, can have a key role in offering critical analysis and solutions, but need to innovate and transgress our more traditional ways of measuring and analysing problems and work towards including environmental and biophysical measurements. Furthermore, effective public policy, based on interdisciplinary and community based research, has the potential to be the linchpin to address upcoming challenges and advancing social and environmental justice. Overall, the paper offers both theoretical and methodological contributions that work towards advancing and improving Social Policy approaches by transcending our traditional disciplinary methods

**Political Economy**

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**A Chronopolitics of Friday Releases from Prison to Communities: In Policy and Practice, Whose Time Matters?**

*Hannah Graham*

*University of Stirling, Stirling, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Does it matter what day of the week a person is released from prison? This issue has not received the attention it deserves, as preoccupation with the who, where and what obscures when it happens. Social, health and welfare needs in the time immediately after release are paramount, as are the potential risks and the need for access to various services. Policy provisions preventing release from prison custody on weekends and public holidays have been in place for decades in Scotland, England and Wales, coming to the fore again recently with legislative reforms to also prevent Friday releases. By way of context, in England and Wales, there are approximately 46,000 people released from serving a prison sentence per year, and 1 in 3 are released on a Friday (Ministry of Justice, 2022, 2023). In discussing these issues and developments, this paper does three things. The paper critically analyses the framing of time in 'day of release' policy narratives in two jurisdictions across three nations: Scotland and England

and Wales. It considers release from prison as more than a singular event – crossing the custody threshold on the day of release – by recognising it as a temporal process of transition and as a temporal practice by institutions who use time as a powerful ordering device, wielding power through temporal governance (Facer et al., 2022; Maier, 2021). Thirdly, it raises a line of argument about the politics of time and whose time matters? Why? Politics of the timing of release from prison are not a minor ‘administrivial’ matter of altering days of the week, rather it is indicative of wider professional, institutional and socio-political dynamics and intersecting inequalities. There remains a need for better recognition that prisoner reintegration is not ‘just’ a penal policy issue.

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**Social policy reforms in Lebanon and Jordan since the Covid-19 pandemic: what future for welfare systems in conflict-affected, underdeveloped Capitalist societies?**

*Rana Jawad*

*University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The paper examines the idea of social policy futures from the perspective of two countries with contrasting political economies in the Middle East that are both undergoing major reforms in the design of social policy services under the auspices of international development institutions (the World Bank, UNICEF, ILO and FCDO). Focusing on the time-period since the Covid-19 pandemic (2020), the conceptual framing for the paper combines three analytical parameters: 1. social protection policy transfer in international development; 2. the geo-political importance of the Middle East in Western foreign policy; 3. the importance of social assistance in underdeveloped Capitalist economies in the Global South as the primary locus of welfare state futures (Barrientos, 2018). Lebanon and Jordan are exemplars of two types of non-oil producing political economies in the region; the former being a collapsing laissez-faire economy and the latter a relatively stable monarchy. In social policy terms, both countries share the same status of a) being aid-dependent, b) host to the the largest refugee populations in the region which has thrown up major challenges for social policy services and c) in the midst of implementing reforms that see largely unconditional targeted cash transfer programmes (UCT) at the forefront of these reforms: NPTP and ESSN (Lebanon) and NAF (Jordan). The data and methods that the paper is based on are: 1. on-going qualitative research in the two countries (funded by the AHRC-GCRF Network Plus Scheme, Grant number AH/T008067/2 and Ford Foundation Grant number 135630 - both ending in 2025); 2. 50 semi-structured interviews with senior officials and programme managers in Ministries of Social Affairs and Planning overseeing the design and implementation of cash transfer programmes in both countries; 3. 20 semi-structured interviews with experts and senior policy officials based at a range of international development organisations who have a direct influence on reform processes in both countries; 4. descriptive secondary quantitative data on the structure of social policy services and social spending. The analysis is on-going and follows the thematic networks approach (Attride-Stirling, 2020). The key arguments of the paper are: the combination of foreign security interest, fiscal deficits and patrimonial welfare systems in the two countries encourages a narrowly defined future for social policy based on targeted social assistance and the "deserving poor." Although civil society actors have increased their advocacy around universalism, the current evidence points to a divergent welfare state path from other Global South contexts (Barrientos, 2018).

## **Health Inequalities**

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### **Health Inequalities: the Fall, Rise and Future of a Social Policy Puzzle**

*Ally Brown*

*University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

##### **Background:**

Policy approaches to health inequalities have repeatedly been criticised for ‘lifestyle drift’: the undermining of upstream conceptualisations of health by a preoccupation with downstream policy actions (e.g. promotion of individual behavioural change and improvements to healthcare services). However, this critique has largely been based on analyses of policy texts formulated by health policy teams. Informed by Lynch’s (2020) political analysis of the ‘health inequalities’ framing, this paper considers ‘health inequalities’ as a cross-governmental policy agenda involving social, economic and health policy teams who may take varying approaches to ‘health’ and ‘health inequality’.

##### **Methods:**

This qualitative doctoral research involved thirty-four semi-structured interviews with policymakers and a critical analysis of thirty social, economic and health policy documents from two devolved policy bodies in the UK: the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and the Scottish Government. Interviews and documentary analyses were directed by the question: how were ‘health’, ‘inequalities’ and ‘health inequalities’ framed and approached by different policy teams and texts?

##### **Results:**

Social and economic policy documents were less prone to individualised conceptualisations of health (including lifestyle drift) than health policy texts, due to their tendency to focus on more structural health determinants. However, interviews indicated that the medical model of health remains embedded across policy settings. Three policy framings of ‘health inequalities’ were identified: a ‘social injustice’ framing, which struggled to facilitate the policy change it promoted; a ‘healthcare for disadvantaged groups’ framing, which achieved high-level support for limited policy ambitions; and an ‘illness-related inactivity’ framing, which made ‘health inequalities’ an economic priority. Inequalities in health were also framed strategically by policy bodies to advance – or subdue – particular political stories aimed at broader policy goals.

##### **Discussion:**

If individualisation remains prevalent in health policy conceptualisations of health, and the medical model of health remains embedded across policy settings, how can an evidence-informed policy agenda tackling preventable inequalities in health succeed? Can ‘health inequalities’ be decoupled from health policy? Or perhaps emergent non-health policy agendas such as fair work, child poverty, or ‘levelling up’ might lead to more policy action on inequalities in health determinants? In Scotland, ‘wellbeing’ was a popular framing among non-health policymakers who equated it with the social model of health. But might the attractive ambiguity of ‘wellbeing’ also leave it too vague to be operationalised?

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**Socio-economic solutions to health inequalities in Scotland: overcoming the implementation gap**

*Emma Congreve, Katherine Smith*

*University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Scotland's health inequalities are significant and show no signs of abating. Whilst much academic study is focussed on the issue, solutions to reducing health inequality are likely to emerge from the socio economic policy sphere rather than solely from public health. A new programme of work led by the Fraser of Allander institute and the Centre for health policy at the University of Strathclyde (in collaboration with the Health Foundation) is seeking to focus on socio economic solutions focussed on two distinct groups (young children and young adult men). The work builds on the 2023 Health Foundation report 'Leave No One Behind' and its underpinning reports from the Fraser of Allander Institute (University of Strathclyde) and the MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit (University of Glasgow). This report focused on data from the period covering the last twenty years since devolution. A particular focus of the new programme will be overcoming the gap between promise and delivery of the Scottish Governments often world leading and well meaning policy rhetoric. Here we present the basis for Action Research methods combined with Peer Research activity which will inform and build consensus on the necessary actions that can be taken, at all levels of policy and practice, to make headway in reducing harm.

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**Generating a shared diagnosis of the present to inform cross-sectoral action of the future: A synthesis of critical insights from health and social policy research**

*Naoimh McMahon*

*Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The contemporary challenges facing welfare organisations are immense. Over a decade of austerity has led to a hollowing out of essential infrastructures, insecure funding arrangements have undermined relational working between organisations and the communities they serve, and workforces across the board are feeling overstretched and undervalued. At the same time, global economic instability is directly impacting the lives of individuals and communities, culminating in greater financial precarity and ever-increasing need. These impacts are not felt evenly across social groups and there is a growing sense of urgency about the need to get beyond unsustainable and siloed firefighting of the symptoms of these inequalities, to collectively address their causes.

The aim of this research was to compare the experiences of different sectors in responding to inequalities, and to synthesise critical insights and learnings about what has constrained efforts to date. In this talk, I will present key findings from my synthesis of early childhood, youth justice, and health literatures. Employing the theoretical concept of 'problematisation', I'll set out what critical scholarship in particular tells us about how inequality has taken shape as problem to be 'tackled' within each of these areas. I will draw out insights on the dominant intellectual influences and institutional processes that are said to have shaped the issue. Lastly, I will present a synthesised diagnostic account of the harmful and limiting effects of dominant responses to inequality, both in terms of what gets done (policy and practice) and also wider symbolic effects about the nature of the issue and what or who needs to change.

What is interesting about this synthesis is that it gets beyond the topic specific differences and nuances of the individual cases, to generate a shared account of the institutionalised logics and processes that limit action on inequalities. It illustrates how they lead to, at best, ameliorative responses to wider social harms, and at worst, policies and practices that actually further entrench or reproduce structural inequality. However, it also highlights that if the 'roots' of the issue are the same across traditionally quite separate fields, then actually there is scope for much more cross-sectoral and collective reimagining of the underpinning logics of future welfare states.

### **Housing 3**

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#### **The Receiver Doer Judge (RDJ) Framework: Developing a critical policy analysis framework to analyse housing policy in Ireland and Belgium**

*Rory Hearne, Lorraine Grimes*

*Maynooth University, Maynooth, Ireland*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper provides a theoretical and methodological toolkit for policy analysis using a Receiver, Doer, Judge framework (RDJ). The toolkit is part of the EU-funded INVOLVE project which focusses on the relationship between democracy and inequalities. It examines the very core of the contemporary European welfare state: its public and social services. It investigates how the experience of vulnerability and societal inequalities affect citizens' trust and participation in public services.

INVOLVE's RDJ framework aims to better understand and transform how public and social services impact marginalised groups in terms of inequality, participation and trust, by focusing on five key concepts including participation, empowerment, voice, conditionality and capacity to aspire. The project involves both policy analysis and interviews with individuals from marginalised groups affected by the policies and public services under investigation. We aim to bridge the gap between policy, public services and marginalised groups by critically analysing participation and voice in the drafting, implementation and evaluation of policy and delivery of public services. We also consider issues of individual and collective empowerment and aspiration from vulnerable groups, and we critically analyse issues of 'conditionality' and restrictions to accessing public services. The policies analysed relate to public services for vulnerable groups in health, education, employment and housing, across eight European countries. The framework is produced into a policy analysis toolkit which can enable a country-specific policy analysis of the inclusiveness in public and social services of different disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, and how they enable vulnerable individuals and groups facing multiple inequalities to realise their aspirations.

We will present our methodology for developing the framework, the RDJ toolkit for the project and analysing housing policies in Ireland and Belgium using the toolkit. It will analyse two key policies which affect one-parent families in Ireland and Flanders. The key question we ask is, do these policies address and consider the key concepts of participation, empowerment, voice, conditionality and 'capacity to aspire' of the marginalised group, in this case, one-parent families, we are working with? We show how critical policy theory and frameworks (developed considering theories of participation/power, feminist/intersectionality, human rights and trauma-informed approaches) influenced the development of the RDJ framework. The aim of INVOLVE's policy analysis is not only to co-create new knowledge and understanding of policies

and their impacts and outcomes but also to co-create policy transformation through the development of new/reformed policies and public/social service practice.

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**On London's 'petty' rentier structures: a sociological political economy of hostels and rooms**

*Ben Main*

*Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

This paper shares theoretical and descriptive results of an ethnography of rental crisis and urban precarity. From a foothold in precarious worker transition in the rental/rentier interstices of London embedded observations were drawn of a group of inexpensive commercial hostels that offer short-and medium-term dwellings. Burawoy's extended case method motivated extensions of social theory that drew on the political economy of rent, theories of precarity(iat) and the 'wacquantian' optic on urban-societal macro-mechanisms. Three contentions are presented. First, the hostel ownership structure, fabric and internal management, digital positioning operation are outlined to reflect an exploitative, masked 'for profit houselessness' whereby individually inexpensive beds are intensively commodified spaces that enact a form of digital slumlordism and foreshadow an ambiguous advance of trade capital into non-tenural space. Second, by methodologically traversing the contiguous, 'next' transition spaces from the hostel - renting a room and London's multiply occupied housing scene - the hostels were 'cased' as class or strata boundaries connected to rental markets and boundaries. The sociological distinctions of the precariat, service 'sector proletariat' and related communities (Savage, Standing and Wacquant) are expounded via typologies of practices of petty rentierism in subletting and sharing. Third, while macro-economic factors fill out accounts of the modalities of rentier capitalism a rentier sociology is undertheorized. To begin to attend to this the social relation of rent is re-imagined here with constructivist, relational and structural conceptual tools of 'subsistence', 'commodity', 'field' and 'advanced marginality' from Bourdieu, Marx and Wacquant. The twin contexts of rental policy implications and social knowledge of liminal or 'hidden homelessness' then re-connect the paper theoretical extensions to more grounded empirical applications.

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**Critical reflections on innovations in housing policy: the case of Safe Accommodation**

*Emma Bimpson*

*Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

In recent years there has been an apparent consensus shift in policy preferences away from congregate hostel accommodation and towards more progressive, 'housing-led' responses to homelessness. With the capabilities approach applied to understand the way that housing interventions enable or limit wellbeing, we see how hostels affect emotional well-being and autonomy (Watts and Blenkinsopp, 2022; McMordie, 2020). Living with other residents and staff in hostel accommodation also bears significant psycho-social impacts (Irving, 2020). Yet, there is a need for research to understand the extent to which more dispersed forms of accommodation promote well-being and autonomy, and the position of domestic abuse survivors within this shifting policy context. Without available administrative data, it is particularly difficult to map domestic abuse provision (Bowstead, 2022). What we do know is that available accommodation is not enough to meet demand (Women's Aid, 2021), and there is

a particular shortage of services to meet the needs of people living with disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, and those with multiple and complex needs (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2022). Two out of four categories of 'Safe Accommodation' outlined in domestic abuse legislation refer to shared spaces, with additional references to peer support and services aimed at individuals with shared protected characteristics. The women's refuge movement, including by-and-for services, has historically advocated for the mutual solidarity that alternative home spaces can offer (Robertson, 2023). However, research has shown that while offering vital sanctuary for people fleeing domestic abuse, shared accommodation for women and families for example can present significant limitations for parenting and autonomy (Bimpson et al. 2021; Hearne and Murphy, 2019). This paper draws on a range of sources including a largescale primary research project mapping supported housing in England, scoping interviews with key informants in the domestic abuse sector, secondary sources and literature. Evidence will be discussed to explore the form and function of Safe Accommodation within contemporary debates in welfare, highlighting the potential for discord within the policy-practice nexus.

## **Migration 1**

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### **Rethinking Migration Policy through Social Network Analysis**

*Alessio D'Angelo*

*University of Derby, Derby, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper provides an overview of the nexus between migration policy and migrants' social networks, discussing the insights and policy implications emerging from a SNA (Social Network Analysis) approach to migration research. Migration policy is here defined in the broad sense, encompassing both the regulation of entry and settlement as well its social policy dimension, including migrants' access to welfare and public services.

Applying a 'social networks' lens to the study of migration provides us with alternative perspectives to 'over-socialised' deterministic theories – i.e. those portraying migrants as passive agents, whose mobility is the mere results of macro-societal forces and national policy – and to 'under-socialised' economic theories that see migrants as driven only by individual decisions and calculations. In fact, recent scholarly developments have demonstrated that a holistic analysis of migration processes must reconcile issues of structure and agency (De Haas, 2010), encompassing, on the one hand, state responses and policies (Sørensen, 2012), and on the other the personal networks of migrants: locally, transnationally and across time (Ryan and D'Angelo 2017). On this basis, it can be argued that migration policy 'failures' (Castles, 2004) at national and international level are often due to overlooking or downplaying, more or less deliberately, the relational, meso-level of migration and of migrants' experiences. As far as international mobility is concerned, this paper starts from seminal USA scholarship, including the work of Massey (1990), to then examine more recent theoretical developments (Collyer, 2005; Beine, 2016), focusing on migration towards and across Europe (D'Angelo 2024). A review of different academic perspectives reveals that social networks are not on their own sufficient to overcome policy restrictions; rather, the two dimensions interact with complex mechanisms of influence (Collyer, 2005), adaptation (Erick and Ciobanu, 2009), and elasticity (Beine, 2016).

Likewise, with regards to access to welfare and rights, the focus is on migrants' social networks as a mechanism to activate alternative sources of social support as well as mechanisms of

resistance to ‘welfare chauvinism’ (Balch and Balabanova, 2016) and bordering (Yuval-Davis, 2018). In this respect, the UK represents a particularly useful case study, both nationally and as a policy trend-setter across continental Europe (D’Angelo, 2022).

Bringing together a wider range of academic research and approaches, the paper aims to show how Social Network Analysis can help us challenge traditional – and highly Euro-centric – policy approaches to migration, with the potential to inform new political visions and policy agendas for the future.

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**GenMigra: Migrant women navigating inequalities and im/mobilities in times of polycrisis - can there be hope for better futures?**

*Hannah Haycox, Daniela Sime, Emmaleena Kakela  
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit at a time of on-going economic and political crises globally and has since exacerbated existing gender inequalities, from precarious labour to the dislocation of family relationships locally and transnationally. This paper reports on findings from an international study which examines the compounding impacts of COVID-19 pandemic which triggered a healthcare crisis and other crises (e.g. Brexit, the invasion of Ukraine, cost of living crisis).

