

ESF/SCSS Exploratory Workshop Grant:

**Cross National Explorations of the Influence of  
Environmentalism upon Social Policy**

**First Core Group Meeting**

*Nottingham, 2-4 April 2001*

**SCIENTIFIC REPORT**

- *Executive Summary*

The workshop allowed the participants to cover all of the themes and questions that it was intended to cover (see Final Programme), as well explore ideas that emerged *sui generis* throughout the course of the various discussions. As a result, several interesting ideas and proposals emerged. These can be summarised under the following four points.

First, participants discussed the desirability and feasibility of editing a collection of commissioned essays for publication in book form, hopefully during 2003. The possible content and structure of this was discussed extensively and would include four parts:

- Chapters on recent shifts in socioeconomic paradigms, e.g. the shifting nature of political sovereignty from states to markets and from the national to the global, and the relevance of these shifts for environmentalism and policy-making;
- Chapters on how risks are constructed by a variety of key actors and institutions in discursive settings, and on how those actors and institutions are, themselves, constructed through the discourses of risk;
- Chapters on how risks are managed in various countries by differing policy regimes, to theorise a new concept of 'risk regimes', to understand how those regimes are positioned in relation to one another and to relate all of the above to the existing literature on comparative social policy;
- Chapters on welfare services and the well-being of citizens that begins to reconstruct our understanding of the 'welfare subject' in environmentalist and risk-related terms.

The purpose of this book would be to develop a broad conceptual framework that would inspire both further publications and act as a reference point for empirical research.

It was agreed that the workshop convenor would produce a first draft of a chapter for discussion at a possible second workshop later in the year. A book contract would then be sought once contributors, and a firmer idea of the text's objectives and structure, were in place.

Second, participants discussed the possibility of composing several co-authored articles that would revolve around the same theme, acting as a 'primer' for the above book, and which would be targeted upon prestigious publications such as the *Journal of European Social Policy* and perhaps *the International Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*.

These publications would attempt to develop a new approach to 'regime theory' and cross-national analysis by, for instance, critiquing the work of Gosta Esping-Andersen (and other key figures) from an environmentalist perspective. These contributions to the literature could potentially be key works of reference. It was agreed that the workshop convenor would produce a first draft of a section of this article for discussion at a possible second workshop later in the year.

Third, participants discussed possible directions for empirical research and grant applications. Several debates took place regarding the importance of food and of issues relating to health, these being obvious points of intersection between environmentalism and social policy. It was generally felt that this best left to further reflection and to discussion via email, all agreeing that developments here will be partly dependent upon the opportunities for funding that arise in the short to medium term future.

One session was given over to a discussion of the European Union's Sixth Framework which is scheduled to commence in 2003. Advice was taken from a member of Nottingham University's International Office (see Final Programme). It was agreed that participants would network in their home countries and seek to attract both social and natural scientists to the team, if only as associate members to begin with. Given the timetable of the Sixth Framework it was felt that there is a substantial amount of time to expand our range of contacts and that detailed work on a large grant application would not need to occur until summer 2002 at the earliest. In the meantime, participants will continue to liaise with each other regarding smaller scale projects, perhaps tying into participants' ongoing research, that could act as a platform for more ambitious projects in the future.

It was agreed that for a second workshop a greater number of participants should be invited, depending upon resources. The network should expand not only through the input of academics but also, if possible, through the contributions of those in the commercial, not-for-profit and public sectors. These will be drawn not only from Europe but from non-European countries as EU-funded research is becoming more global in scope.

Since it seems that the Sixth Framework will encourage the setting up of flexible research teams some attention will need to be paid to the practicalities of team management and ensuring that members of the team deliver what they will be required to deliver. Some time during the second workshop will need to be given to the appropriate procedures for team management.

It was therefore agreed, finally, that a second workshop should take place, preferably in December 2001. This would focus upon the publications outlined above, perhaps involving a series of presentations and discussion papers from the core team; it would also seek to be more inclusive of other nationalities and of those from outside the social sciences. Much will therefore depend upon networking during the interim period and the convenor is planning to develop links with contacts in Eastern Europe, including a visit to Poland in August 2001. If possible, additional funding from Nottingham University will be sought, to be used in conjunction with the outstanding funds available from the ESF.

