

# Barnett House News

Newsletter of the Department of Social Policy and Intervention

Michaelmas 2011



## Shame, social exclusion and the effectiveness of anti-poverty programmes: A study in seven countries

The Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen, has suggested that shame is an inevitable concomitant of poverty. However little research has been undertaken to explore how far this proposition is true or its implications for our understanding of poverty and the design of anti-poverty programmes. Professor Robert Walker and Dr Elaine Chase are working with colleagues across seven countries on an Economic and Social Research Council/Department for International Development-funded project examining whether shame is universally experienced by people living in poverty.



Women's trade union group in Gujarat, India

### Why look at shame?

Shame is believed to reduce people's ability to participate in society and can therefore lead to their social exclusion. While it can negatively affect the individual it can also affect people collectively. Policies that aim to reduce poverty may improve or worsen the situations of people facing hardship, depending on how effectively they take into account the likely effects of poverty-related shame. If people living on low incomes feel shame irrespective of the degree of poverty they experience, there is scope to develop policies to address poverty which focus on promoting human dignity.

### The study

This research is designed to compare the manifestation of shame and its effects in different global contexts including: rural Uganda and India; urban China, Pakistan and UK; and small-town Norway and South Korea. Colleagues in each of the countries are conducting research using the same tools adapted for local contexts. Every six months the project team meets in a different country to analyse the emerging findings, sharing these with the policy community locally.

### Findings so far

Researchers have analysed different popular media in the participating countries, looking at the presentation of cultural values surrounding poverty and shame. This included a sample of literature in China, India, Norway, Pakistan, Uganda and the UK; a sample of films in India, South Korea and the UK; and additional analysis of proverbs and folklore in India and Uganda. Findings broadly demonstrate an association between poverty and shame in the popular media. However some important cultural distinctions are emerging as to the settings in which shame is experienced, and in the relative importance of shame attributable to poverty and that due to other factors.

In-depth interviews have been conducted with children, young people and adults living in low income households in the participating countries to determine whether and how they experience shame in relation to their economic status. The emerging findings from this phase of the work indicate that people facing material and economic hardship are likely to experience shame in a range of ways and that this impacts on how they participate in their local communities and society as a whole.

### What else is there to do?

The project is due to end in October 2012. Two further areas will be examined over the coming months: the ways in which the wider public may, consciously or otherwise, play a role in shaming people living in poverty; and how social assistance and other anti-poverty programmes in each of the participating countries may moderate or exacerbate any shame attached to being poor.



Women and children making incense sticks, Gujarat, India

## A message from the Head of Department

Welcome to this edition of *Barnett House News*. During the last year the most important change from an outside perspective was probably the change of the Department's name. We are now the *Department of Social Policy and Intervention* (DSPI), which we feel more accurately reflects our academic focus. Furthermore, social policy research has now been integrated into the *Oxford Institute of Social Policy*.

In the Research Assessment Exercise 2008, 70 per cent of DSPI's research output was categorised either as world leading or internationally excellent. Income from externally funded projects continues to increase and colleagues continue to publish in world-leading peer-reviewed journals. However, high-quality academic research has not prevented colleagues from advising governmental and international organisations, demonstrating how evidence-based research can have a real impact on public policies and peoples' lives.

Teaching and supervising excellent students from around the globe continues to be a success. Responding to the global environment of graduate teaching needs and to make our teaching provision more attractive in the coming years, we are looking into possibilities to further develop our scholarship programmes.

The Department thanks Ann Buchanan, Kenneth Macdonald, Mavis Maclean, and George and Teresa Smith who have recently retired for their contributions over the years. We also said goodbye to Evan Mayo-Wilson who moved to UCL in October 2011. At the same time I want to take this opportunity to welcome new faculty members: Chris Bonell, Erzsebet Bukodi, Paola Mattei and Georg Picot. I thank Peter Kemp, who has been Head of Department for the past four years, for his stewardship in guiding the transformation of the Department.

I hope you enjoy reading this year's *Barnett House News*.

Professor Martin Seeleib-Kaiser



### Inaugural Zola Skweyiya lecture

The inaugural Zola Skweyiya Lecture on South African Social Policy was given by His Excellency Dr Zola Skweyiya, the South African High Commissioner to the UK, at the Department on 17th May 2011.

We were honoured that Dr Skweyiya could give the first of these annual lectures, named for him in recognition of the outstanding contribution he made as Minister for Social Development in South Africa between 1999 and 2009, both in promoting the development of a comprehensive social security system and in promoting and supporting the study of social policy in South Africa.