GEN-MIGRA ([www.genmigra.org](http://www.genmigra.org)) uses an intersectional perspective to explore migrant women’s intersecting experiences of polycrisis and the possibilities for renewal and regeneration, while examining the changing nature of inequalities during pandemic (what new inequalities have emerged or worsened for women) and what was the role of state policies mitigating or worsening inequalities.

The paper centers the concept of ‘polycrisis’ to explore the new structural constraints facing migrant women. In 1999, the French philosopher Edgar Morin and Anne-Brigitte Kern were reflecting on the “interwoven and overlapping crises” that were affecting humanity. More recently, Swilling (2019) used the term ‘polycrisis’ as a comprehensive label for the multiple interconnected crises facing the global political economy, including rising inequalities, global warming and the threat of financial crises.

Drawing on interviews with representatives from organisations supporting migrant families (17 interviewees), migrant women and their family members (40 interviewees), we examine the extent to which personal crises (mental health challenges, bereavement, family breakdown, isolation, gender and state violence) were felt alongside the ongoing polycrisis. In the UK, the wider crisis in healthcare was also compounded by an overhaul of the immigration system in the aftermath of Brexit which has exacerbated women’s vulnerabilities, particularly for those with insecure immigration status, and a cost of living crisis.

Findings indicate that voluntary organisations supporting migrants were filling the gaps left by a lack of response from statutory services, with very little resource. Migrant women were navigating challenging spaces of isolation, new care roles, mental health vulnerabilities and a sense of profound insecurity. These personal crises were shaped and compounded by the on-going global polycrisis. We expand also on women’s activation of their agency to identify solutions and coping strategies to new challenges post-pandemic.

We conclude with an examination of the extent to which recovery is possible post-polycrisis, both in terms of systems of support and individual resilience. We problematize further the gendered consequences of the poly-crisis and propose that future social policies must adopt an intersectional lens to generate sustainable solutions.

**After the asylum process, what next for unaccompanied young people in Scotland?  
Temporal affordances and restrictions in a multi-level policy system.**

*Maggie Grant, Scot Hunter*

*University of Stirling, Stirling, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

In recent years, UK asylum and migration policy making has largely been a story of ever-increasing restrictions and explicit hostility. Over a similar period, Scottish policy-makers approach to reforming the systems for children in care has focused on consolidating and extending their rights, including for support into adulthood, through a large-scale programme of work following the Independent Care Review (The Promise Scotland, 2020). For the group of people affected by both policy areas – namely unaccompanied young people, who have sought asylum by age 18 without their parents or customary caregivers – this divergence in policy directions has significant and long-lasting consequences.

Building on previous work on time and the asylum system that has highlighted experiences of waiting (Rotter, 2015) and the importance of being able to visualise a future (Chase, 2013), this paper examines how temporal affordances and restrictions are built into policy instruments affecting unaccompanied young people in Scotland. It asks: what happens when the waiting for an asylum decision is over? What new opportunities and restrictions emerge, and how do young people and those who support them navigate these?

Drawing on interviews with 19 young people who have lived in Scotland for a variety of lengths of time, and data from a national support service for unaccompanied children over a ten-year period, the impact of policy-making is illustrated via changes in young people's relationships with individuals and services, perspectives on their former and current circumstances, and plans for the future. Special attention is paid to examples where temporal flexibility supported young people to make choices and access opportunities. While recognising that these experiences may not be typical, and that policy intentions do not always translate into practice (Ramsay, 2020; Rigby and Malloch, 2020), these narratives offer a glimpse into what a future welfare state could offer if young people's rights are consistently protected, their individual interests and talents are nurtured, and learning from their experiences drives policy decisions.

## **General Social Policy 2**

**Behavioural science of cooperation: Serving social policy for a better future**

*John Lazarus*

*Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

As a behavioural scientist I recently guest edited the Global Discourse journal issue 'Cooperation and Social Policy: Integrating Evidence into Practice' in which social policy practitioners co-wrote papers with behavioural scientists on social dilemma problems where cooperation for the public good is in conflict with self-regard. (As an example of a social dilemma, although an act of fly-tipping is beneficial for the individual actor whatever others do, and all parties may therefore fly-tip, if everyone shows restraint they will all be better off than if they all pollute.) I will present an outline of this work. Papers in the journal issue, accompanied by commentaries and responses, consider: welfare problems; climate change negotiation; sustainable transport; vaccine hesitancy and organ donation; refugee assistance; and building

a cooperative child. In an introductory paper I review the many factors known from experiments, in the lab and the real world, to encourage cooperation, and explain their motivational foundations.

In a final paper I propose that the design of social policy initiatives requiring greater cooperation should start with a game theory analysis of the problem followed by an evaluation of the motives that players bring to it. This is a 'methodological hypothesis' whose success will depend on whether it produces efficient policy results when used in practice. If found to be successful it would provide a taxonomy of social policy cooperation problems – classified by game structure, player motives and effective intervention methods – that functioned to guide the design of further interventions, for a better future.

To promote the aims of the journal issue I hope, in conversations at this conference: to engage with delegates interested to apply the concepts and results of behavioural science to problems in social policy requiring cooperation; to receive feedback on the 'methodological hypothesis'; and to deepen my understanding of the social policy world and its methods.

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### **Diary of an SNP First Minister: A Chronopolitics of Proximity and Policy Priorities**

*Hannah Graham*

*University of Stirling, Stirling, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper provides a content analysis of Nicola Sturgeon's First Ministerial diaries in the final two years of her leadership (April 2021 – March 2023). As First Minister, to whom and what did she give her time – which issues and interest groups had access? Which didn't? Or, who and what may be missing? An audience with a national leader can be indicative of policy priorities and potential for influence – as can its absence. The lens of chronopolitics – the politics of time – is used here to consider 24 months of diaries, with 681 entries, published by the Scottish Government. Some diary entries in the research sample have been cross-referenced with three other resources to gain more information about why they interacted with the First Minister and the topic of focus: the Scottish Parliament Lobbying Register; the Scottish Government First Minister's speeches collection; and the Scottish Government Freedom of Information (FOI) disclosure log publications about First Ministerial meetings. This research demonstrates how some key social policy and political issues in Scotland were kept away from the First Minister's meetings and events, instead delegated to other Ministers to oversee. Several of these issues would be considered important or central in the context of devolution and Scottish society, as reflected politically in topics in First Minister's Questions (FMQs) and empirically in Scottish social attitudes and public perceptions research. Whereas other issues appear to be signature priorities in being given a significant commitment of First Ministerial time, including climate and the environment, economy and finances, culture, and health and COVID-19. The paper briefly reflects on the limitations and opportunities of using a temporal lens to analyse Government Ministerial diaries to make inferences about proximity and policy priorities.

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### **Understanding the role of small and local third sector organisations in employability support for young people in Scotland**

*Charlotte Zealley*

*University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper presents findings from doctoral research into small and localised forms of third sector employability support for 16-25 year-olds in Scotland. The Scottish Government's employability strategy is trending towards a place-based approach to provision with local, instead of national, programmes. However, Scotland has a multi-layered employability landscape which also includes UK government-funded provision (including the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund) and grant-funded programmes. Previous research has shown there are challenges for third sector organisations (TSOs) to participate in welfare-to-work markets: for example, they may struggle to retain their distinctiveness in the face of competitive pressures to conform to work-first approaches. This research investigated whether at a local level, smaller TSOs in Scotland are able to provide alternative forms of employability support by effectively navigating the complexity of the Scottish policy landscape. The research took place between 2021 and 2023 and comprised of ethnographic observations and interviews with thirteen different TSOs (varying in size from micro to large) providing employability support in a local authority in Central Scotland, as well as with public sector stakeholders.

The research identified that TSOs were an integral part of the employability support landscape, depended on by public sector services. While in some instances TSOs were in formal contractual relationships to provide employability support, in others these were informal partnerships which relied on local networking. This highlights the need to look beyond the welfare-to-work market to understand the delivery of employability support for young people in Scotland. TSOs of varying sizes and funding models were also found to be providing a broadly relational approach to employability (Pearson et al., 2023), and this also contributes to broader debates about the distinctiveness of small voluntary organisations (Dayson et al., 2022). This paper's findings support calls for greater consideration of how the UK's work-first policy orientation is being tempered at the sub-state level (Pearce and Lagana, 2023).

## **Social Care 2**

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### **The Life Course Effects of Care**

*Justin van de Ven, Patryk Bronka, Matteo Richiardi*

*University of Essex, Colechester, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Caring has its most obvious effects when it is actually required. Yet the effects of care are likely to extend to other periods of the life course. People may anticipate the need to provide informal care, either as part of their fertility decisions, or in response to deteriorating health of loved-ones. Similarly, a reason given for high savings rates among the elderly is the desire to self-insure against the needs consequent on adverse health shocks, including the need for (expensive) formal care. Furthermore, both informal care and incapacity demanding care can have effects that persist well after the actual episodes of care are past due, for example, to labour market scarring and/or depleted savings. This study uses current best-practice methods of economic analysis to explore these phenomena. Focussing on the channels of employment

and savings, the study considers how the effects of care vary over the life course, and with the time that episodes of care are encountered.

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**Is 'innovation' the policy solution? A case study of Shared Lives schemes in England**

*Carl Purcell, Jill Manthorpe, King's College London, London, United Kingdom*

*Juliette Malley, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

In the context of austerity 'innovation' is routinely presented as a response to pressure on public services. This study considers the development of Shared Lives (SL) schemes in England – a model of adult social care that has been consistently promoted as an innovative and cost-effective alternative to more traditional models such as residential care. Following the closure of long-stay hospitals from late 1970s, SL schemes (then called adult placement schemes) developed and expanded as an alternative way to care for people with learning disabilities as part of the wider 'ordinary life' movement and the shift to care in the community. Most local authorities in England now operate or commission a SL scheme. However, despite this wide 'spread', SL remains a very small model of care that has not yet been 'scaled-up' to the extent that many have hoped. Drawing on interviews with 50 people involved in SL, including at four contrasting local schemes, we highlight four interconnected sets of 'organisational capabilities' and resources needed for schemes to grow: (1) collaborative working with social workers; (2) leadership at different levels; (3) mechanisms to harness knowledge and evidence; (4) investment in the workforce of scheme staff and carers. We propose these factors help schemes become locally embedded in communities. However, our study also highlights the fragility of the model to socio-economic changes and social work practice imperatives.

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**The innovation landscape in English Adult Social Care: barriers and opportunities**

*Valentina Zigante, Juliette Malley, Raphael Wittenberg*

*Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Innovation in the adult social care sector is receiving considerable attention from policymakers, as evidenced in the 2021 White Paper and more recently through the Accelerating Reform Fund. There is also significant interest among providers and local authorities (LAs) in "doing things differently", but there remains a lack of systematic knowledge regarding the innovative landscape. This research presents the findings of an organisational survey conducted among LAs and providers of social care services in England between 2023 and 2024. The survey is part of the Supporting Adult Social Care Innovation project (SASCI). Its aim is to gain a better understanding of how innovation and innovative capacity are distributed across the sector, as well as to identify perceived challenges and the availability of support. We explored perceptions of innovation, the extent to which organisations possess the necessary capabilities for successful innovation (such as leadership, knowledge and learning, culture, and collaboration), and the barriers and facilitators for innovation. The findings suggest that service providers responding to the survey are indeed innovative and consider innovation to be important. They also hold a very positive view of their organisational capabilities for innovation. However, external barriers are identified as limiting their ability to innovate. LAs, on the other hand, perceive innovation as somewhat less important, have a less positive outlook on their capabilities for innovation, and view lack of funding and limited flexibility as hindrances to their

ability to innovate. LAs also emphasise a focus on savings and value for money when pursuing innovation. Service providers typically derive ideas for innovation from staff and service users, while LAs often draw inspiration from observing successful innovations elsewhere and from research evidence. Collaboration is deemed important, especially between providers and LAs. However, this collaboration is impeded by restrictive rules governing procurement and contracting. Collaboration between LAs and providers is one strategy employed by LAs to promote innovation in their local market, alongside outcomes-focused commissioning. In conclusion, this research sheds light on the landscape of innovation in the English Adult Social Care sector, informing our understanding of how to support innovation in a sector characterized by specific features such as limited budgets, safeguarding focus, and private provision procured by LAs. Further research could fruitfully explore the relationship between providers and LAs, as well as the challenges surrounding the commissioning of innovative services.

## **Minority Populations**

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### **Can human rights be achieved through antidiscrimination and equal opportunity policies?**

#### **Evidence from Trinidad and Tobago Equal Opportunity Commission case files**

*Bephyer Parey, Hannah Enightoola, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago*

*Elisabeth Kutscher, George Washington University, Washington, USA*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The purpose of the paper is to examine whether the Equal Opportunity Act, the sole legislation piece addressing the rights of persons with disabilities of Trinidad and Tobago, supports the achievement of fundamental human rights for persons with disabilities. Data were collected from 105 discrimination complaints lodged by persons with disabilities with Trinidad and Tobago's Equal Opportunity Commission. These complaints, spanning the years 2010 to 2021, addressed four categories of discrimination: education, employment, accommodations and goods and services. Constant comparison was used to analyse characteristics of each complaint including complainants' expected outcomes and actual outcomes of the cases (i.e., withdrawn, closed, forwarded to conciliation or the Equal Opportunity Tribunal). From the complaints, persons with disabilities expected access to basic services, opportunities for employment, or an apology for emotional distress. With withdrawn cases there were missed opportunities to address systemic issues while closed cases revealed a bounded process for redress, and cases forwarded to conciliation or the Tribunal had supporting evidence. This study provides insights into how the current legislative framework and its implementation miss opportunities to address discrimination at organisational and systemic levels. Specifically, cases revealed dominant/subordinate dynamics in society and a lack of transparency throughout the system. The paper also revealed inconsistencies regarding the application of antidiscrimination and equal opportunity policies in achieving human rights. Recommendations include policy and systemic change, including addressing gaps in national legislation and the adaptation of strong equality of opportunity and equality of wellbeing approaches.

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**'Persons Unknown': Imagining the Future Planning, Governance and Regulation of Gypsy/Traveller Sites in Scotland**

*Colin Clark*

*University of the West of Scotland, Paisley, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

In a recent paper for Social Policy & Society (Clark, 2024) that examined the current provision and development of Gypsy/Traveller sites in Scotland, I rather pessimistically concluded: 'This bolder future – of new, safer, 'green' spaces for locating Gypsy/Traveller sites – will require something much more; a political will that seeks to challenge and change both discriminatory legislative planning issues, as well as deeper structural issues rooted in challenging the social abjection faced by Gypsy/Traveller community members and their long-held cultural preferences to stay on sites.' (Clark, 2024: 11)

In the current paper - a continuation of where the previous Social Policy & Society paper ended - I aim to think ahead and imagine this 'bolder future' of social policy making whereby Gypsy/Traveller sites and their planning, governance, and regulation are freed from the narrow limitations and imagined fears of current sedentarist legal and policy mindsets (McVeigh, 1997). To facilitate this approach, I show how structural inequalities and discrimination in providing culturally appropriate accommodation can be challenged and changed via innovative approaches to co-created policy-making that fosters a political environment that is both amenable to, and respectful of, both nomadic and sedentarist ways of living.

Fundamentally, this paper addresses two key questions: 1) how can flattie (non-Gypsy/Traveller) sedentarist objections to public, private, and roadside Gypsy/Traveller sites be accommodated for and, to be more optimistic: 2) how can public opinion be influenced to be more accepting of Gypsy/Traveller sites – as previous empirical research has shown is possible in the right context and circumstances (Duncan, 1996).

In closing, the search for socially just and inclusive policies for providing accommodation should not be a case of building further divisions between those who prefer to stay in caravans, chalets, and trailers - and those who prefer flats and houses - but rather to imagine a re-landscaped Scotland that can offer safe and healthy space for all to enjoy their lives and livelihoods.

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**Formal(ised) and informal(ised) institutions in Indigenous Development Areas in Chile: decolonial institutional analysis to understand the present and future of social policy.**

*Victoria Rivera-Ugarte*

*Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The Indigenous Development Areas (ADI) policy aims to coordinate national policies across different sectors in specific areas characterised by the presence of indigenous people and

culture. The presentation will showcase the main findings of my research conducted as part of my PhD studies in Social Policy, with a focus on the role of institutions in shaping the implementation of this policy. New institutionalism (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013), particularly sociological and historical institutionalism, provides the categories of formality and informality used to classify the institutions shaping the ADI policy. Similarly, the research proposes a decolonial turn in institutional analysis by integrating the colonial matrix of power and the categories of power, knowledge, and being (Mignolo 2007, Quijano 2000). This shift was crucial in understanding the current expression of power relations established during colonial times and their pivotal role in defining the boundaries between formal(ised) and informal(ised) institutions that will affect ADI implementation.

The study revealed that although the ADI is shaped by the rhetoric of incorporating indigenous perspectives in the implementation of local programmes, its institutional arrangements are predominantly shaped by the central government. These arrangements are embodied by agents who reproduce them and perpetuate colonial dynamics between indigenous communities and the state, failing to distribute power equitably among the involved parties. These institutional arrangements uphold hierarchical structures that centralise decision-making power within the government, thereby marginalising indigenous communities from formal decision-making processes. However, institutional arrangements are also resisted by certain local stakeholders who develop strategies to maintain traditional indigenous institutions, which primarily occur through informal mechanisms.

Building upon the initial findings, in this presentation, I will examine the future of the policy by further developing the decolonial institutional analysis, exploring the role of the deinstitutionalisation concept (Oliver, 1992)—social, functional, and political—in understanding the practices of resistance undertaken by stakeholders aiming for the redistribution of power in the ADI policy.