- *Scientific Content*

The scientific content mainly revolved around a discussion of the new genetics, particularly in relation to food. If health is to be of central importance to the work of the group then the issue of genetically modified (GM) food is particularly relevant. The discussion took place in the context of consumerism and the response which British producers and consumers have made to GM food, Britain being the European country where GM products have been most actively promoted by both government and agri-business. These discussions occurred within a social scientific framework, especially in relation to risk society debates, and it is clear that the expertise of non-social scientists will be required if this feature of network's interests is to be pursued.

An additional discussion took place on a more general level of the relationship between new technologies and social policy. The workshop convenor distributed a copy of his recent work on the subject ('Critical Cyber Policy: Network Technologies, Massless Citizens, Virtual Rights', *Critical Social Policy*, 20:3, pp.375-407, August 2000) and will distribute a forthcoming publication which looks specifically at the new genetics once the final draft has been produced ('Before the Cradle: Social Biopolicy, Genetics & Regulated Eugenics', *Journal of Social Policy*, October, 2001).

It is therefore hoped and expected that the science-related discussions likely to take place at the second workshop will be more focused and will be able to draw relate social science more precisely to the new genetics by inviting the participation of non-social scientists.

- *Final Programme*

### **Agenda for April 2nd**

- 15.00 Introduction at Rutland Square Hotel  
*Outline of objectives for, and expectations of, the workshop.*  
*Background of participants.*  
*Informal discussions*
- 18.00 Meal in city centre

### **Agenda for April 3rd**

School of Sociology & Social Policy, Nottingham University

- 9.30-12.30 Edited Book?  
*What is the appropriate conceptual framework?*
- Break
- Research Project 1  
*What do we want to do and why?*
- Lunch at Staff Club with Professor Nick Manning (Head of School)  
 and Professor Robert Walker
- Brief campus tour
- 14.30-17.30 Research Project 2  
 Bridget Saywell, International Office, Nottingham University  
*Introduction to EU Fifth and Sixth Framework Programmes*
- Break
- Co-authored journal article  
*How do we put this together?*
- 18.00 Meal in city centre

### **Agenda for April 4th**

Rutland Square Hotel, Nottingham

- 10.00-Noon Where next?  
 Workshop for early December 2001?  
*How do we widen the network?*
- Noon Lunch and departure

- *Participants - Core Group Meeting - Nottingham - 2-4 April 2001*

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- *Assessment of Workshop and Future Plans*

The workshop was most successful in terms of the publication plans that emerged from it. These still need to be firmed up – hence the intention to base the second workshop around draft papers to be produced in the interim – but the research interests and disciplinary expertise of the group seemed to be compatible.

More work and planning needs to be conducted around the question of how to expand the network in terms of both geography (should the members be limited to Europe?) and discipline (how can we attract non-social scientists to the group?). The participants agreed to give this some thought during 2001 and to propose some firm plans around which the agenda of the second workshop can be partly based. Assuming that there is enough of the original grant remaining it may be possible to invite an additional person. In addition, the convenor will try to obtain money from Nottingham University since the university is keen for its staff to strengthen their research contacts throughout Europe. This means that the second workshop may consist of 6 participants in all, i.e. 4 members of the core team and 2 associates.

Both Arni Sverrisson and Ilona Ostner wish to continue with the above plans although Prof. Yanitsky has withdrawn. Each feels that a replacement from Russia should be sought. In my capacity as chief editor of the *International Encyclopedia of Social Policy* (forthcoming from Routledge) there are several contacts in Russia that I can approach in this respect.

Therefore, the immediate plans of the convenor are:

1. to organise a replacement from Russia;
2. to organise 1 or 2 additions to the core team;
3. to write one or two draft publications that can form the basis of the second workshop;
4. to liaise with the core team over their ideas for expanding the group during 2002;
5. to organise a second workshop for December 2001.

*(now postponed to May 2002)*

**Tony Fitzpatrick**