The Centre for the Analysis of South African Social Policy (CASASP) has worked closely with the Department of Social Development over the last decade. Discussions are underway about how to continue this collaboration and build on the many successful initiatives to date.

### Barnett House Centenary Project

Barnett House – now the Department of Social Policy and Intervention – will celebrate its centenary in 2014. It started life before the First World War as a centre for the study of social and economic problems and for training, aiming to combine research, policy and practice, as it does now, on some of the most urgent issues of the times.

A number of colleagues are currently writing the Centenary History to be published in 2014. We are planning a series of events during the academic year 2013-14 leading up to the Centenary Reunion in the summer of 2014. Please email us to make sure that we have the right address to invite you to the various events ([editor@spi.ox.ac.uk](mailto:editor@spi.ox.ac.uk)).



*"Fear not to sow because of the birds"—CANON BARNETT*

## Coaching has a significant result on SAT scores

Students receiving some form of coaching for the SAT (the primary entrance exam for US college admissions) had significantly higher scores in verbal and maths tests than those who had not had coaching, according to research by Professor Paul Montgomery and Jane Lilly. Coached students gained on average an extra 23 points in the verbal test and 33 points in the maths test - a combined score of 56 points - suggesting that coaching has an even greater effect than previous research has shown.



The researchers reviewed ten existing studies conducted over a 30-year period (1966 to 1999) which used randomised controlled trials to look at effects of coaching on SAT performance. The studies involved 1,355 pupils taking the maths test, and 1,208 pupils taking verbal tests, and covered a diverse range of coaching methods, including teacher-led and computer-based coaching varying in length from four hours in a classroom to an expensive programme of coaching lasting up to 45 hours.

The researchers found that for verbal tests, coaching sessions of more or less than eight hours resulted in broadly similar test mark gains. However for maths the longer coaching programmes were more beneficial, with pupils gaining on average three times the increase in points compared with those taking short coaching sessions. The researchers reviewed different coaching styles, but found no significant difference in improvement between those who went on online computer-based courses and those who paid for classroom-based coaching. Poorer pupils benefit as much from coaching as pupils from more privileged backgrounds, but as students do not have equal access to coaching opportunities, there is an inherent unfairness in favour of students from higher-income families.

Lead researcher Professor Montgomery concluded that, as SAT performance determines who gets a place at college or a scholarship, the system is unfair if some pupils have coaching opportunities while others do not for financial reasons. The system currently penalises those who cannot afford coaching. Professor Montgomery urges all students to be aware of the advantages of familiarising themselves with the test formats generally, and to know that specific coaching for an examination does have a significant effect on examination scores.

---

## Leverhulme Early Career Fellowships

Julia Griggs and Adam Saunders have each been awarded Leverhulme Early Career Fellowships which, with matched funding from the University's John Fell Fund, allow them to pursue their research interests in the Department.

Julia is exploring changes in fathering values and behaviours over time and the intergenerational transmission of parenting practices from father to son to assess the reality of the perceived generational shift in what it means to be a father, from the distant, disciplinarian, breadwinner of the mid-19th century to the actively involved '21st century dad'. Her early findings suggest that today's fathers are more involved and physically demonstrative than their own fathers, but feel under pressure. In fact, fathers of both generations are aware of the 'dual-burden' today's parents face, and highlight the importance of policies intended to improve the work-life balance (appreciating developments but wanting more). Societal and partner expectations, as well as individual circumstances appear to play a greater role in determining the involvement of fathers than their experiences of being fathered.

Adam's research compares welfare provision in the United States with approaches to social policy in the UK, Germany and Japan since 1945. The presumed uniqueness of the US welfare state has been a core assumption of comparative theories of social policy. However Adam's research seeks to move beyond the analytical focus on institutional differences which have dominated the literature for so long. In doing so, he is emphasising the many institutional commonalities in social protection and labour markets between the country case studies being analysed. As the project has progressed, new evidence has come to light indicating that the US has not necessarily been the welfare laggard depicted in the literature. Instead, it has been the manner of delivering social protection which has been the key feature distinguishing American social policy from that in other similarly developed nations.