Considering the above, this presentation aims to contribute to responding to how social policy research can contribute to imagining and shaping future policies in the context of welfare states.

### **Symposium 169 - Teaching tax and social policy**

*Organiser: Adrian Sinfield*

#### **Symposium proposal**

Socially just futures and teaching about tax and social policy

This symposium from the SPA Taxation and Social Policy Group approaches the conference theme of socially just futures from two interlinked perspectives. First, it introduces findings from new research on the social implications of carbon taxes. Second, it looks at the imperative to more comprehensively embed the subject of tax into social policy teaching. The symposium seeks to show that the research that we will need to develop over the coming decades to address multiple intersecting social and environmental crises needs a generation of social policy scholars who fully understand the role of taxation in building socially just futures.

Paul Bridgen and Micheál Collins explore the challenge of designing public policy to at once pursue environmental goals and deliver on traditional social policy objectives. The paper introduces a social policy framework, derived from the energy justice literature, which aims to enable a delineation of the social implications of carbon taxation in Ireland and the UK.

Adrian Sinfield will then introduce a discussion on bringing taxes into social policy teaching to develop the understanding of how the transfer of resources affects welfare and the wider society, economy and environment. What kinds of approaches and materials might best

communicate what can feel like a complex econometric subject area? What kinds of information about tax and social policy, and what kinds of methodologies, do undergraduates need to understand in order to pursue research like that of Bridgen and Collins, or to work towards just outcomes beyond academia?

Paper:

'Taxation, environmental sustainability and distributive outcomes: balancing behavioural change and fairness'

Discussion:

'A discussion on bringing taxes into social policy teaching'

### **Abstract of Paper**

Taking more account of how governments choose to raise resources as well as how they spend them is increasingly recognised as valuable in social policy teaching, but how do we do it? The discussion session will be briefly introduced by Adrian Sinfield who will be joined by some members of the Tax & Social Policy Group core team.

Bringing taxes in helps understanding of how the transfer of resources affect welfare and the wider society and economy. Who contributes and how become as important as who benefits and how. Analysing the 'state organised redistribution of life chances' properly requires as much attention to 'the process of collecting resources from society' as to 'the process of re-allocating' (van Oorschot, 2008).

Are there particular challenges in teaching taxation to social policy students? The growth of social policy material on the impact of various taxes on individual and common wealth should help greater inclusion of taxing as well as spending – and also brings in spending through tax reliefs. Agustin Redonda will also be contributing on developing teaching modules based on the Global Tax Expenditures Database (GTED). Wealth taxes and business taxes serve to shape societal welfare in many significant ways – and documentaries provide much teaching material.

Are there good examples of bringing taxes into a session or more broadly in a course? Using Titmuss's 'social division of welfare' helped Adrian, but there can be many other ways. We hope that participants will share their own experiences of taking account of any taxes in their teaching.

### **Paper Session 9 - 16:35-17:35**

#### **Symposium 42 - Social Security Futures Scotland and Beyond (papers 43, 80, 39 and 49)**

*Organisers: Ruth Patrick and Sharon Wright*

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#### **Living with two social security regimes: better understanding the Scottish case**

*Sharon Wright, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Ruth Patrick, University of York, York, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Social security operates throughout Scotland in two very different realms with a conditionality clash. Approximately 80% of benefits remain reserved to Westminster, under the control of the

UK Department for Work and Pensions. DWP's priority of 'increasing overall workforce participation' applies in Scotland, delivered via digital systems, a long-standing network of Jobcentre Plus offices and large service centres. Although Universal Credit claimants can choose to have their housing element paid directly to their landlord, they are still required by default to work 35 hours per week and can be sanctioned for non-compliance. The central UK political and ideological agenda to move people 'off benefits and into work' uses harsh benefit sanctions that have been described as 'cruel, inhumane and degrading' (Adler, 2018). The Scottish Welfare Fund has existed since 2013 to make discretionary hardship payments, but it was 2018 before Scotland's own social security system was established. Benefit sanctions are highly controversial in Scotland, sparking debate in the Scottish Parliament. Many Members of the Scottish Parliament, including key ministers, take an anti-sanctions and anti-conditionality stance. Social Security Scotland delivers a limited range of payments according to the principles of 'dignity, fairness and respect'. Scottish benefits are much less radical than the divergent discourse surrounding their development. This paper uses early evidence to explore how citizens might make sense of these two contrasting systems that co-exist within Scotland. We examine differences in social security discourse at UK and Scottish levels and consider the extent to which policy intentions fit with policy realities.

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### **Investing in children: Why Scotland's Scottish Child Payment demands our attention**

*Kate Andersen, Ruth Patrick, Emma Tominey, University of York, York, United Kingdom*

*Kitty Stewart, LSE, London, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

At the UK level, recent years have seen a marked refusal to target expenditure at benefits for children - even in a context of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. With the exception of additional school meal provision in the school holidays, there was no cash-based support for children as part of the Government's crisis response. The household support that was provided via first the £20 uplift to Universal Credit and then the Cost of Living payments was flat rate, making no allowance for family size. Practically, this meant that a family of five would receive the same additional help as a single person household, rather than centring social security around the needs of children.

This UK approach is however markedly different from what has been happening in Scotland, where the Scottish Government have used their devolved powers on social security to introduce a package of 5 Family Payments, the centrepiece of which is the new Scottish Child Payment (SCP). Introduced in February 2021, and increased in value on two occasions since then, this benefit provides £25 per week for each child under 16 living in a low-income household. This policy is projected to significantly cut Scotland's child poverty rate, and has led to a wide gap between the support being provided to families with dependent children north and south of the border.

As a mixed-methods team of researchers, we are committed to undertaking the research necessary to understand the impact this policy has, and to examine lessons from its roll out to improve policymaking in Scotland and beyond. In this paper, we will explore these recent policy developments; and present our proposed programme of work. We will also share early findings from a review of the currently available evidence base.

**Examining outcomes associated with social security spending in Scotland: An evidence synthesis**

*Linda Bauld, Scottish Government, Edinburgh, United Kingdom and Usher Institute, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

*Tom Lamplugh, Fran Warren, Scottish Government, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

*Jud Lowes, University of Stirling, Stirling, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Social Security Scotland was established in 2018 and now delivers fourteen benefits that provide support to around 1.2 million people in Scotland. Investment in devolved benefits represents a significant proportion of the Scottish budget and it is important to understand what outcomes are being realised from this investment to date. This evidence synthesis brought together existing findings on eight different but inter-related outcomes: child poverty; reducing poverty and protecting households; income inequality; health; wellbeing; education and social participation; economy and employment; and protected characteristics. The work was conducted by analysts within Scottish government and Social Security Scotland led by the Office of the Chief Social Policy Adviser. It involved a rapid review of the literature from 2017 to 2023 and also drew on logic models for newer benefits. 138 different evidence sources were identified. The final report brings together findings to date, but also points to gaps and opportunities for further research. This work is intended to inform plans for the future evaluation of the devolved social security system in Scotland.

**The cost of raising a child in Scotland**

*Juliet Stone*

*Loughborough University, Loughborough, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

With continued pressures on family budgets in 2023, the estimated cost of raising a child from birth to 18 in the UK rose to more than £165,000 for a couple, and over £220,000 for a lone parent. While challenging economic circumstances are being experienced by households across the UK, in Scotland there has been a stronger commitment to policies that improve the lives of low-income households, particularly those with children. In this context, we estimate the cost of raising a child in Scotland compared to the UK as a whole. The calculations draw upon the Minimum Income Standard (MIS), which sets out the amount needed for UK households to have a socially acceptable living standard, as specified by members of the public. The paper also considers the adequacy of benefits and earnings in enabling low-income families to meet the minimum cost of raising a child, while maintaining a socially acceptable standard of living. We find that combined with other policies, the Scottish Child Payment can reduce the overall cost of raising a child by more than a third compared to the rest of the UK. Nevertheless, typical out-of-work families in Scotland are still falling around 40 per cent below MIS; while working families benefit from relatively low-cost childcare in Scotland, they are often unable to reach MIS even working full-time on the national living wage. More therefore needs to be done. This includes ensuring additional benefits are fully taken up; but development of more radical approaches such as the Minimum Income Guarantee is needed if all families in Scotland are to escape financial hardship.

## **Disability**

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### **Policy failure in the lives of young disabled people: In search of new parameters for good transitions**

*Charlotte Pearson, Jane Cullingworth, Nick Watson, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Ned Coleman-Fountain, University of York, York, United Kingdom*

*Janice McLaughlin, Tracy Shildrick, University of Newcastle, Newcastle, United Kingdom*

*Katie Salmon, University of Newcastle, University of Newcastle, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

For many disabled young people, social policies have failed in their role to support transitions from childhood into the next stage of life. Across OECD countries, policy development has been fragmented, haphazard and limited in its scope. It is only relatively recently that governments have begun to engage with the specific needs and develop initiatives which reflect them. Yet there is little known about the experiences of transition to adulthood for this group and there is an absence of longitudinal data. In seeking to address these issues, this presentation reports on the first stage of data collection from a major ESRC study, based in Glasgow and the North East of England, which follows a group of disabled young people (aged 16-29) from a variety of backgrounds as they leave school and move towards adulthood. The research is informed by co-production and has involved disabled young people and disabled people's organisations in its design and includes a range of methods. Drawing on themes from disability studies and youth studies and the accounts told by the young people we spoke to, we examine how the failure of transitions support and broader social policies, have impacted profoundly on life experiences and socio-economic well-being, reinforcing barriers to inclusion and inequalities for disabled young people.

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### **Not fitting anywhere: the intersectional experiences of trans people claiming disability-related benefits in Great Britain**

*Peter Matthews, University of Stirling, Stirling, United Kingdom*

*Eleanor Formby, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

*Lee Gregory, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Disability activists and scholars have long highlighted how the social security system within the UK continues to use the medical model of disability. This means that many people with non-physical impairments, or with variable conditions, struggle to "fit" into the categories for eligibility within the system. This has been compounded, somewhat ironically, since the introduction of Personal Independence Payment (a name which seemingly reflects the social model of disability) and its punitive and poorly resourced assessment system. Using evidence from interviews with 21 trans people (here we use the term trans in its most inclusive way to mean all non-cisgender people) in this paper we explore how these people find themselves in a double-bind of not "fitting" into the social security system: many of these people do not have impairments that easily map onto disability "categories" and they live outwith the cisgender gender binary. We explore the stresses and barriers this creates for them, and how they have to manage their identities to get through the categorisations processes of welfare bureaucracy to get the financial help they need.

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**The experience of disability employment discrimination in the UK: impact upon self-esteem, self-confidence and motivation to remain in the workforce**

*Cara Molyneux*

*Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Workplace discrimination is underpinned by negative assumptions and attitudes that are held by many employers and throughout the community about the productivity and capability of disabled people. Perceptions that disabled people present a higher work health and safety risk are also rife. Employers may lack knowledge, awareness and skills to develop inclusive workplaces, implement recruitment and retention strategies to support disabled people and meet their legal and regulatory requirements. They may also be unaware of government programs and supports that can assist them. This paper draws upon interviews with disabled workers and employers in the UK to understand how such experiences impact upon an individual's self-esteem, self-confidence and motivation to remain in the workforce.

**Governance 2**

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**Democracy, inequality and social harm – updating and comparing the claims of The Spirit Level and Patterns of Democracy**

*Ian Greener*

*University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

This paper compares claims that inequality is the main cause of social harm made in The Spirit Level with those made by Lijphart that it is instead the form of democratic governance that is the main driver. It reproduces the social harm index created in The Spirit Level for its original time period, adding data from 2019 (the last year before the pandemic), comparing the claims made in terms of both inequality and democratic governance form for each period using the simple bivariate analysis of the original authors and the sample of 21 countries. It then extends the range of causal factors leading to social harm to include other factors found in the research literature including GDP per capita, international competitiveness and social spending, making use of Qualitative Comparative Analysis to make use of the same sample of countries that were present in the original study, but increase the causal complexity of the model, to explore what countries with lower levels of social harm have in common.

The paper finds that lower levels of inequality remains an important factor in reducing social harm, but that higher levels of proportional democracy most consistently appears in such solutions. It then explores how these dimensions play out in the country with the 'typical' combination of factors leading to lower social ill, Sweden, and what we might learn from that analysis in the UK.

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### **Towards a Sustainable Welfare State: Rethinking Social Policies in Turbulent Times**

*Mehmet Fatih Aysan*

*Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing environmental disasters have dramatically demonstrated how these previously seemingly insignificant challenges to well-being can have profound impacts on humanity. In this context, it has become clearer that environmental problems such as global warming, environmental pollution, and biodiversity loss, whose effects have been felt indirectly for a long time but are often ignored, need to be addressed urgently. Although at first glance it may not seem directly related to social policies, the effects of environmental problems indirectly affect social welfare and social policies, such as economic development, migration, and social unrest. At this point, as Jessop puts it, while there was a transition from the Keynesian welfare state to the employment-oriented Schumpeterian working state in the 1980s, it can be claimed that a transition to a sustainable welfare state took place as a third stage in the 2020s. In this type of welfare state, on the one hand, it is important to have economically and socially sustainable social policies, and on the other hand, it is essential that the policies are compatible with the changing needs of the environment and people. In this context, building a sustainable future for future generations and creating more resilient societies has become much more important for welfare states. In this study, it is aimed to discuss the four dimensions of the sustainable welfare state: economic, social, environmental, and individual, through the conceptualization of the sustainable welfare state. While carrying out this analysis, the effects of different social policy tools on the sustainable welfare state will be examined by using comparative data. This study aims to present an alternative framework, apart from traditional social policy discussions in the literature. It is argued that there must be three main objectives of a sustainable welfare state: i) ensuring social justice, ii) rising human development, iii) increasing life satisfaction. Even though these three goals are important for a sustainable welfare state, there are serious problems in achieving them in practice.

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### **Integrating equitable climate action within social policy: reflections from an international collaboration**

*Harriet Thomson, Alice Mah, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Alana Griffith, Winston Moore, Debra Joseph, University of the West Indies, Saint Michael, Barbados*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

From megadroughts and sea level rise to heatwaves, wildfires and species loss, climate change affects us all. However, the felt impacts of climate change, and climate policies, are unevenly distributed along the lines of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. Disproportionately, it is those least responsible for causing climate change, particularly within the global south, who bear the brunt of its consequences, a stark reality exacerbated by the unjust absence of their voices within academic and policy discourses. As a discipline, social policy should be at the forefront of efforts to build a more equitable and sustainable future for all, yet as the work of the UK Social Policy Association's Climate Justice and Social Policy group has shown, there is an urgent need to mainstream climate change within all activities of the social policy discipline. Teaching is a particularly significant, yet so far underutilised, area of the discipline for advocating for climate justice in terms of solidarity, education, and decolonialising climate policy debates, including loss/damage/reparations, especially at a time when British

universities increasingly refer to decolonising research and curricula, but often fall short in enacting transformative changes. Drawing from an international collaboration between the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the University of Glasgow (UofG), in this talk we critically reflect on what it means to advocate for climate justice within teaching and research, while recognising positionality. Practical examples are given from work to integrate sustainability within the UWI and UofG curricula, before ending with broader recommendations for mainstreaming climate action within the discipline.

## **General social policy 5**

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### **The Rise (and Fall?) of Third-Sector Housing in Hong Kong**

*Yung Yau*

*Lingnan University, Hong Kong, China*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Inadequate housing is a challenge that affects both developing and developed countries. Hong Kong, for example, has a large-scale public rental housing programme, yet inadequate housing in various forms continues to be a problem. Before the mid-2010's, Hong Kong's housing system was dominated by the private-public dichotomy. The private sector, on one hand, allocates housing resources based on market mechanisms and purchase power of the housing consumers. It is thus not surprising to see the market fail to cater specifically for the needs of low-income and disadvantaged households and some other marginalized groups. The public housing sector, on the other hand, provides housing that is of reasonable quality, well-managed and affordable, and helps to mitigate the consequences of severe income inequality in the city. However, the supply of public rental housing (PRH) has rarely caught up with the supply, resulting in the long waiting lists and waiting time for PRH. In this light, more and more people in the city live in overcrowded and substandard housing like the subdivided units (SDUs). In response to the inadequate housing problem, alternative ways to address the issues or problems beyond the public and private sectors have been explored. Third-sector (or non-profit or community) housing emerged in Hong Kong in the early 2010s. The housing-related third sector grew gradually with more and more transitional housing projects being launched by social enterprises and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The growth of the third sector was further fueled by the government's introduction of subsidization and support schemes. However, in his 2022 Policy Address, the Chief Executive put forward the idea of building "light public housing". Some people worried that the light public housing would crowd out the third-sector housing. Against this background, this research will examine the challenges and opportunities involved in third-sector housing development in Hong Kong. Relevant stakeholders (e.g. representatives of NGOs and grassroots concern groups) were interviewed about the future of third-sector housing in the city.

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### **Reframing long-term care: from services to social determinants**

*Tania Burchardt*

*London School of Economics, London, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The organisation and financing of services dominates long-term care policy and research. This paper argues for a reorientation, centring instead the social determinants of long-term care. It

reviews existing evidence on social and economic inequalities in the development of needs for care among people of working age and older people in general, and presents new evidence for England, an instructive case because of its high levels of inequality combined with a mixed economy of care provision. Analysis of data from the Health Survey for England shows that inequality is at least as important as ageing as a driver of need. Individual and area-based inequalities in access to formal care are also demonstrated. The social stratification of care need, combined with unequal access to formal care, produces both higher levels of unmet need and a greater weight of responsibility to provide care falling on the family and friends of socio-economically disadvantaged people. Furthermore, analysis of data from the Adult Social Care Survey suggests that users' experiences of publicly-funded care are also socially patterned. Drawing these elements together, and building on Dahlgren and Whitehead's influential equivalent for health, the paper offers a framework for understanding the social determinants of long-term care need, access and experience. The final section identifies implications for research, practice and policy, including listening to the priorities and frustrations articulated by people who draw on support, and expanding the terrain of long-term care to include 'upstream' determinants of inequalities across the lifecourse such as policies on child and adolescent well-being, adult social security, housing and neighbourhood regeneration, in combination with anti-discrimination and inclusion agendas.

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### **How Important are Carer Tasks in Determining Carer Quality of Life? Evidence from a Shapley Decomposition Approach**

*David Candon, Michael Hewitt, Peter Murphy, Yu-Ling Liu-Smith  
Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

While there is a large literature that examines the determinants of carer quality of life, there is a dearth of research that focuses on the usual activities that carers perform and how it is related to carer-specific measures of quality of life. We use data from the Survey of Adult Carers in England to investigate the role that the individual tasks that carers perform play in determining carer quality of life. This data set contains detailed questions on the tasks that carers perform (personal care, physical help, give them medicine, keep an eye on them, help with care services, practical help, help with paperwork, take them out, keep them company, provide emotional support, and other help), as well as questions that relate to a carer-specific measure of quality of life. We model the relationship between the variables through a series of simple linear regressions, multiple linear regression, and a Shapley decomposition. We find that all the individual tasks that carers perform are statistically significant predictors of carer quality of life ( $p < 0.001$ ). The Shapley decomposition shows that, when taken together, carer tasks explain a higher proportion of variance in carer quality of life than any other groups of determinants. These results are largely robust to different measures of carer tasks, different measures of carer quality of life, different subgroups, and are even present when using more tangible outcomes such as new carer illnesses or carer GP visits. Services that are used to support both carers and care recipients can be focused on the carer tasks which have the largest effect on carer quality of life.

## **Methods 2**

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### **Poverty Research and Advocacy Network (PRAN): Mobilizing Communities and Shaping More Socially Just Futures**

*Natalija Atas, Vicki Dabrowski, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, United Kingdom and PRANA, Liverpool, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The Poverty Research and Advocacy Network (PRAN) is an independent, collectively run advocacy network, established in June 2023 in Liverpool, UK. PRAN exists to unite those who want to take collective action to fight poverty and social injustice. It aims to bring together different people and organisations to facilitate knowledge-sharing and collaborations to advance the fight against poverty and social injustice. PRAN has over 130 members drawn from NGOs, other third-sector organisations, local councils, the NHS, academia, the media and members of the general public. Wide representation is vital to the ethos of the network - the belief that only collective, coordinated action can escalate the fight against poverty.

This paper will introduce the network, discuss the rationale beyond its establishment and discuss some of its recent initiatives, including the SPA funded, Empowering Change' workshop series. The workshops were designed to provide academics, members of the third sector and the local community with the necessary tools and knowledge to drive transformative initiatives and policies within their respective fields. Through a combination of interactive sessions, hands-on activities, and expert-led discussions, our workshops were designed to equip participants with practical skills and strategies to fight poverty and inequality. These skill sets are essential for driving meaningful change and catalysing impactful projects in a context of crisis.

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### **Undertaking and using social policy research to inform and influence policy and practice.**

*Emma Young, Robert Porter, Nadine Fowler, Mihaela Manole, Joanna Soraghan  
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In 2022-23 the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (CELCIS) conducted a large, multi-strand, research project to better understand what is needed to ensure that children, young people, and families get the help they need, when they need it. The Children's Services Reform Research study was commissioned by the Scottish Government and aimed to inform ongoing discussions about the integration of health and social care services in Scotland in light of the proposed introduction of the National Care Service, as well as influence wider policy and practice within children's social care. The study had four strands, comprising: a rapid review of national and international research evidence focusing on the integration of children's health and social care; case studies of transformational reform programmes in different country contexts; a quantitative assessment of the impact of previous integration efforts within Scotland; and, an exploration of the views and experiences of Scotland's children's services workforce through a national survey, interviews and focus groups. This paper will consider how social policy research can inform and shape policy and practice through consideration of the whole 'life' of the research to date, from initial conception to realising impacts.

Specifically, the paper will look at:

- What can we learn about the efficacy of social policy research in creating change?

- What added values can be brought to policy decision making through social policy research?
- What are the challenges and benefits of conducting research for direct policy application; and what compromises must be struck?

The paper will conclude by reflecting on the challenges and benefits experienced across the whole 'life' of the Children's Services Reform Research study. Consideration will be given to the universality or otherwise of the learning taken from the study, as well as the implications that this may have for how we should look to use social policy research to inform and influence policy and practice.

### **Social Care 3**

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#### **Social care inequalities in the Netherlands: Ensuring a match between older migrants' needs and social care policies and practices**

*Lara Fizaine*

*Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, The Hague, Netherlands*

##### **Abstract of Paper**

The current Dutch social care system is designed based on the assumption that people in need of care can mostly care for themselves with the help of loved ones and "the community", therefore requiring minimal support from public services. However, the public health authorities distinguish several "vulnerable" groups who are unable to conform to this assumption. This includes older adults with a migration background, as services are often ill-adapted to their needs, making them less likely to access care and services and creating a form of care inequality. Simultaneously, social care policies have set a mandate for care to be "safe, effective, efficient and client-centered", also referred to as "appropriate care". For older migrants, this has taken the form of culture sensitive and culture specific care.

Culture sensitive and culture specific care are both underdefined concepts, often used to describe quite different practices. In general, the former refers to care organisations which welcome care receivers from multiple ethnic, racial, and/or religious backgrounds and attempt to be sensitive to their diverse needs, while the latter refers to care organisations which welcome only people with a shared background and tailor services to their specific needs. While culture sensitive care is widely accepted and encouraged, culture specific care has been the subject of much debate in the Netherlands as it is considered to work against integration. As a result, several Dutch municipalities (the governmental entity regulating social care) no longer contract culture specific care organizations.

Despite the critiques and lack of governmental support, culture specific care continues to exist in the Netherlands. We reason that this might be linked to an ongoing demand for specific services. To study this, we are conducting fieldwork in one culture sensitive and one culture specific care organisation in Amsterdam. We examine how care organisations define, operationalize and execute culture sensitive or specific care and how this process is tailored to care organisations' perception of their client population's needs. We argue that understanding the needs addressed by culture sensitive and specific care will create insights into why having policy support for multiple modes of care provision is, or is not, necessary. This contribution can help work towards a reduction in social inequalities in an increasingly diverse and ageing society.

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### **The Effect of Private Equity Financing Ownership on Quality in South Korea's Home-Visit Care Sector**

*Hyun-Jung Kwon, Seon Ju Song, Youngsan University, Busan, Republic of Korea*

*Mi Jin Lee, Konkuk University, Seoul, Republic of Korea*

*Jeongmi Lim, Gyeongsang National University, Jinju, Republic of Korea*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

**Background** The emergence of for-profit financial model providers (i.e. private equity, venture capital) in public-funded Long-term care (LTC) sector has sparked new supply debates in Korea. While government intervention is deemed necessary due to the failure of marketization policy over the past 15 years, the current 3th National care plan is facilitating the financialization of private equity-invested LTC provider by the influx of significant financial funds through deregulation. Amidst the diversification of for-profit entities in Korea, a new private equity-invested LTC provider debate has been triggered. However, research on the service quality of private equity-invested LTC facilities has not been conducted. This study aims to investigate the impact of private equity financing ownership on quality.

**Methods** Purposive sampling was utilized to select the top five private equity-invested LTC firms from Crunchbase and the Long-term Care Insurance (LTCI) homepage. Quality indicator data were collected from the NHIC (National Health Insurance Corporation) and the MOHW (Ministry of Health and Welfare). Using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression, the study compared private equity-invested LTC firms (n=108) to three ownership groups: public (n=15), nonprofit (n=39), and for-profit franchise (n=133) home-visit care providers.

**Results** The two for-profit entities exhibited lower service quality across all quality domains, including staff retention, program expenditures, human resources and institutional operations, and service process, compared to their public and non-profit counterparts. Private equity firms received the lowest quality ratings based on regulatory assessments. In contrast to private equity firms, labor costs of non-profit providers were significantly higher, while public entities demonstrated notably higher scores in service process.

**Conclusion** Private equity financing ownership is linked to lower quality in long-term care services. The findings emphasize the importance of closely monitoring changes in the LTC structure to ensure service quality, particularly as private equity-invested providers continue to expand.

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### **Analysis of Capital Structure and Profitability in the Financialization of Long-term Care : A Comparative Study of For-profit chains and Non-profit groups in South Korea**

*Seon Ju Song, Hyun-Jung Kwon, Youngsan University, Busan, Republic of Korea*

*Mi Jin Lee, Konkuk University, Seoul, Republic of Korea*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

**Background:** The Korean long-term care (LTC) has experienced a significant surge in financial capital, including private equity, resulting in the rapid expansion of chains within the private service sector. The heavy reliance of many private companies in this sector on debt capital for their operations is a key characteristic of the financialization observed in the long-term care market. While financialization may have advantages such as a wider array of services, concerns remain regarding its reliability as a supplier with profit-driven structures.

**Objective:** This study aims to investigate the financialization phenomenon by analyzing the capital structure and profitability of both for-profit and non-profit service sectors within Korea's long-term care supply system.

**Methodology and Data:** Data for the for-profit service sector is collected from the Electronic Disclosure System (DART), while data for the non-profit service sectors is obtained from the National Tax Service (Home-tax), reflecting variations in disclosure systems. The extracted data is then categorized and meticulously analyzed to discern similarities and differences between for-profit and non-profit entities.

**Results:** The study indicated that non-profits had a higher ratio of equity capital to debt capital in their capital structure, whereas for-profit had relatively higher profitability. Firstly, non-profit entities generally maintain higher equity capital ratios with a few liabilities compared to for-profit counterparts, suggesting a stronger reliance on equity capital. Secondly, for-profit chains tend to exhibit higher levels of profitability, albeit with variations observed among individual entities. Thirdly, for-profit chains demonstrate a higher asset growth rate in comparison to their non-profit counterparts.

**Conclusion:** The comparative analysis of for-profit and non-profit entities highlights key distinctions in their operational dynamics. Non-profit organizations demonstrate a tendency towards stable capital structures, characterized by higher equity capital ratios. In contrast, for-profit entities exhibit higher profitability levels and greater potential for asset growth. These insights shed light on the financialization trends within Korea's long-term care sector, offering valuable perspectives for stakeholders and policymakers alike.

### **General Social Policy 3**

**35**

#### **The social investment approach and the double crisis of the majority**

*Remo Siza*

*University of Sassari, Sassari, Italy*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Over the last three decades, the social investment perspective has been the main strategy in the welfare sphere to reconcile economic growth with social inclusion, work with family life through investment in human capital, childcare and leave policies (Giddens, 1998; Esping-Andersen et al, 2002; Bonoli and Natali, 2012; Morel et al, 2012). For many years, in many Western European countries, substantial middle-class segments supported the social investment approach and its core beliefs and promise of 'flourishing lives'. In the last decade, for many middle-class segments, this approach has become less capable of promoting an active individual that better addresses the social risks of post-industrial societies (European Social Survey, 2018; Eick, 2024). Many authors (Reckwitz, 2021; Wolf, 2023; Reckwitz and Rosa, 2023) highlighted the economic, social, and cultural changes of late-modern societies that can help us to explain these attitude changes towards the social investment approach and the liberal values and principles that it has adopted. They argue that in contemporary societies, the core principles of liberalism have been pushed to extremes to the point where those principles have been undermined and have generated backlash. Economic liberalism evolved into what is now labelled as neoliberalism, which increased economic inequality; liberalism with regard to lifestyle choices, values and personal autonomy came to be seen as a value that trumped all other visions of the good life (Fukuyama, 2022: ix-xi).

Empirical and theoretical research clearly shows that both market-liberalising policies and the promotion of active individuals with no permanent bonds are simultaneously weakening the securities enabled by the work system, as well as the support and stability ensured by informal relationships, family and friendship ties.

This paper argues that this double crisis in both the private and public sphere is often no longer mutually sustainable for the majority. Especially with flex-security strategies, the social investment approach has mitigated the effects of labour market liberalism, while in the private sphere its social programmes that mostly address individuals regardless of family relationships and friend networks often have not dealt with the growing fragmentation of personal relationships. Over the last decade, social investment has been further weakening as project able to reconcile economic growth with social inclusion. The emergent types of social investment strategies strengthen liberal values and principles and prioritise individual responsibilities and economic goals, selective politics of privatisation, and restrictive minimum-income policies that do not counteract the double crisis of the majority.

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### **Culturally competent? Rethinking child welfare policy and interventions for marginalised mothers**

*Larissa Haensel-Povey, Sana Rahim*

*Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper explores cultural awareness and responsiveness within the social care system for children and families in England. Of particular concern is the disproportionality we see in ethnic minority children separated from their families by state intervention. Black and minority ethnic (BAME) children are overrepresented in the child welfare system (Detlaff et al., 2020), it is therefore important to understand the lived experience of ethnic minority families. Incipient research highlights ethnic minority mothers experiences of racism and oppression within child protection interventions (Cornish, 2024), but the diverse nature and complexity of these experiences is under-researched and under-theorised.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI), algorithmic tools and data analytics within public services is expanding rapidly (Dencik et. al, 2018). Many questions remain about these novel tools of governance in the UK. Utilising data analytics to profile and identify children at higher risk and in need of early intervention brings with it questions of in-built biases, fairness and social justice (Vogl, 2021).

Proponents of data analytics innovations claim that they enable public services to work more accurately and cheaply – identifying and targeting support more efficiently. Yet when it comes to child protection and the removal of children from birth mothers, particularly marginalised and ethnic minority families, the dangers of such processes cannot be left to chance. The politics of AI profiling, child removal and the dangers of algorithms getting it wrong, requires transparency and academic attention. Drawing upon new empirical data from northern England this paper explores the experiences of ethnic minority mothers subject to children's and family social care interventions, and the professionals working in this arena both in terms of cultural responsiveness and perspectives on the use of AI in this type of work. This paper argues that before AI is used to automate tasks partially or fully within frontline children and families social care in England much work remains to ensure fairness, effectiveness and buy in from local communities.

## **Accountability, responsibility, and trust in the benefit assessment process: Exploring multi-stakeholder perspectives**

*David Young, Lisa Scullion, Philip Martin, Celia Hynes, Joe Pardoe  
University of Salford, Salford, United Kingdom*

### **Abstract of Paper**

Benefit assessments are an essential part of the social security system for determining how much financial support is provided to those with disabilities and long-term health conditions. Existing research has highlighted many significant concerns around benefits assessments, including how aspects of assessment processes and decision-making have created a lack of trust and transparency in the operation of disability-related benefits. However, much research has often focused on a singular perspective (e.g., claimants or advice/advocacy organisations), with the perspectives of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and assessment providers largely absent. Drawing upon unique data from a study of veterans in the benefits system - which includes research with claimants, advice and advocacy organisations, the DWP, and Health Care Professionals (HCPs) undertaking benefits assessments - this paper seeks to bring together diverse perspectives of benefits assessment processes and challenges. We find that a key point of agreement relates to how understandings of the process and purpose of assessments is central to more positive outcomes. However, across the diverse stakeholder experiences, a common narrative relates to how the problems experienced in relation to processes and understanding 'lie elsewhere', raising issues of accountability and responsibility. Furthermore, despite our multi-stakeholder consultation, the 'decision maker' remained an elusive – but essential – figure in the assessment process and subsequent outcomes of that process. Notwithstanding this missing voice, we demonstrate how engagement with multiple perspectives are essential to our understanding of benefits assessments, how they are experienced, and how they can be improved.

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July**

**Paper Session 10 - 10:05-11:05**

### **Symposium 37 - SPA Pension Policy Group 1 of 2 (papers 124, 196 and 219)**

#### **Symposium proposal**

Pensions are a core part of welfare states, which are intended to support societies in sustainable ways. Existing research has pointed to a shifting landscape of public versus private provision, over which pension policy presides. On one hand, these policies implicate different outcomes for citizens, against a landscape of income and wealth inequalities.

On the other hand, these policies have also created new meanings and practices of pensions for citizens and policy makers alike. For example, this opening up debates including (but not limited to) the technologies of pension provision, individual responsibility and pension planning, pension freedoms, the meaning of social support and the role of the collective in policy governance.

We seek to foreground new social policy research which examines pensions. Our two linked symposia asks: What do pension developments mean for different groups? To what extent can pensions promise a better future, and what can social policy research contribute to this?

This is the first of two linked symposia from the SPA's Pension Policy Group.

124

**Normalising individual responsibility? A gendered study of retirement planning in a financialized system**

*Roberta Adami, Glasgow Caledonian University, London, United Kingdom*

*Liam Foster, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The individualisation of risk and responsibility for retirement planning and the commodification of financial literacy to make 'good saving decisions' are essential features of the financialization of everyday life within the remit of pension provisions. Individuals are encouraged to become active financial subjects to ensure their own economic welfare, with the use of concepts such as individual responsibility, risk management and financial planning presented as moral obligations. In the UK, this narrative has become an intrinsic part of the neoliberal policies implemented over the last four decades, and aimed at privatising retirement. This presentation examines the views and attitudes of young women towards individual responsibility and risk management within the context of retirement planning in the UK. It presents a gendered analysis of financialization of the pension system and draws from the concept of 'individual investor', prominent in some economic literature, to critically discuss its practical shortcomings. The study employs a series of 45 interviews and a focus group with young British women (born between 1981 and 1996) to explore their attitudes to the role of the state in pension provision, individual responsibility, and how they relate to the risks associated with retirement planning. While the findings show how deep rooted the idea of personal responsibility is, as advocated by the financialization agenda, the concepts of risk management and uncertainty in retirement planning are far from being adequately recognised, despite their centrality to pension individualisation and investment practices. There is also insufficient acknowledgement of the inherent (gendered) challenges and risks within the financialised system, which indicate a likely misalignment between expectations and outcomes. The reality is that under-saving for retirement is likely to remain, with the ideological and policy focus on individual responsibility further accentuating existing pre-retirement gendered inequalities and risks.