## Sidney Ball Memorial Lectures



The Sidney Ball Memorial Lectures are a key event in the calendar of Barnett House. They were established after the First World War in memory of Sidney Ball who was a philosophy fellow at St John's College, Oxford. Sidney Ball was both a political radical and an energetic university reformer, concerned that contemporary social and economic problems should be studied at Oxford. He was the first President of Barnett House at its foundation in 1914.

The memorial lectures were to address 'modern social, economic or political questions' and were given annually until the 1940s, and then intermittently in the post war period. Some of the most prominent lectures include John Maynard Keynes, *The End of Laissez Faire* (1924); Sidney Webb, *The English Poor Law. Will it Endure?* (1927); Sir William H. Beveridge, *The Past and Present of Unemployment Insurance* (1930); R.H.Tawney, *Juvenile Employment and Education* (1934); Sir William H. Beveridge, *Some Experiences of Economic Control in Wartime* (1940); and Sir Douglas Copland, *The Full-Employment Economy, with Special Reference to Wages Policy* (1953).

The annual series was revived in 2006-2007 with the first lecture given by Neil Gilbert (University of California, Berkeley) on *The Opt-out Revolution: Motherhood and Social Policy* (23 April 2007). On 1 November 2007, Paul Pierson (University of California, Berkeley) gave a lecture on *Winner-Take-All Politics: Policy and Inequality in the New American Political Economy*. Greg Duncan (University of California, Irvine) delivered the 2008-2009 lecture on *Early Childhood Poverty and Adult Attainment* (26 February 2009).

### 2010-11 lecture *Life Chances and Early Childhood Investments*

The 2010-11 lecture was delivered by Gøsta Esping-Andersen (Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona) on 13 October 2010. Esping-Andersen, a globally renowned scholar of comparative social policy, who has advised the European Commission and a number of governments, addressed one of the most pressing social issues of our time, namely the need to equalise the life chances of children.

Summarising the robust empirical evidence presented in his book *The Incomplete Revolution* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), Esping-Andersen highlighted that investing in the life chances of very young children does not only seem attractive from the normative point of achieving equal opportunities for all, as the parental/familial background continues to be a very strong predictor for educational outcomes, but that such a strategy pays economically. Esping-Andersen argued that investing in a 'policy that combines paid leave through the child's first year with affordable high-quality external care should yield important dividends in terms of homogenising children's school preparedness'.

A universal strategy that invests in human capital of children can be understood as insurance against risk, and providing insurance has always been a main aim of the welfare state. As skill requirements continuously grow, countries that end up with insufficient skills are at a competitive disadvantage. Hence, welfare state interventions should not per se be understood as a drag on economic efficiency and growth; moreover, well designed social policy can provide significant and important economic benefits, as is the case in social investment policies to improve the skill set of future generations.



Gøsta Esping-Andersen

### 2011-12 lecture

This year's lecture, *Evidence-Based Interventions in Juvenile Justice: Concept, Research, Practice, and Frontiers*, was given by Professor Mark Lipsey (Peabody Research Institute, Vanderbilt University) on 9 November 2011 at 5 p.m. in the Nissan Lecture Theatre, St. Antony's College.

Podcasts of the 2010-11 and 2011-12 lectures can be found at <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/>

## Student news

The George and Teresa Smith Awards were launched in 2010, the brainchild of five former students wishing to thank the Department for the opportunities and skills gained during their time in Oxford, and to honour George and Teresa Smith for their hard work. The annual awards acknowledge academic achievement in Comparative Social Policy and Evidence-Based Social Intervention. The students have purchased two plaques on which the names of the winners will be engraved each year, displayed in the newly renamed George and Teresa Smith Lecture Room. The Department is grateful to the alumni for enabling it to recognise students' hard work and achievement, and welcomes opportunities to engage former students in supporting our work. The awards were won in 2010 by Andrew Hammond (George Smith Award for Comparative Social Policy) and Rebecca Waller (Teresa Smith Award for Evidence-Based Social Intervention).

---

### Early Steps Multisite Project

#### Rebecca Waller

I completed the MSc in Evidence-Based Social Intervention, before embarking on my doctoral studies in Social Intervention with a Green Templeton scholarship. I am very fortunate to be part of the Early Steps Multisite Project, for which my supervisor, Professor Frances Gardner, is one of four Principal Investigators. Early Steps tests the effectiveness of the Family Check-Up preventative intervention using a randomised controlled trial design. The intervention is focused on parenting and personalised to meet the individual needs of families. 731 mothers and toddlers were recruited 10 years ago from across Oregon, Pittsburgh and Virginia in the USA. Recruitment criteria were based on socioeconomic risk (e.g. low income), parental risk (e.g. maternal depression), and child risk (e.g. early starting conduct problems).

My own research uses data collected within the annual assessments to investigate the emergence of different subtypes of antisocial behaviour, their reciprocal interaction with parenting and their relationship with the development of problem behaviour across childhood.

Being part of the Early Steps team is like being in a big, transatlantic research family. We have weekly telephone meetings with the Principal Investigators, doctoral and Masters students, therapists and researchers from all sites to talk about all aspects of the project, from paper ideas to practical issues with the intervention or assessment tools.

Particular highlights of this year included being part of a symposium at a child development conference, presenting a poster at a child mental health conference and visiting the project in action in Pittsburgh. I am excited about continuing to build on my work this year and collaborations with colleagues in America as we look towards renewing the Early Steps grant next year and beyond.

### Youth empowerment

#### Matt Morton

Governments, funders, and organisations increasingly promote youth empowerment as a strategy for improving a range of adolescent outcomes. Youth empowerment programmes involve young people in programme decision-making processes, with the support of caring adults, in order to increase engagement and development of positive skills, attitudes, and behaviours. As manifestations of youth exclusion emerge in events from UK riots to Middle East demonstrations, the goals of youth empowerment become all the more relevant.

Despite the attention, however, very little work has been done to assess the impacts of youth empowerment programming from rigorous evaluation, especially in non-Western contexts. In response, with Paul Montgomery, I partnered Questscope (NGO) and the Jordan Ministry of Education to conduct a pilot randomised evaluation of a national empowerment and education programme for out-of-school youth (aged 13-21) in Amman, Jordan. It was the first randomised evaluation of a youth intervention in Jordan. The study showed no significant overall effects on the primary outcomes at four months, but it did find a significant effect on improving conduct problems. Notably, the implementation study showed differences in the delivery of empowerment methodologies between programme centres, and the level of empowerment appeared related to developmental outcomes.

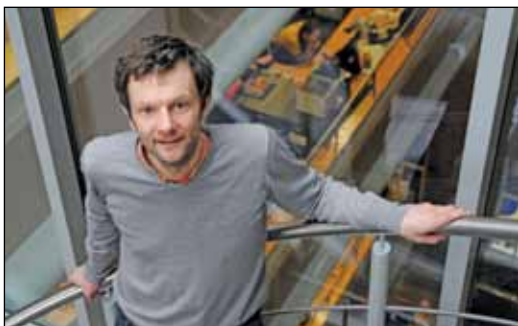
These results are both sobering and encouraging. They are sobering because they indicate that empowerment processes are difficult to implement, especially over multiple programme sites, and low implementation can yield weak results. They are encouraging because they suggest that empowerment-based programmes may have promise for vulnerable Arab youths when they feel adequately supported and engaged.

Matt won the 2010-11 Barnett Prize for his paper *Empowerment-based non-formal education for Arab youth: A pilot randomised controlled trial*, and in 2009-10 was named as the British Council's International Student of the Year.

## New arrivals

The Department has seen some change in academic staff recently. Paola Mattei joined during 2010, and during 2010-11 the Department undertook recruitment for three further posts, and is looking forward to working with Chris Bonell, Erzsebet Bukodi, and Georg Picot. They each work in different areas, but bring skills and interests that will complement and enrich the Department's current research.

**Paola Mattei** joined the Department in April 2010. She is a Fellow of St Antony's College, specialising in health care reforms, European welfare states, social inequalities, and education policies. She has developed a comparative framework to understand the changing patterns of accountability in Europe, and is author of *Restructuring Welfare Organizations in Europe: From Democracy to Good Management?* Her current research projects at the Oxford Institute of Social Policy focus on reforms in higher education across OECD countries. She is also Principal Investigator of an international European project on reforming the welfare state, democracy and accountability in Denmark, Germany and Norway.



**Chris Bonell** joined the Department in October 2011, and is an exciting addition to the Centre for Evidence-Based Intervention. He is interested in the health and social development of young people and the evaluation of interventions to promote this. Recent work includes evaluations of youth development interventions to prevent teenage pregnancy; evaluations of whole-school interventions to promote health; and a systematic review of the effects of schools on health. Chris also has an interest in HIV prevention both in the UK and South Africa.