196

**The Underpensioned: Defining the Gender Pension Gap**

*Lauren Wilkinson, John Adams*

*Pensions Policy Institute, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

Two-thirds of pensioners in poverty are women, with women currently in retirement receiving incomes from private pensions that are on average worth around 50% of men's.[1] While the Gender Pension Gap appears to be smaller for women of working age, it is still substantial at around 35% among those with private pension savings.[2]

The latest report in PPI's Underpensioned series: Defining the Gender Pension Gap explores the impact of factors that contribute to inequality in retirement outcomes between men and women, in order to provide greater clarity on how to define the Gender Pension Gap and support effective policymaking decisions to narrow the gap. The report analyses data from the Wealth and Assets Survey to identify the proportion of the pension gap attributable to various contributing factors for women currently in their late 50s. While it is useful to measure the overall magnitude of the Gender Pension Gap, a more detailed and nuanced approach may better support the development of effective policies to reduce the gap.

The Gender Pension Gap is primarily driven by labour market inequalities, including differences in work pattern and the Gender Pay Gap, which in turn are driven by gendered divisions of domestic labour. The report also explores pension-specific factors that either help or hinder the narrowing of the Gender Pension Gap. Understanding what proportion of the gap is attributable to labour market inequalities, in comparison to differences stemming directly from pensions landscape, can help to determine which policies are likely to be most effective and whose input may be required to implement them.

[1] Barnes (2022) Longer-term pensioner poverty and poverty transitions: A quantitative analysis of the Understanding Society survey; Wilkinson, Adams & Redgewell (2022) The Underpensioned Index

[2] DWP (2023) The Gender Pensions Gap in Private Pensions

**219**

### **Understanding the lived experience of unpaid caregiving and risks to later life financial wellbeing**

*Louise Overton, Maxine Watkins*

*University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

As the UK population ages and state responsibility for provision of income security and social care continues to decline, individuals are required to take greater responsibility (and associated risk) for funding their own needs in later life.

For those providing unpaid care to family members or friends due to long-term health problems, disability or needs related to older age, the risks and challenges are potentially even greater. A growing body of primarily quantitative evidence suggests there are negative employment and income outcomes of unpaid caregiving and risks to retirement security. However, relatively little is known about how and why the experience of caring affects financial wellbeing.

This paper reports on a recent qualitative study involving 50 in-depth interviews with unpaid carers and ten subsequent timeline interviews to reveal the diversity of caring experiences and the challenges faced by those at different life stages and in different circumstances. Drawing on an ecological life-course approach to financial wellbeing (Salignac et al., 2019), our findings show how unpaid caring creates risks to current and future financial wellbeing due to forgone (pension) savings and income, job opportunities and increased expenses. Importantly, they underscore how these risks are exacerbated or mitigated through the interaction of factors at three different levels: the individual (e.g. financial capability, financial resources, gender, education), the familial (e.g. care roles and responsibilities, parental influence and support, and relational dynamics) and the societal (e.g. cost of living, access to financial products and services, state benefits and wider social and economic policy) as well as interacting with the individuals life course.

This more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the factors shaping unpaid carers' financial wellbeing, and the dynamic interaction between them, provides greater opportunity for policy makers to adequately address the risks to their long-term financial security.

### **Symposium 152 - Housing & poverty 1 (papers 123 and 252).**

*Organiser: Kitty Stewart*

#### **Symposium proposal**

High housing costs pose a major challenge for families living on a low income, as well as for many higher up the income distribution. Decades of under-investment in social housing have compounded this problem in the UK. A growing share of low-income families live in the private

rented sector with implications for both housing costs and housing quality. Further, a series of changes to housing support through the social security system have restricted the options for those in need of this support, and meant that rising rents must frequently be absorbed by households through cuts to other aspects of essential spending. The benefit cap, which affects working-age families with little or no paid work, and which has been uprated with inflation just once in a decade, is the most extreme example, causing severe deprivation in capped households. Hundreds of thousands more households have been affected by wider changes to local housing allowances. In this symposium we bring together four papers which explore different aspects of the interaction between poverty, social security and housing, between them using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. The aim is to consider the implications of current social security policies for the cost, quality and security of housing available to families living on a low income in the UK, as well as options for a better future.

**123**

**Escaping the cap: Exploring the options for capped households to move to cheaper accommodation**

*Aaron Reeves, Mark Fransham, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom*

*Kitty Stewart, LSE, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The benefit cap places an upper limit on the total amount of social security a household can receive in financial support from the government in a given year, depending on both where you live and household size. Many of those subject to the cap live in high rent properties and the designers of the policy hoped that the cap would therefore incentivise people to move to cheaper accommodation. But a recent analysis by the DWP found that very few people had in fact moved to cheaper accommodation in response to being capped. In this paper, we try to explore why capped households are unlikely to find cheaper accommodation by examine local rental markets. We use complete data from Zoopla (a rental listing website) over a multi-year period to track the affordability of properties for household types common among those being capped. We examine rental prices, estimate the proportion of suitable properties that are affordable in a given area, explore housing quality of those properties, and then consider how far people would need to move to find both a suitable and an affordable property. Our results suggest that one reason so few people are moving is that capped households are already living in the cheapest, suitable housing in their area and that opportunities to move – even quite far away – are limited. Our analysis raises questions about the assumption built into the policy design that the cap will prompt people to find cheaper accommodation.

**252**

**A roof over our heads: examining housing inadequacy and paths forward for low-income parents and carers in the UK**

*Uisce Jordan, Maddy Power, Ruth Patrick, Katie Pybus, University of York, York, United Kingdom*

*Jim Kaufman, University of Salford, Salford, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The provision of suitable housing was foundational to the establishment of the welfare state. However, the challenge of securing and maintaining suitable housing is increasingly difficult for families on low incomes. This paper draws on findings from Changing Realities, a long-running participatory research project, to detail how parents and carers are struggling with rising housing costs, and insecurity of housing while also striving for adequate housing conditions. By sharing experiences of people living on a low income across the UK, this paper reveals

commonalities among private renters, people living in social housing and people living in temporary housing. These shared experiences reveal the pervasive stress and constraints within housing, exacerbated by the erosion of the social security system. In concluding, it will set out key co-produced recommendations for change.

## **Symposium 54 - Housing futures and serious play - SPA Housing Policy Group**

### **Symposium proposal**

Playing into the future: exploring serious games as ways to do social policy research in predicting, imagining and enacting future housing sector challenges

This interactive symposium will offer a creative and collaborative approach to exploring 'social policy futures' led by the Social Policy Association Housing Policy Group to explore futureproofing for the ageing population. We propose a symposium aiming to:

- Build skills and capacity of social policy academics in creative research methods;
- Explore what policy impact can look like in housing research;
- Demonstrate the importance of interdisciplinary and cross sectoral partnership and networking.

The Housing Policy Group propose a full Symposium slot to play a 'Serious Game', which is a large-scale Board game developed to play into the future and help the housing, health and social care sectors plan for an ageing population. The symposium will utilize serious games (examining serious topics via interactive play) and give participants insight into creative methods that turn research methods into positive real-world change.

This symposium offers delegates something different and interactive via 'Hopetown: A Game for Housing and Ageing' that explores the challenges of providing housing to support healthy ageing over time. In this game, players take on different roles, such as policy maker, service provider, community group or developer, and negotiate how to use their limited resources to maximise the wellbeing of residents in the fictional Hopetown. The game helps people think through the linked and complex welfare landscapes that support people (for example by even important impacts such as tax cuts, budget reduction, development, health service delivery, adaptations and more).

The Housing Policy Group in partnership with Socialudo will support a creative and strategic 'open space' session to enable creativity, key discussions, evidence gathering around tangible outputs for the wider network. We aim to use this session to gather interesting discussions, and convert them into later tangible outputs for the Housing Policy group for use of the SPA membership in teaching and research.

The symposium will build participant capacity and knowledge of housing, health and social care and provide insight into how we can help support research impact. We invite participants to come along and explore housing, health, care, ageing, developer, policy and community issues and gain insight to this innovative approach while also having fun!

### **Abstract of Paper**

Please note this will be an interactive workshop symposium, without individual papers.

This interactive symposium will offer a creative and collaborative approach to exploring 'social policy futures' led by the Social Policy Association Housing Policy Group to explore futureproofing for the ageing population. The symposium will:

- Build skills and capacity of social policy academics in creative research methods;
- Explore what policy impact can look like in housing research;
- Demonstrate the importance of interdisciplinary and cross sectoral partnership and networking.

In this symposium the Housing Policy Group will play a ‘Serious Game’, a large-scale Board game developed to play into the future and help the housing, health and social care sectors plan for an ageing population. The symposium will utilize serious games (examining serious topics via interactive play) and give participants insight into creative methods that turn research methods into positive real-world change.

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## **Higher education**

**88**

### **Care within a Governance Infrastructure: International Students in an Education-Exporting Country**

*Gaby Ramia*

*The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Innovations in social policy can derive from deeper understandings of the relationship between public governance and care. Care tends to be viewed as interpersonally relational, but it is also institutionally relational, which implies that it is variable in quality based on interactions and relationships between Governments, civil society organisations, service-providing agencies, and the human care subjects. This presentation considers international students as prospective subjects of care, focusing on the interaction of the institutions which constitute ‘a governance infrastructure’: ‘the collection of technologies and systems, people, policies, practices, and relationships that interact to support governing activities’ (Johnston 2010: 122). The analysis focuses on Australia, which is the world’s third most significant host for international students after the US and the UK (OECD 2023).

In the exchange between Australian education providers and their student ‘customers’ (as they are constructed) - who pay full and up-front fees and purchase all of their additional products and services at unsubsidised, commercial rates – the commodification that accompanies international education is almost complete. Yet there is a public governance infrastructure that shapes the welfare of international students through informal care. The question of its

effectiveness has not often been questioned in the social policy literature. Care can be provided in students' home (or 'sending') country if and when the students visit family in-between teaching semesters. When onshore in the host (or receiving) country, the Government and education providers together offer quality-assured learning plus consumer protections in the form of fee insurance. International students do not benefit substantively from the welfare state, but there are important sources of support from civil society and service agencies, albeit typically patchy and siloed. The informal and formal supports together fail in their duty of care, however, and the presentation explores what measures can be taken to merge them in a more integrated and collaborative governance infrastructure, involving Governments, education providers, and providers of health and human services including housing. Implications from this form of collaboration in the Australian case are drawn for other major education-exporter countries.

#### References

- Johnston, E. (2010) 'Governance Infrastructures in 2020', *Public Administration Review*, 70(Supplement), s122-128.
- OECD (2023) *Education at a Glance*, Paris: OECD.

## 204

### **Ambivalent internationalisation: Reviewing the social policy context for international students in the United Kingdom and implications for social exclusion**

*Isaac Thornton, Rebecca Graber, Linda Tip, Stephanie Fleischer*  
*University of Brighton, Brighton and Hove, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

A key challenge for social policy looking forward is responding to the expanding scale and variety of temporary and permanent migration in contemporary societies. In doing so, policymakers must decide who is to be included within social policy provision, and by extension, wider society. Focusing on a specific migrant group, this study explored the social policy context for international students at UK universities and its implications for social exclusion (an inability to fully participate in society). Within a rapid review of policies addressing international student experience, forty-seven articles from the Web of Science and Social Science Research Network were selected through multiple screenings. Migration and education were the most explored policy areas, followed by inequalities, work, health and wellbeing, security, and housing. Results demonstrated that policy both creates barriers to inclusion (e.g., hostile environment migration/bordering practices) and supports inclusion/adaption to social exclusion-related challenges (e.g., sanctuary scholarships for forced migrants, Graduate Visas). All international students to some degree lack equitable participation in wellbeing-relevant social policy provision. Overall, policies are constructed so the state and universities can extract value from internationals without fully including them in British society. Policies enable universities and the state to abdicate responsibility for students' inclusion, making it expensive and complicated to build a life in the UK.

237

**Factors influencing Chinese students' choice of the UK as the higher education destination: A Comparative Study of Educational Policies and Quantitative Analysis in the United Kingdom and China**

*Junzhe Gu*

*University College London, London, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

While China has become the most significant contributor of international students to the UK, Chinese students now have many choices in higher education. As there are few comparative educational policy analyses and quantitative studies on the factors of Chinese students' choice of study abroad destination in previous studies, It is worth exploring how Chinese students make their higher education destination choices to study in the UK and the policy factors that influence them in greater depth. This paper presents a comparative study of 16 openly recruited Chinese students aged from 18 to 21 with different majors, genders, and family backgrounds who chose either the UK or China as their higher education destination through in-depth semi-structured interviews, and these data are analyzed in the form of open coding and axial coding the responses after transcription. Initial conclusions were drawn by counting the type and frequency of codes. Based on these results, the paper further compared and analyzed the impact of both UK and Chinese educational policy. The paper argues that the choices of Chinese students are significantly related to educational policy in both countries, student family circumstances, and student personal ability. Overall, from an individual perspective, Chinese students' independence and learning ability were commonly cited as important factors by the students themselves in the interviews. Regarding family circumstances, the two most prominent influences were family finances and students and their parent's perceptions of studying abroad in the UK. From a macro perspective, the educational policies of the two countries are also an important indirect factor influencing students' choices. The UK's international student-friendly policy and China's higher education policy significantly impact students' perceptions and choices. However, the other side of these policies also creates educational inequality. China's policy artificially shapes urban-rural inequality, and the UK's policy of making education marketable consolidated the educational inequalities brought about by class solidification.

**Employment 5**

119

**The Negative Wage Effect of Job Loss: Are Temporary Workers Equally Affected?**

*Katariina Rantanen*

*Department of Social Policy and Intervention, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

A growing literature links job loss with wage losses. In this literature, studies often include temporary workers' job changes in the operationalisation of job loss (e.g. Light, 2005; Fuller, 2008; Malo and Muñoz-Bullón, 2008; Kronberg, 2013). Temporary contracts are time-bound by definition, and temporary workers can therefore be expected to be more likely to experience job loss than permanent workers. Taken together, these perspectives raise social policy concern: is the negative wage effect of job loss equally severe for temporary and permanent workers? Although much is already known about the careers of temporary workers (Latner and Saks, 2022), the consequences of their external job mobility remain under-theorised and untested.

Accordingly, my theoretical framework maps established mechanisms in the job mobility literature (reviewed by Carrington and Fallick 2017) onto the job losses of temporary workers. I hypothesise that the negative wage effect of job loss is less pronounced for temporary than for permanent workers, due to (i) worker characteristics, (ii) how temporary contracts are used by employers and workers, and (iii) differences between temporary and permanent contracts themselves. The United Kingdom provides a fitting context for a pioneering investigation into the topic, as most theoretical models of job change have been formulated for liberal countries (Schmelzer and Ramos, 2016).

Using individual-level data from UKHLS waves 2009-2020, I interact job loss with contract type in a series of linear regression models, with year-on-year wage change as the outcome. While the data structure allows for the use of individuals as their own control (i.e. fixed-effects), this approach may underestimate the immediate effects of job loss due possible long-lasting effects. To account for unobserved differences between temporary and permanent workers, I therefore employ the Heckman control function approach, which models selection into temporary work in a first-stage probit regression (Heckman, 1978). I further evaluate the competing mechanisms (i-iii), by investigating how the inclusion of relevant variables contributes to reductions in the interaction coefficient.

Preliminary findings indicate that the negative short-term wage effect of job loss is indeed less pronounced for temporary workers. Remarkably, however, mechanisms (i) and (ii) do not seem responsible for any of this advantage. The findings therefore suggest that attributes inherent to temporary contracts (such as advance notice of job loss) protect temporary workers from the detrimental wage effects of their frequent involuntary job mobility.

**128**

### **Serving the Future: reducing and preventing in-work poverty in the Scottish hospitality sector**

*Chirsty McFadyen, Allison Catalano, Emma Congreve, Helen Schwittay McArthur, Calum Fox, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Anna Hirvonen, Fiona McHardy, Laura Robertson, Helen Timbrell, Poverty Alliance, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of workers experiencing in-work poverty across Scotland and the UK. One sector that faces particularly acute challenges is the Scottish hospitality sector, where 62% of workers were on low pay in 2022 – the highest proportion of any sector across the Scottish economy.

The Serving the Future project is a three-year action research project funded by The Robertson Trust and undertaken collaboratively by the Poverty Alliance, the Fraser of Allander Institute, and the Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures. By working directly with employers and people with experience of low-paid work, the project has taken a variety of approaches to better understand the drivers of in-work poverty in Scotland, as well the necessary policy or systems-wide changes that may be required to address this issue.

This presentation will provide an overview of the data and policy context surrounding in-work poverty, low-pay and insecure work across Scotland and the United Kingdom. It will include an update on previous research developed by the Serving the Future project, including findings from action learning sets, longitudinal research, and futures planning. In addition, owing to the significant challenges presented by the Cost-of-Living Crisis, Brexit and the COVID-19

pandemic, this presentation will explore the challenges faced by employers operating in the Scottish hospitality sector, as well as the role employers can play in addressing the issue of in-work poverty.