**Georg Picot** joined the Department in October 2011 as Departmental Lecturer in Comparative Social Policy. This is a new post in the Department, and allows us to offer a career development opportunity in social policy. Georg's main research interests are in the politics of welfare state reform, differentiation of social rights, labour market policy, and family policy. His book *Politics of Segmentation: Party Competition and Social Protection in Europe* will shortly be published by Routledge. His more recent research focuses on the consequences of social policy regarding support for political parties.



**Erzsebet Bukodi** will join the Department in January 2012 to teach quantitative research methods to Comparative Social Policy Masters students. She is currently Reader in Quantitative Sociology at the Institute of Education, University of London, and Research Director of the National Child Development Study and the 1970 British Cohort Study. She is working on an Economic and Social Research Council-funded project investigating associations between people's career trajectories and their partnership dynamics. In 2012 she starts a new major project – also funded by the ESRC – on the role of education in social mobility.

---

## Kenneth Macdonald retires

Kenneth Macdonald started his long career in the Department in 1966 as a graduate sociology student, where he quickly developed a central focus on research methods and the conceptual side of social research. After graduating Kenneth joined the famous Oxford Social Mobility study as a researcher, then moved to Essex University where he held a lectureship in the Department of Government and was an early head of the emerging Essex (now national) Data Archive. Kenneth returned to Oxford in the mid-1970s, and for many years taught on the graduate social work course. He also helped develop the MSc course in Comparative Social Policy. In recent years he has been involved in both Masters degrees in the Department. Although Kenneth is formally retiring this year, it seems unlikely that colleagues will cease beating a path to his door to seek his advice on knotty conceptual or methodological questions, or on the arcane workings of the University.

## Alumni news

**Manuel Souto-Otero** came to the Department with a grant from the Spanish Caixa Galicia Foundation, then continued his doctoral studies with an Economic and Social Research Council grant. His DPhil thesis, completed in 2007, looked at the determinants of access to post-compulsory education, and in particular the role of public policy in shaping access levels from a comparative perspective.

In 2007 he worked for a consultancy company in Madrid, mainly directing evaluations of several major education programmes for the Directorate General of Education of the European Commission, before moving to the University of Bath, where he is now a Senior Lecturer in Education Policy. Manuel has continued to advise several EU-funded policy development and evaluation projects, and is currently a senior expert for the OECD for a project on systemic innovation in vocational training.

Reflecting on his DPhil experience, Manuel says 'The time at Barnett House helped me enormously in developing the research skills that I now employ in my work. Three things stand out for me in relation to the experience I had in the doctoral programme. First, its structure and the amount of contact I had with my supervisors. Second, the degree of freedom they allowed me to explore and develop my own ideas. Third, it provided me with the opportunity to work together with and learn from a close net of talented and intellectually generous fellow students.'

---

**Timo Fleckenstein** completed his doctoral research on institutional change and policy learning in labour market policy in December 2007. From November 2006 to August 2008, Timo also worked as a research officer on a project analysing corporate family policies in Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States.

In September 2008 Timo was appointed Lecturer in Social Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science, where his teaching focuses on European and comparative social policy. He has continued his research into labour market and family policies, with a particular interest in the politics of social policy. The Fritz Thyssen Foundation has funded his research on 'The Political Economy of Family Policy', and he was recently supported by the Korea Foundation with a Visiting Research Fellowship at Seoul National University.

Timo's papers have appeared in leading journals, including the Journal of European Social Policy, and

he was awarded the 2009 British Journal of Industrial Relations Best Paper Award.

Timo considers that he particularly benefited from the close relationship with his supervisor who not only provided valuable support and guidance in his doctoral research, but also encouraged collaborations that allowed him to collect additional research experience.

---

**Gretchen Bjornstad** was in the first cohort of the MSc in Evidence-Based Social Work. She went on to complete a DPhil in the Department, running a small randomised controlled trial of a parenting programme for children on NHS waiting lists in Primary Care Trusts for psychology services.

While in the Department, she concentrated on conducting systematic reviews and collaborated with Paul Montgomery and Frances Gardner on work for the Cochrane Collaboration. Her work initially led to a job working as a Postdoctoral Researcher at the National Academy for Parenting Research at the Institute of Psychiatry, under Stephen Scott, evaluating the evidence for parenting programmes that are delivered across England.

She is now a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Social Research Unit in Dartington, working on a project to translate to the United Kingdom an economic model of interventions designed by Steve Aos at the Washington State Institute for Public Policy. This project utilises the skills that she gained in the Department in evaluating research and conducting meta-analyses.