**199**

**Acceleration, dynamic stabilisation and the exhaustion of work first activation at the end of the 'long 1990s': decelerating into the future?**

*Jay Wiggan*

*University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

The embedding of a work first approach in active labour market policy since the late 1980s has been extensively detailed, but less attention has been given to the temporal dimension of successive welfare reforms. Yet, the removal of the '16 hours' rule in Universal Credit, reduction in the period claimants can restrict job search to usual occupations, and the promotion of rapid benefit off-flow, all point to the state's ongoing concern with the management of time. Drawing on Rosa's (2013) theory of technical, socio-cultural and everyday acceleration in the pace of life, this paper examines how work first activation policy transforms the temporal experience and expectations of claimants and the time horizons of the labour market. Having contributed to the 'dynamic stabilisation' of Britain's variety of capitalism, the paper argues that the 'escalatory logics' internal to this form of social security and employment policy is now weakening the correspondence between the benefit system, employment services and labour market, pointing to the end of the 'long 1990s' hegemony of work first activation. Space is now opening up for consideration of decelerationist alternatives, and to this end the paper critically engages with the temporal logics permeating recent proposals from the Fabian Society, IPPR and Institute for Employment Studies to explore the potential for path breaking change.

**Gender & social policy 1**

**171**

**How has gender income inequality in Ireland and the UK changed and why?**

*Silvia Avram, Daria Popova, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex, Colchester, United Kingdom*

*Karina Doorley, Claire Keane, Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin, Ireland*

**Abstract of Paper**

The gender gap in income is large and well documented across Europe. Previous research has shown its composition, distinguishing between gender gaps in wages, in work patterns and in redistribution by the tax and welfare system. There is extensive research on the evolution of the gender wage and the gender work gap over time - these have been closing in many countries. However, the cumulative impact of developments in gender wage and work gaps and their interaction with the tax and welfare system has not been examined in a historical context. This research investigates how the gender gap in market and disposable income has changed over time in Ireland and the UK, neighbouring countries with different histories of gender segregation and legislative pushes for gender equality. Our study period encompasses the years 2008-2019, taking in the effect of the financial crisis, which increased female labour supply compared to male but which was also associated with strong austerity measures, with differing impacts for men and women. Using microsimulation models for the two countries, we document the evolution of gender income gap by income decile. We decompose the total

gender income gap in each time period into the relative contributions of gender gaps in work (including self-employment), wages, demographics, and the cushioning effect of the tax and welfare system. Our results have implications for policy makers interested in balancing the objectives of gender budgeting with maintaining incentives for gender equality in the labour market.

**236**

**The Role of Financial Backgrounds: Transition to Marriage among Educated Chinese Women, 2010-2020**

*Ruhua Ma*

*University of York, York, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

**BACKGROUND**

The latest data from the seventh China census (2020) indicates that in the past decade, a delay in the timing of marriage entry has become more prevalent. Existing literature has reached an agreement that men's favourable financial status facilitates their first marriage. However, findings on the impact of financial resources on marriage outcomes for educated women are inconsistent.

**METHODS**

Using data from the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS), the current study examines the role of financial backgrounds over time (2010-2020) in determining educated women's marriage entry in China, employing discrete-time event history analysis. In addition, multiple regression is adopted to model the effect of gender role expectations on marriage timing.

**RESULTS**

Educated women with higher individual income are less likely to get married. Specifically, for every 100,000 yuan increase in individual income, educated women's odds of getting married decrease by approximately 55.4%, holding other covariates constant. By contrast, higher family income facilitates educated women's marriage entry. Educated women are 1.6 times more likely to get married with every 100,000 yuan increase in family income. Additionally, the educational attainment of an individual's father, specifically holding a university degree, does not significantly impact their daughter's marriage formation.

**CONTRIBUTION**

This study contributes to the literature by employing more direct and accurate indicators of financial backgrounds to explain delayed marriage entry. It highlights that both individual and family financial backgrounds are important in understanding marriage outcomes within the social and cultural context in China.

**324**

**Gender Norms, Values, and Welfare Systems in East Asia**

*Trude Sundberg*

*University of Kent, Whitstable, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

When studying welfare systems in East Asia Confucianism is often used as a proxy for the cultural systems found in the area, and it has been identified as a central driver for and framework to explain and understand welfare provision within East Asian welfare systems by some (Jones, 1993). This approach to understanding welfare has been challenged over the last decades, a challenge driven by East Asian welfare scholars as we see improved and more nuanced perspectives being developed. At the same time East Asian societies are experiencing

high levels of gender inequalities combined with social pressures such as ageing societies, low birth rates, increase in childcare needs, and inequality in the labour markets.

This paper discusses the results of a critical analysis of these arguments with a focus on gender norms, values, and attitudes. These are seen to be central to understanding East Asian welfare system as well as their labour markets. The paper challenges the simplistic use of Confucianism to understand values at play in East Asia and analyses value sets in a multidimensional and wide way to understand which attitudes matter. By analysing quantitative data, the paper shows that there are particular attitudes towards families' roles when it comes to the provision of eldercare and childcare across these societies. However, the paper is critical to simply claiming that these are Confucian values, as there are variations between the societies studied that suggest a complex and varied set of values and beliefs present in the societies included.

## **Social Care 5**

**137**

### **The 'Plat-Co-op' Ways of Care: A Care Fix?**

*Maimoona Waseem*

*Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The digital economy is increasingly viewed as a promising solution to mitigate the adverse economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly evident in sectors such as banking [1-3], design, education [4-6], real estate [7, 8], and transportation [9, 10], there remains a notable gap [11] in research concerning the integration of digital solutions within care cooperatives in England. Digital solutions in care may enable increased exchange of care information, promoting mutual matching between those getting care, amid the care sector's notorious reputation for negligence, exploitation, and commercialized practices. Despite the considerable attention [12-15] given to platform cooperativism in the United States, the adoption of digital platforms within social care cooperatives in England is still at a nascent stage [11, 16]. Since cooperatives are founded on principles of equity and social objectives, the convergence of cooperative values within the digital economy often lacks adequate support within academic circles. This research addresses a critical gap in care settings by focusing on the dynamics of care relationships via platform and emphasizing the importance of preserving the dignity and self-esteem of both carers and care recipients through person-centered care rather than task-oriented approaches thereby facilitating purposeful, long-lasting, and reliable carer connections. To achieve this, the article centers on a key research question: exploring the efficacy of platforms in care co-operative in the care delivery process. To deepen comprehension of platforms within cooperative principles, the study undertakes an in-depth examination of a social care cooperative located in England. Leveraging extensive findings from the author's PhD thesis, the study predominantly employs observations from a care cooperative and analysis of twenty-two semi-structured interviews with both carers and management personnel. Through this research, the study endeavors to foster an understanding of the platform from the perspectives of carers and its impact on caregiving within a care cooperative setting. The findings of the study revealed that the platform facilitates a relationship centered approach, concurrently reducing administrative expenses, manual data processing, and decentralizing data control. Moreover, it indicated that the platform enables responsiveness, autonomy, and enhancing efficacy of carers collaborating in teams. Hence, a plat-coop -

integrating and rearranging the finest aspects of cooperatives with the digital platform may serve as a potential opportunity to restore the autonomy of individuals involved in both providing and receiving support, thereby empowering members to take actions, with power being distributed rather than concentrated.

**180**

**Care in the welfare state: UK National Assistance and payments to family carers 1948-1965**

*Jackie Gulland*

*University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

**Abstract of Paper**

In its opening statement, the UK National Assistance Act 1948 declared that “The Existing Poor Law shall cease to have effect” (S1). The Act replaced the poor laws and provided for means-tested financial assistance “for those who need it”. It was designed as a safety net for those who fell through the gaps in the Beveridgean national insurance system. Based on the male breadwinner model, the national insurance system was designed to provide financial support for those unable to participate in the labour market because of unemployment, ill health or retirement. Care of family was firmly in the domain of married women, who were expected to be supported by wage earning men. In this model, little or no account was taken of those who we would recognise today as unpaid carers. National Assistance was one of the ways in which financial support could be provided to those providing care for other relatives. Early regulations under the Act did not specify eligibility criteria in detail and there was a certain amount of discretion in the scheme. In the scheme’s early years one growing category of claimants were women who were ‘caring for old or sick relatives’. Some payments were also made to men who claimed exemption from the requirement to be seek work because of their caring responsibilities. This paper looks at how the National Assistance Board dealt with these cases in the early years of the scheme, based on annual reports of the Board and an initial analysis of case papers held in the UK National Archives. These sources from the UK welfare state in the 1940s and 1950s show how the Beveridgean idea of the male breadwinner model failed to take account of care and how means-tested benefits were used to bridge this gap. Evidence from these early National Assistance decisions provides an insight into a growing awareness of unpaid care, set within gendered assumptions about the family and the male breadwinner model. While social security arrangements have changed since then, the idea of the gendered family as the first provider of unpaid care is still embedded in social security and care support systems today.

**328**

**Does Managerial Reform for Social Service Provision Under Neoliberal Rhetoric Truly Yield Cost Savings? Insights from the Hong Kong Experience**

*Michelle Hei Yan Shum*

*Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

**Abstract of Paper**

The global drift towards the dominant political-economic ideology, namely neoliberalism, through the implementation of managerialism and new public management in social welfare services for the last few decades emphasizes competition and the achievement of measurable outputs and cost-effectiveness. Despite the vast literature on the predicament and impact of neoliberalism, there has been little empirical analysis of the actual difficulties faced by social workers, how they handle these dilemmas, and the specific factors contributing to ethical decision-making. This study aims to address this gap by examining ethical dilemmas in social

work and the factors that shape ethical judgments and decisions under neoliberal managerialism, drawing on the experience in Hong Kong. Using a Delphi methodology, a panel of 30 social worker experts in Hong Kong participated in two successive web-based surveys, and their feedback was gathered, summarized, and confirmed.

Three themes are identified

1. The ethos of emphasizing value for money, coupled with the rigidity of the output standard, significantly impedes the flexibility of social workers in effectively responding to the ever-changing needs of society. As a result, social workers are left with no choice but to sacrifice the quality of service over quantity.
2. The reduction in budget and the drive towards marketization exert pressure on non-profit service provision organizations to secure new financial resources through competitive bidding. This emphasis on competition disregards the importance of maintaining the stability and sustainability of existing services, as well as the fair remuneration and job security of social workers.
3. Confronted with heavy workloads and the necessity of working overtime always, social workers often find themselves compelled to make compromises in terms of the depth of their services, prioritizing high-risk cases. This places them at a heightened risk of burnout and may result in adopting a mechanistic approach, resorting to employing expedient strategies to cope with the overwhelming demands.

These results demonstrate that an excessive emphasis on cost and efficiency within the managerial approach generates rigidity, undermining the benefits experienced by clients. This approach falls short in effectively addressing social problems and fails to address the ever-evolving needs of society. Consequently, social workers often assume the role of representatives for various stakeholders, rather than focusing primarily on the well-being of their clients. To address these issues, it is crucial to enhance the relational communication between funders and service providers, fostering a stronger and more collaborative relationship.

## **Poverty & Inequality 1**

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### **Unsecured debt for people on low-to-medium income: does it enable or hamper financial wellbeing? Evidence from financial diaries in the UK.**

*Elena Magli, Olga Biosca, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Anne Angsten Clark, Nest Insight, London, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper explores how low-to-medium income households use different forms of unsecured debt and whether this reduces or exacerbates their financial vulnerability. Unsecured debt includes overdrafts and credit cards, but also forms of non-traditional credit such as payday lenders, catalogue credit and Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) – i.e., subprime lending.

Subprime lenders are accused of charging usurious interest rates and keeping people in a constant cycle of debt, worsening the circumstances of already vulnerable individuals. Since the FCA enacted stricter regulation, new subprime lenders have quickly proliferated, such as BNPL and shopping apps. While this has raised new concerns, it also shows that there is demand for this type of credit. Furthermore, ‘responsible’ subprime lenders such as CDFIs show that providing access to unsecured debt, even if more expensive than mainstream credit,

can help vulnerable individuals to go through a financially difficult period. A question therefore arises of when unsecured debt causes or worsens financial problems, or on the contrary when it improves financial wellbeing.

This paper contributes to this debate by using financial diaries to explore the lived experiences of 52 low-to-medium-income households in the UK from 3 to 9 months. We used an innovative open banking platform to track the households' transactions, and we conducted monthly interviews to discuss the rationales underlying financial decision making, including access, preferences and use of credit. Through this longitudinal mixed-method approach, we gained a rich and granular picture of how individuals make decisions about using (or not using) particular forms of unsecured debt, and their understanding of how these decisions have affected their lives.

Our findings show a complex and nuanced picture. While diarists explained how they actively made some decisions – e.g., looking for an interest-free credit card, or preferring BNPL to other options - in other cases they described their use of credit in a more passive way, as they felt subjugated by the external context. "Credit was thrown at me". "I was offered an overdraft when I was a student". This is usually when debt became a problem. In some cases, credit was not even perceived as such, like BNPL or shopping apps. Aggressive marketing strategies and over-supply can therefore lead to debt problems, and this not only concerns credit provided by subprime lenders, such as BNPL, but also mainstream products such as credit cards and overdrafts.

**283**

### **Do different levels of severity of food insecurity affect mental health? Individual fixed-effects analysis during the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK**

*Marina Kousta, Karen Glaser, King's College London, London, United Kingdom*

*Rachel Loopstra, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

While the link between food insecurity and mental health is established, the causal nature of the relationship remains uncertain. Few studies use longitudinal data or investigate whether different levels of food insecurity lead to poorer mental health. Utilising five waves of the Understanding Society Covid-19 Survey (N=67,554), this study aimed to evaluate the mental health effects of different levels of food insecurity. The validated General Health Questionnaire (GHQ)-36 score, and the GHQ-12 (caseness,  $\geq 4$ ) captured mental health. Food insecurity measures reflected varying levels of severity, from milder (access to healthy food) to moderate (cutting/skipping meals) and severe (hunger and food bank use). Two Way Fixed Effects (TWFE) linear regression models and TWFE linear probability models were employed and adjusted for various time-variant confounders. Sensitivity analyses tested the results' robustness using a lower GHQ-12 threshold ( $\geq 3$ ). Hunger was associated with a 1.26-point increase in the GHQ-36 score ( $p=0.010$ , CI: 0.56, 1.94), whilst using a food bank  $\geq 4$  times was associated with a 2.14 increase ( $p=0.033$ , CI: 0.28, 3.99). Using a food bank  $\geq 4$  times also increased the probability of GHQ-12 caseness by 11% ( $p=0.020$ , CI: 0.03, 0.20), whereas cutting/skipping meals increased the probability by 12% ( $p=0.030$ , CI: 0.02, 0.22). In sensitivity analyses, using a food bank  $\geq 4$  times increased the probability of GHQ-12 caseness by 12% ( $p=0.010$ , CI: 0.05, 0.19) whilst cutting/skipping meals increased probability by 11% ( $p=0.020$ , CI: 0.02, 0.20). The remaining food insecurity measures did not demonstrate any significant associations. To the author's knowledge, this is the first longitudinal, nationally representative study employing robust fixed effects models to assess the potential causal impact of food insecurity on mental health. This study found that milder manifestations of food insecurity were not associated with poor mental

health, unlike more severe forms like hunger or food bank use. These findings suggest that policies that aim to prevent or reduce food insecurity could have wider positive impacts on mental health inequalities, especially in the recent context of the cost-of-living crisis.

**287**

### **The impact of the Scottish Child Payment on the need for food banks**

*Hannah Randolph, Emma Congreve, Kate Milne*

*Fraser of Allander Institute (U. of Strathclyde), Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

The Scottish Child Payment (SCP) was introduced in February 2021 and plays a key role in the Scottish Government's strategies to reduce child poverty and food insecurity. Understanding the effects of SCP is important both for informing further Scottish social policy and to explore policy options for the rest of the UK.

In this paper, we use administrative data from the Trussell Trust's network of food banks from 2019-2023 to analyse the effects of SCP on food insecurity in Scotland. We use microeconomic methods of causal analysis, including difference-in-differences and event study models, and leverage the variation in the age range of children eligible for SCP and increases in the payment amount to evaluate how SCP affected food bank usage by selected types of households.

We find evidence that SCP decreased food bank usage across some, but not all, groups of households with children in the eligible age range. Household groups where we find a statistically significant decrease in food bank usage include single-adult households with children 0-4, as well as households with children aged 5-16 without younger children. The effects are largest in late 2022 and early 2023, after the SCP payment amount was raised to £25 per week, per child. There is some more limited evidence of a decrease in food bank usage for large households (those with 3+ children) with children aged 0-4 after the increase in the payment.

These results are based on a short time period following the introduction and full roll-out of SCP. We therefore encourage the interpretation of these results as preliminary evidence, where further research may show a larger or more widespread impact. Continued monitoring and evaluation of the effects of SCP is therefore warranted, alongside explorations of how households have used the SCP payments since the benefit was introduced.

### **Paper Session 11 - 11:25-12:25**

#### **Symposium 38 - SPA Pension Policy Group (2 of 2) (papers 38, 58 and 270)**

##### **38 Workplace pension saving in the context of income volatility: findings from Real Accounts, a financial diaries project**

*Anne Angsten Clark, Phavine Phung, Nest Insight, London, United Kingdom*

*Elena Magli, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Hayley James, CPFW, Aston University, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

#### **Symposium proposal**

Pension Matters – the SPA Pension Policy Group symposium (2 of 2)

Pensions are a core part of welfare states, which are intended to support societies in sustainable ways. Existing research has pointed to a shifting landscape of public versus private provision, over which pension policy presides. On one hand, these policies implicate different outcomes for citizens, against a landscape of income and wealth inequalities.

On the other hand, these policies have also created new meanings and practices of pensions for citizens and policy makers alike. For example, this opening up debates including (but not limited to) the technologies of pension provision, individual responsibility and pension planning, pension freedoms, the meaning of social support and the role of the collective in policy governance.

We seek to foreground new social policy research which examines pensions. Our two linked symposia asks: What do pension developments mean for different groups? To what extent can pensions promise a better future, and what can social policy research contribute to this?

This is the second of two linked symposia from the SPA's Pension Policy Group.

### **Abstract of Paper**

In the context of the rising cost-of-living, increasing household debt and decreasing financial resilience, it is now more crucial than ever to understand the real experiences of households.

The Real accounts project, involving 44 low to moderate income households in the UK who have experience of financial volatility, uses an innovative financial diaries methodology which tracks income and expenditure over time. We meet participants on a monthly basis to discuss monthly transactions and dive deeper into specific areas of financial experience, such as savings, debt and credit, or pensions. This mixed-method approach allows us to capture decisions, practices and strategies that may be missed by quantitative analysis alone.

This paper analyses experiences of workplace pension saving amongst our households, most of whom have been through automatic enrolment, including people who are currently saving and some who have opted out. We provide an overview of the profile of workplace pension saving amongst the group and consider the key drivers and barriers experienced by participants, specifically how volatility in present circumstances shaped approaches to workplace pension saving. We consider what this is likely to mean for our households in the future and reflect on recent and proposed policies to encourage saving across the pension landscape.

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### **Precarious lives: Understanding later life financial decision making through the context of insecurity in everyday life.**

*Kristian Fuzi, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

*Debora Price, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom*

### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper considers how precarious workers experience insecurity in everyday life, specifically through work, income, and housing, and how this in turn shapes financial behaviours and financial choices. We know that precarious workers have lower than average income and pension savings, and often lack access to workplace pension and savings schemes. They experience insecurity in income and housing – both significant identifiers of financial resilience and planning for retirement (Suh, 2022; Suh and James, 2023). However, we know little about how these insecurities impact on financial behaviours and financial choices.

This paper will consider the variegated subjectivities of insecurity associated with living precariously and will evidence how different intensities of lived insecurity can lead to precarious workers presenting either a surviving, securing, or saving financial mindset. We employed an in-depth mixed methodology of semi-structured interviews and financial diaries. Our sample of 24 precarious workers included men and women aged 28-52 years old, all relatively low earners earning £10,000-£23,000 per annum (median earnings are £17,000 p.a.). All worked in freelance or self-employed roles, or on fixed-term, zero-hour, or part-time contracts.

Insecurity at work was associated with financial inconsistency, unpaid labour, and impermanency of work roles. Beyond work, many also experienced uncertainty, risk, and costs

associated with housing. Insecurities were found to have a cumulative effect where, for example, income inconsistencies made mortgage applications problematic. Analysis revealed three categories of financial mindsets. Workers with a surviving mindset focused heavily on their present conditions and struggled to think beyond this or the very short-term future. Those with a securing mindset considered their finances from a short-term perspective. Workers displaying a saving mindset held a heightened sense of security relative to their peers that enabled slightly longer-term financial considerations, but only a small few were saving for later life.

Our study supports the hypothesis that lived insecurity shapes and limits precarious workers abilities to engage with planning for later life financial wellbeing. The findings suggest that precarious work creates a sense of ontological insecurity that hinders long-term financial planning. In order to tackle pension poverty in later life for precarious workers, we conclude that wider issues of inequality must be addressed alongside reforms to the current pension system. Greater recognition is also needed of the links between precarity in work and housing and how to address the barriers to financial security that such precarity creates.

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### **What is a comfortable retirement? Findings from the Uncertain Futures project**

*Hayley James, Centre for Personal Financial Wellbeing, Aston University, Birmingham, United Kingdom*

*Sarah Campbell, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom*

*Elaine Dewhurst, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Research has shown that there are gender differences in imagined retirement futures which are affected by pension security with regard how positive or negative aging futures are perceived. This paper will explore data generated through a co-produced art research project called Uncertain Futures. The project set out to explore the inequalities facing women over 50 related to work in Manchester. 100 diverse women were interviewed about their experiences of accessing work, being in work, and exiting work. The women ranged in age from 50s to 80s, two-thirds were from minority ethnic backgrounds, with a small number who were refugees. All the women were asked about their views on what made for a comfortable retirement, whether they were retired or planning for retirement. Here we will explore the imagined futures and realities for women over 50 in Manchester, and we will share their ideas about what makes for a 'comfortable retirement'. We will also explore the factors influencing the women's viewpoints and the often quite modest aspirations women had for retirement. Women also shared their fears for their retirement futures which often looked precarious due to the lack of pension provision, secure housing, or good health. This paper argues that the inequalities women have faced across their life course due to intersectional disadvantage mean that for many women their imagined retirement futures and lived realities felt uncertain.

## **Symposium 152 - Housing & poverty 2 (papers 135 and 130)**

*Organiser: Kitty Stewart*

**135**

### **Housing, social security and minimum needs: the impact of housing costs and support on income adequacy, 2013-2023**

*Matt Padley, Juliet Stone*

*Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper will use the Minimum Income Standard (MIS) benchmark to look at the interaction between housing costs, (restrictions on) housing support and social security support over time, and what this has meant for households' ability to cover their minimum needs. MIS sets out what the public agree is needed for a minimum socially acceptable standard of living in the UK today – this is about meeting essential needs, such as food, clothes and housing, but is also about being able to participate in the world, to feel included. Starting in 2008, MIS has been annually updated and so we can look back at how the interaction between housing and income adequacy has changed over time. The paper will focus on two illustrative households – a lone parent with two children and a couple with two children. It will look at income adequacy for low income households both in work and receiving out of work benefits, and living either in the private or social rented sector in the period since 2013. It will then look at the impact of raising the benefit cap, increasing the level of universal credit, and increasing local housing allowance, on income adequacy in 2023. In doing this, we hope to point towards some possible policy solutions to the current housing challenge.

**130**

### **Crisis and coping in social housing. A study of tenancy sustainment**

*Emma Bimpson*

*Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Low-income households who were already at a tipping point prior to the cost-of-living crisis, have now found themselves making increasingly difficult decisions about paying for housing and priority bills, or meeting immediate needs. Undoubtedly, social landlords identify tenancy sustainment as the heart of their mission. Yet, as a key performance indicator, tenancy sustainment has traditionally been measured in narrow terms. For example, recorded through eviction or abandonment, or rent arrears. The question is, if a tenant is paying the rent but is living in damp conditions, and cannot meet the costs of food, heating or other household needs, can that tenancy be described as sustained?

This presentation will share the findings of the Holding onto Home project funded by the Nuffield Foundation, based on survey data from 1,200 social housing tenants and interview data from 64 social housing tenants in England and collected between 2023-24. The findings illustrate the daily experience of living with debt, the normalisation of precarity, the coping strategies and the sacrifices made by tenants who are increasingly struggling to get by. Participants reveal how the intersections of health, housing quality and accessibility, poverty and other inequalities are placed in sharper focus with progressive cuts to welfare and rising costs of living. Data collected also illustrates the difficulties that follow life events such as ill-health, bereavement and job loss, and the ways that social security and housing systems respond to changes in circumstances. Finally, this presentation will also outline how perceptions of social landlords and their communication can help or hinder their efforts to identify and mitigate difficult situations before a tenancy breaks down.

## **Social security 7**

**6**

### **UBI in Africa: Ghana in Focus.**

*Stella Gmekpebi Gabuljah, Hefin Gwilym*

*Bangor University, Bangor, Wales, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Universal Basic Income (UBI) has been piloted globally, including in many African countries, but not yet in Ghana. It has been piloted as a potential strategy to reduce poverty and inequality. This paper explores Ghanaians' perceptions regarding UBI efficacy compared to existing poverty reduction measures. Through qualitative interviews and surveys conducted among Ghanaian politicians and educationalists, this study aims to understand Ghanaians' attitudes, beliefs, and expectations towards UBI.

Preliminary results suggest mixed attitudes amongst Ghanaians on adopting UBI. While some respondents express optimism about the potential of UBI to alleviate poverty and provide financial security, others express scepticism about its feasibility and effectiveness in the Ghanaian context. Factors such as cultural norms, existing social welfare programmes, and concerns about dependency are identified as influencing attitudes towards UBI.

Furthermore, the paper examines the finance mechanisms, administrative feasibility, and potential economic impacts of UBI in Ghana. It also explores the role of government, civil society, and international organizations in shaping public opinion and policy discourse around UBI.

In conclusion, the paper contributes to the ongoing debate on UBI by providing insights into the perspectives of Ghanaians, thereby informing policymakers and stakeholders about the opportunities and challenges of adopting UBI as a poverty reduction strategy in Ghana.

**23**

### **Basic income-inspired policies in Europe: a municipalistic perspective through Europeanization processes**

*Bruno Oliveira*

*DINÂMIA'CET-Iul, Lisboa, Portugal*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Minimum income schemes are perceived as being underperforming in different member states of European Union (Figari, Matsaganis and Sutherland, 2013). In this context, UE recommends member states have adequate minimum income schemes, at least 60% of the median of the country (resolution of EP [2012/C 70 E/02]). When looking at the sociological context of European cities, we see they offer particular problems that the States have difficulty tackling (e.g. housing emergency, cost of living, or precariousness of jobs). In this scenario, cities emerge as potential institutional actors in developing public policy. In this context, some municipalities innovated by implementing a policy experiment in the social policy context. This policy entails some features of the basic income into the minimum income schemes, like unconditional and unlimited. Policy innovation (PI) can be defined as the "process and/or product of seeking to develop new and/ or widely adopted, and/ or impactful policies, when existing ones are perceived to be underperforming" (Zohlnhöferetal, 2016: 250). In this process (of innovating) is very dependent on the ability of the actors involved, to explore and experiment. Literature has provided various factors which can account to explain the emergence of policy innovations: a) the work of policy entrepreneurs in coupling activities (Guldbbrandsson and Fossum, 2009, Jordan and Huitema, 2014, Audrestschetal., 2021); b) the role of epistemic

communities (Nelkin, 1979, Haas, 1992, Weible, 2008); c) the progressive alliance of the left (Fernandes et al., 2017); d) the participation of cities in transitional municipal networks (Bulkeley, 2004, Kern and Bulkeley, 2009); e) the evolution of the political agenda of the EU (ERDF article 8). By tracing the process of the PI (with qualitative methods from semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and documental analysis) in a two-case selection in Europe – Barcelona and Utrecht (Two different municipal contexts with a similar policy innovation), we were able to find what factors lead to policy innovation in the social policy context: a) Historical and strong participation in the European networks of municipalism; b) Radical change in the government structure, presenting a great match between municipalism and European union in local policymaking. Moreover, by applying a two-theoretical approach (MSF and ACF) to a multilevel reinforcing dynamics context, the study also shows the agency role of public officials in opening policy windows on other levels of governance and also the role of science and expertise in advocacy coalition activities, playing a role as strategic policymakers.

**200**

### **Not So Simple? Comparing Policy Efforts to Merge Means-Tested Benefits in France and the United Kingdom**

*Ewan Robertson, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

*Fran Bennett, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

In recent years governments in France and the United Kingdom have sought to redesign means-tested social security, through proposals to bring together various benefits into so-called ‘universal’ minimum income schemes. However, despite pursuing the apparently common goal of simplification via superficially similar proposals, in practice the reform trajectories of benefit integration have been markedly distinct in the two countries. In the United Kingdom, Universal Credit has been replacing six means-tested benefits with one since 2012 and, after a long implementation period, will become the core form of minimum income support for all means-tested benefit claimants by 2028/29. But in France, the proposal for a new Universal Activity Income (Revenu Universel d'Activité) – floated initially in 2018 by the first Macron administration – appears to have stalled, or been altered or abandoned.

This paper analyses these two major proposals to simplify means-tested benefits in each country through a comparative lens, to investigate what may account for the implementation of Universal Credit but the non-implementation (or watering-down) of the Revenu Universel d'Activité. Through close study of each reform, we suggest that, despite policymakers sharing largely common objectives, differences in each case (e.g. political, institutional and circumstantial) have resulted in very different outcomes to date. Interaction effects are also potentially relevant, including the possibility that policy learning from the UK led to greater caution among policy elites in France regarding a more comprehensive merger of means-tested benefits.

In summary, we show how in France a combination of political, institutional and technical obstacles together with circumstantial ‘shock’ events has thus far prevented radical integration of means-tested benefits. Further, these obstacles were either weaker or absent at the time of Universal Credit’s introduction in the UK. In this sense, despite some similarities in both the goals and the direction of minimum income reforms in France and the UK in recent years, ongoing cross-case differences and contingent events have prevented fuller policy convergence. This finding updates and substantiates previous studies of past reform waves in these two cases and contributes theoretical and empirical insight regarding the mechanisms shaping minimum income reforms in each context.

## **Housing 4**

**281**

### **Government policy and the impact of deepening financialisation on affordable housing in England since 2010 - the views of those affected.**

*Alan Green*

*University of Derby, Derby, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper examines how UK government policies have impacted upon affordable housing in England by promoting the sector's deeper entrenchment in financial markets and how this, in turn, has affected tenants and residents in need of affordable homes.

From 2010 the Conservative led coalition government reasserted extreme laissez-faire housing policies reminiscent of the 1980s. These included rents more closely aligned to market levels; a focus on home-ownership; and increased discounts for tenants Right to Buy (RtB) of council homes. With the help of low interest rates, these policies supported house-price inflation whilst the pool of truly affordable homes reduced as homes were converted to more expensive 'Affordable' rents' or lost through RtB and estate regeneration. This shrunk the housing 'safety net' for those least able to afford the rising housing costs that resulted.

40% allocation funding cuts from central government to local authorities, alongside reduced capital subsidies to housing associations, created a funding vacuum as demand for housing continued to increase. Global finance, seeking to evidence 'philanthocapitalist' outcomes, following its role in the GFC, was keen to fill this vacuum by investing in 'safe' government backed social housing assets. Investment took the form of both direct lending and indirect involvement in the commercial, profit-seeking, activities that councils and housing associations were encouraged to embark upon, to fill funding gaps.

Building on previous research which examined the effects of 'financialisation' upon affordable housing outside the UK, this paper explores how financial markets, in pursuit of shareholder value, are reshaping non-market, social housing in England by hearing the seldom heard experiences of tenants and those most affected. These experiences are recorded through semi-structured interviews conducted with people living in affordable housing across the different housing markets of Liverpool, Cornwall and Haringey. The inductive, semi-structured approach gathers primary qualitative data whilst offering space for participants to influence and steer the research. Data from interviews is then organised across different themes pertinent to affordable housing to identify relationships and derive theories. Primary qualitative research is augmented by secondary quantitative data to identify macro-level changes within the affordable housing sector, and so draw conclusions on relationships between the macro and micro through hearing the rarely heard first-hand views of those most affected.

**321**

### **Moving to healthy homes**

*David Finch*

*The Health Foundation, London, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Health starts at home. It's central to where many of the building blocks for a good life are created, including safety, warmth, family connection, community, good education and work. But for some people, home is making them sick.

The UK's housing crisis reflects a long term long policy shift away from active management of the nation's housing stock to ensure it is affordable, high quality and secure, and that health is a central consideration in housing policy making.

Across all tenures there are still 3.7 million households in England classed as 'non-decent', causing avoidable ill health and inequalities. Failure to drive up standards means that hazards in the home are estimated to cost the NHS £1.1bn a year.

Overcrowding – which is linked to development issues for children as well as worse mental health outcomes – has been gradually rising since the early 2000s in the private and social rented sectors.

The number of families with children living in temporary accommodation – often unsuitable bed and breakfast or hotel rooms – is also increasing. This reflects affordability issues driving families into unsuitable accommodation.

An increased share of families now live in the private rented sector – a fifth (19%) of families now live in the private rented sector, of which 36% are families with children. The Renters (Reform) Bill presents an opportunity to begin to ensure tenancy conditions support healthy homes. But there are concerns with the efficacy of key elements of the bill including ending no fault evictions and the application of the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector.

At the same time, the housing stock is ageing with a high share of home owners – key factors behind difficulties in making progress on the quality of the housing stock.

This paper sets out the health case for change, outline the principles to create healthy homes (including through the Decent Homes Standard) and call for a long-term strategy to ensure healthy homes for all.

**226**

### **The UK's housing policy gap: evidence and advocacy versus policy priorities and levers**

*Lisa Garnham, Jasmyne Sheridan, Katherine Smith, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Clementine Hill-O'Connor, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Housing has long been recognised as a core pillar of the welfare state, and homelessness and social housing policy are long-standing social policy research topics. However, in the UK, the contraction of social housing and consequent overspill of low-income or otherwise vulnerable households into the private rented sector has broadened the boundaries of housing policy for those interested in social outcomes. As a result, housing researchers and advocates are increasingly considering a broader array of policy reforms. Complicating the situation, UK housing policy levers in this broader space span multiple levels of government.

This paper compares: (1) evidence reviews outlining the role of a broad range of housing characteristics and experiences in generating social impacts; (2) recent policy recommendations put forward by housing campaign organisations; and (3) the policies being pursued (2018-2023) by the Scottish Government (SG) and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). These two policy organisations both operate between UK and local government level, and each has made commitments to improving the availability of decent quality, affordable housing.

Our aim was to examine the alignment between evidence, advocacy and policy concerned with reducing the negative social impacts of living in poor quality, unaffordable or unsuitable housing or of experiencing homelessness. To address this, we draw on evidence reviews, documentary

analysis (of policy and campaign organisation texts), and interviews with five individuals directly involved in housing policy in SG and GMCA.

The findings suggest that, for homelessness and social housing, existing policies are well aligned with evidence and advocacy. In contrast, when it comes to regulating the private rented sector, there are significant differences between the types of policy changes being advocated by campaign organisations (which align with available evidence) and the focus of policy action (which, our interview data suggest, is limited by market forces and the UK government).

Drawing on this analysis, we propose a four-part matrix in which established/emergent policy areas intersect with issues policymakers can control/influence. This creates four policy 'spaces' in which social issues are created and maintained. We argue that research and policy recommendations in the emergent/influence space appear to pose the greatest challenge in generating research impact, owing to: the limited policy levers with which to target social impacts within these spaces; a dearth of reliable quantitative data; and the existence of powerful stakeholders, with competing interests.

## **General social policy 6**

**288**

### **Exploring the Diverging Destinies of Families: Can Social Policies leverage Change?**

*Anat Herbst-Debby, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel*

*Amit Kaplan, Tel Aviv-Jaffa Academic College, Tel-Aviv Yaffo, Israel*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper discusses the relationship between socio-economic status and Top of Form marital status, vis-s-vis changes in family policies, through an intersectionality lens. Drawing on Collins' (2006) intersectionality paradigms, we explore how inequality across dimensions such as socio-economic status, gender, and ethnicity shapes individuals' experiences.

Top of Form

Specifically, we examine the interplay between family dynamics, particularly divorce, and their implications on household income and wages across genders, socio-economic and ethnic groups. Our premise is that family dynamics including divorce, are integral to the creation and deepening of social inequality (Esping-Andersen, 2009). Guided by the 'Diverging Destinies thesis' (McLanahan and Jacobsen, 2015), we analyze marital separation pathways in Israel since the mid-1990s, a period marked by significant changes in family policy and social security. During this time, means-tested allowances for divorced mothers have been steadily reduced and delegitimized. Since the early 1990s, Israel has experienced two main policy configurations regarding single-parent families: the first occurring between 1992 and 2003, and the second between 2003 and the present. In the first configuration, the welfare state and labor market participation facilitated women's economic autonomy, while at the second configuration welfare cuts and a shift toward a market model have undermined women's economic autonomy. Our methodology utilizes longitudinal data spanning from 1995 to 2018 combining administrative records and census data.

Top of Form

Our findings indicate that couples from lower socio-economic backgrounds are at a higher risk of divorce, consistent with patterns observed in other countries and the diverging destinies thesis. Moreover, women experience greater income loss post-divorce, particularly those with

lower socio-economic status. Taken together our findings indicate that the most vulnerable group of women, specifically low-wage earners, bore the heaviest burden of the policy changes. Based on our findings, we discuss strategies for family policy implementations to mitigate the economic consequences of divorce, especially for vulnerable groups based on gender, socio-economic status, and ethnicity.

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### **Empty convoys? Disabled people navigating lifecourse transitions in the community**

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

This paper draws on semi-structured interviews with disabled people and their unpaid carer/paid support worker to look at navigating lifecourse transitions. We explore whether the theory of care convoys (Kahn and Antonucci, 1980; Antonucci et al., 2013) – developed in gerontological research and often involving participants in Assisted Living (AL) settings – is applicable to working age disabled people who are living in the community. The concept of care convoys was developed to convey how people travel through life with a shifting network of support, focusing on age related dynamics rather than, for example, being disabled from birth or a young age. A convoy is often depicted as a set of concentric circles, with the person with care needs at the centre and their unpaid and paid care networks in circles around them. We found that for working age disabled people, there were three aspects of the care convoys model that were hard to apply to their experiences: (1) Whereas the convoy model suggests movement and progression, people were often stuck or blocked in their lifecourse changes; (2) People tended to have small convoys, in that, they were not travelling through life with a rich array of support that the care convoys model suggests; (3) It was not always obvious who was at the centre of the convoy; disabled people and carers/support workers were offering each other mutual support. One interpretation of our findings is that the care convoy model needs to be adapted to make it more applicable to working age disabled people who are living in the community. However, another is that the normative assumptions in the convoys literature about progression foreground a critical engagement with the limitations of life for disabled people who often experience accumulative barriers when attempting to change their lives.

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## **Study on the Effect of OECD National Fertility Support Policy from the Perspective of Female Employment**

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### **Abstract of Paper**

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China focuses on reducing the costs of childbirth, child-rearing, and education, proposing an active population development strategy of 'optimizing the population development strategy and establishing a supporting policy system for child-birth'. This marks an important measure for China to achieve long-term and balanced population development, pointing the direction and clarifying the goals of future childbirth supporting policies. Fertility and employment are major life events throughout women's life journey. The Chinese fertility policies remain at 'ultra-low fertility levels' during the transition from birth control to fertility encouragement. Meanwhile, the female employment participation rate in China has basically remained at approximately 62% since 2017. Women strive to find a balance between work and family in the game of fertility and employment trade-offs. It is urgent to establish a diversified, moderate and inclusive related system for supporting fertility policy adjustment. This paper adopts the fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) method to compare 38 OECD member countries' fertility support policy groups from the perspective of promoting female employment, and analyze the effects of fertility support policies in different employment contexts. By analyzing female employment behavior choice, anti-sexism culture, and labor market supervision and inspection strength as female employment scenarios in OECD countries, and maternity support policy system, maternity time support, maternity economic support, and maternity service support are selected for necessity analysis and group analysis. It is found that individual employment scenarios and fertility support policies do not represent necessary conditions for active policy effects. As a result, five types of policy configurations that can promote fertility levels are identified, which indicates that there are multiple ways to achieve policy effects under different female employment scenarios and fertility policies. In order to accelerate the construction of a "fertility-friendly" social environment and promote high-quality female employment, Chinese fertility support policies should integrate the dual functions of promoting fertility and supporting female employment.

### **Symposium 267 - Employment policy group 3 (papers 327, 61, 94 and 115)**

*Organisers: The SPA's Employment Policy Group*

**327**

#### **The employment retention of disabled people in the United Kingdom and Germany in the 2010s: labour market stratification and cross-country differences**

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### **Abstract of Paper**

Employment retention of disabled people is a major issue in addressing the inequalities faced by disabled people in the labour market. Moreover, it is not an issue that can be addressed by anti-discrimination legislation alone, as it interacts with contract type and other forms of labour market stratification (Eurofound, 2021). In this paper, I investigate how the employment retention of disabled people is affected by employment-level characteristics such as occupation, sector, and contract type; and varies across the historically contrasting labour

markets of the United Kingdom and Germany. In other words, I move beyond individual-level characteristics (though controlling for them statistically), to focus on the meso- and macro-level determinants (Bambra, 2011) of social inequalities in the employment retention of disabled people. Though they are often characterised as contrasting labour markets, the 2010s saw employment growth driven by the growth of low-paid and non-standard employment in both the UK and Germany, especially in the service sector. Not only are disabled people disproportionately concentrated in these jobs, but they are particularly disadvantaged by them, as reasonable adjustments are less readily made and sick pay is less likely to be available. First, I present a theoretical framework to analyse the relationship between health/disability and employment comparatively and with a focus on employment retention. I then present doctoral findings based on longitudinal analyses of the UK Household Panel Survey and the German Socio-economic Panel. In addition to contributing to our understanding of disablement in the labour market, this research can inform policies aimed at supporting the employment of disabled people.

**61**

**Centralised and devolved policy interactions at the intersection of youth unemployment and work insecurity: a street-level perspective**

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**Abstract of Paper**

Drawing on 31 qualitative interviews with work coaches delivering on youth employment policy in England, Scotland and Wales, this paper examines the way centralised and devolved policies crossover, interact and clash with significant implications for young people on the receiving end and wider implications for our understandings of welfare regime categorisation. Examining the impact of territorial rescaling through devolved employment policy and sub-state responses to youth (un)employment and work insecurity, this paper argues that devolved social policy (narrative, approach and delivery) presents an important alternative to the UK central government's work first approach with implications for job quality.

The paper also critiques the privileging of methodological nationalism in the study of welfare regimes, offering a sub-state alternative which draws on the work of Béland amongst others. Specifically, the paper identifies challenges associated with policy intervention and support for the young (un)employed and those facing work insecurities within volatile labour market conditions and steadily diminishing welfare protection against a backdrop of prevailing neoliberalism, trends towards activation measures, the work first approach and mixed economies of welfare across Western Europe. In this context, in short, the UK's categorisation as a Liberal Welfare regime of minimal protection is challenged using a devolved policy context.

**94**

**Still one model of youth transition? The diversity of skills formation systems within the post-devolution United Kingdom**

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**Abstract of Paper**

The UK welfare state is often seen as one monolithic entity, despite responsibilities for key social policy areas such as education, housing, health, or social care having been devolved to the sub-state level since the late 1990s. This paper examines how and why skills formation systems differ within the United Kingdom more than two decades since the start of the

devolution process. On a descriptive level, we ask: how do the devolved governments facilitate post-school transitions within the same broad growth model and welfare regime type? And can we still speak of one model of skills formation in the UK? Motivated by evidence of divergence, we then proceed to identify and test explanatory variables behind divergent strategies.

We rely on policy documents, parliamentary data and interviews with key policymakers and we use quantitative data to support our findings. We find that governments in Scotland and Wales have not only rhetorically expressed a clear aspiration to diverge from English practice but have also implemented divergent policies. We also find divergence in outcomes, although this is less stark than in rhetoric and policy output.

The contribution of this paper is twofold. First, we expand on the existing literature in going beyond the central state level by combining existing analytical frameworks in a novel way to compare the skills formation systems in England, Scotland and Wales. Second, we shed light on often overlooked social policies that are important for addressing social inequalities, namely provisions for post-16 learners.

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### **Progression in work – a journey of shared values and constrained choices across the policy process**

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#### **Abstract of Paper**

An important policy shift in the UK welfare landscape is the Universal Credit (UC) in-work progression policy, which requires low-income workers to increase their earnings in return for government support. This policy is aimed at helping people live more prosperous lives “independent from the welfare state” (DWP, 2016, p.1; McGregor-Smith, 2021). Critics of the policy on the other hand believe it does not reflect everyday lives for UC claimants and exposes fundamental policy mismatches (Millar and Bennett, 2017; Dwyer and Wright, 2020; Scullion, Jones and Wright, 2022). This paper will explore this policy shift through a qualitative journey through the policy process looking at shared values and constrained choices for people involved in designing, developing, implementing and experiencing Universal Credit.

The paper uses Amartya Sen’s capability approach (Sen, 1985; 1988; 1999) to analyse this shift from ‘work first’ to ‘work more’ (Jones, 2022) from three perspectives: policy design, policy delivery and everyday geographical experiences amongst low-income families with dependent children. The capability approach advocates for a holistic and multi-dimensional approach to policymaking and acknowledges people’s motivations as more than just maximising their economic gains. It argues people should have the freedom to make choices that might be seen by politicians and policymakers as leading to economic losses, but which may carry value to the person themselves (Sen, 1985, 1992, 1999).

In alignment with Sen’s beliefs capabilities are understood as the composite set of choices that determines what actions people have the opportunities to pursue as they live their lives (Sen, 1993, 1999). This research with policymakers, frontline workers and low income families explores the extent to which UC enables people to make meaningful choices around work and other important aspects of their lives. The UC in-work progression policy is shown to create the contexts that define what capabilities are available to those subject to the policy as well as those designing and implementing it.

## **Youth 2**

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### **MenMinds: Engaging marginalised young men in co-designing mental health research, services and policies for the future**

*Daniela Sime, Nina Vaswani, Leyla Kerlaff, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Matt Maycock, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia*

*Julie Cameron, Mental Health Foundation, Glasgow, United Kingdom*

*Members of young people's forum*

#### **Abstract of Paper**

Mental health and wellbeing typically declines throughout adolescence with rates of mental health conditions in adolescents increasing over time (Pitchforth et al., 2019). These trends have given rise to a concerns over an unprecedented crisis in adolescent mental health (Gunnell et al., 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent public health restrictions have led to a worsening of adolescents' self-reported mental health as the pandemic has worn on (MHF, 2021). A gender gap has also been observed in adolescent mental health. While adolescent females are often perceived to be at higher rates of internalising disorders such as anxiety and depression, males are more likely to be diagnosed with behavioural disorders, including conduct disorder (Sadler et al., 2018), which can affect how society and support services respond. These diagnosis rates reflect not only underlying mental health difficulties, but also factors such as help-seeking behaviours, the availability of mental health support services, diagnostic criteria and clinical practice. Young males are at greater risk of poor mental health and wellbeing outcomes in key health and wellbeing areas such as suicide (ONS, 2021) and substance use (Holloway & Bennett, 2018). Young men are also under-represented in mental health research, meaning that the knowledge and evidence used to inform mental health policy and practice may not fully reflect their experiences or perspectives. Additionally, more marginalised and disadvantaged populations of young men face additional barriers to accessing services or participating in research.

This paper presents findings from a UKRI-funded project ([www.menminds.org](http://www.menminds.org)) exploring the interaction between marginalised young men's masculine identities, their mental health and wellbeing and their help-seeking behaviours. The project aims to improve knowledge of youth-centred research methods and has adopted a co-produced peer-research approach, with a core group of young men from LGBTQI+, refugee/migrant or justice-experienced populations acting as co-researchers. The Young People's Forum aims to identify barriers to research participation and to design more inclusive, accessible and innovative research methods to engage other young men in mental health research and influence future provision of services and development of social policies.

Drawing upon a year of co-production sessions with a core group of 10-12 young men, this paper reflects on the key methodological learning arising from engaging young men in coproducing research to inform research, policy and practice change. The implications for coproduction in services, future social policy and practice settings will be discussed, and what this all means for more socially just futures.

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**Putting together a jigsaw puzzle? Family, emotional support and youth transitions**

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**Abstract of Paper**

Our paper aims to advance our understanding of contemporary young lives via the advancement of a theoretical framework that maps family's ability in supporting youth transitions. Drawing from Papadopoulos and Roumpakis (2019) we identify family both as a key welfare provider but also as a collective socio-economic actor and a site for the social reproduction of welfare capitalism. In this way, family's collective agency has to analytically explore both relationships among its members but also how family, as an actor, can be conditioned and affected by contemporary social (cultural markers of 'youth'), economic (e.g. local labour markets), health (e.g. covid-19; prevalence of mental health) and political (e.g. 'Levelling up' agendas) factors. The latter factors are dynamic and therefore can reconstitute a family's ability to mobilise, consolidate and redistribute the necessary economic and emotional resources to protect and support their younger members. Our paper argues in favour of a holistic approach that enables us to explore the ability of family as a collective actor to facilitate youth transition, including the need to understand both how intergenerational ties within the family relate to the emotional support available to young people but also explore how these intergenerational ties are conditioned by wider societal, political and cultural contexts. We integrate analysis of place-based inequalities in York and Scarborough, to highlight the interlinking factors that form a multifaceted 'youth transition jigsaw puzzle' and explore holistically the factors that underpin the provision of emotional support for young people.

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**Migration, social connections, and rural living among young people in Scotland**

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**Abstract of Paper**

Growing diversities of rural mobilities re-shape the ethnic and national composition of the rural communities and have an impact on community relations in rural places. While migration is an integral part of rural communities, little is known about how social networks and community relations shape mobility decisions (e.g., return, outmigration or stay in) and more widely the experiences of rural living. Such understandings are important in the case of young people who remain central to demographic and social changes and their role in rural livelihoods is crucial to rural futures. This paper addressed these gaps by exploring the relationships between social connections and the complexities of young people (16-25) migration patterns and their experiences of rural living including economic and social inclusion, and wellbeing. Based on the qualitative research with diverse young people (including international migrants, internal migrants and young people who were born and never left the area), this paper maps young people existing social connections to provide novel insights into the relations between migration, social connections, and rural living in Scotland. As such it provides how the level and quality of social connections among young people in rural vary in relation to their ethnicity, class and place of living and its impact on decisions about staying in, migrating, or returning to rural places.

## **Plenary lecture - Prem Sikka - Paying for the welfare state: a view from the House of Lords**

Whatever the outcome of the general election on 4th July, one group always wins - that is big corporations who increasingly fund political parties and think-tanks and are able to shape public agenda and policies. Corporations dominate almost every aspect of our life ranging from food, water, medicine, news, savings and pensions

The contemporary state is in perpetual crisis. For ideological reasons it is prevented from owning means of production, but it must have revenues not only for its own survival but also for creating the impression that it can deliver social welfare mandates advocated through the ballot-box. Failure to do so risks a crisis of legitimacy. The essential revenues are primarily raised through taxation on profits, wages, consumption and savings, which in turn depend on the levels of economic activity controlled by corporations. Thus, the state is obliged to act in the long-term interests (whatever that may be) of corporate capitalism whilst giving impression that it is pluralistic.

The state-corporate nexus is full of contradictions. Governments look upon profit-chasing corporations to fuel economic activity, jobs and investment but they owe loyalty to no place, product, state or people. Little has been done to democratise corporations. To many, corporations have become too powerful and that power itself has become the source of crisis. With full agreement of the state, corporations are harming the environment through pollution; employees through low wages, zero-hour contracts and fire and rehire; customers through high profit margins and local communities by making excessive demands. Companies receive billions in subsidies, grants and tax reliefs, but are permitted to shift profits to low/no tax jurisdictions and avoid UK taxes. This stymies possibilities of welfare rights for citizens.

Taming the corporations is likely to be a major issue for the foreseeable future as governments seek to reignite economic growth. The UK faces stark choice. It can have strong and powerful corporations or democracy but not both.