---

**Raeli Bronstein** completed his DPhil at Barnett House in the summer of 2011. He was involved in the largest study to date concerning the mental health well-being of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the UK, and the only such study to examine Afghan children.

Since completing his studies, Raeli has returned to Israel to take a position as a researcher for the Myers-Joint-Brookdale Institute in Jerusalem, which conducts applied social policy research. Raeli's current work involves evaluating government programmes and interventions for children and families.

Raeli says of his time in the Department 'The academic rigour combined with a friendly, supportive supervisor and environment were invaluable to my career in Israel. There is a direct application of the skills acquired over the course of my DPhil to my current work.'

## The Department in 2010-11



The Department has had a busy year. We welcomed 78 new students: 16 DPhil students, and 62 MSc/MPhil students. Colleagues were awarded grants for over 20 new projects and the Department earned £1.1m in research income, plus £0.6m in overhead income. Peter Kemp was elected an Academician of the Social Sciences Academy and Michael Noble was awarded honorary appointments as Visiting Professor in the Department of Sociology and the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University, South Africa, and Honorary Professor in the School of Development Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The Department continues to have a varied, international research portfolio, demonstrated in the many publications of 2010-11, including: activation for all; business, skills and the welfare state; defining child poverty in South Africa; gender equality and fertility intentions; school nursing; nudge smudge: misrepresentation of the 'nudge' concept in England's Public Health White Paper; class origins, education and occupational attainment; the age of dualisation; social assistance and dependency in South Africa; who's afraid of population decline; transactional sex amongst AIDS-orphaned and AIDS-affected adolescents; market versus meritocracy; historical change in parenting adolescents; spatial variation of sub-national fertility trends; labour market disadvantage and the experience of recurrent poverty; persisting mental health problems; insomnia in older people; welfare regime debate: past, present, future; transforming private landlords; accountability and sanctions in English schools; politics of segmentation; the dual transformation of social protection; migration and its consequences in 21st century Europe; gender analysis of transfer policies; alternatives to randomisation in the evaluation of public health interventions; reforms of unemployment benefits in Germany; recent social policy developments in Africa; contrasting varieties of private renting; welfare governance reforms; and psychological distress in refugee children.

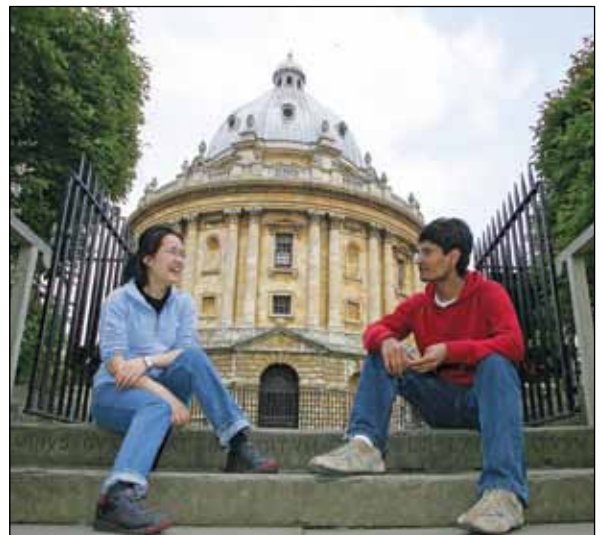
---

### And finally.....

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. We are keen to keep in touch with our alumni, hear your views and comments, and about what you are doing now. Please contact us on [editor@spi.ox.ac.uk](mailto:editor@spi.ox.ac.uk) or by post to Barnett House, 32 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2ER.

The Department's website, [www.spi.ox.ac.uk](http://www.spi.ox.ac.uk), contains more information, including details about staff and their research, news and events. The website also contains a section for alumni news, so please let us know if you would like anything added.

Alumni have the opportunity to keep in contact via facebook pages for 'Evidence-Based Social Intervention' and 'Oxford University Comparative Social Policy', and potential students are directed there to find out more about the Department, the courses and Oxford.



---

Photograph acknowledgements:

E Chase, S Round, T Stabler, Press Association, G Esping-Andersen, P Mattei, C Bonell, WZB, PA Photocall.

Published by:

Department of Social Policy and Intervention  
Barnett House, 32 Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2ER  
Tel: +44 (0)1865 270325 Fax: +44 (0)1865 270324  
Web: [www.spi.ox.ac.uk](http://www.spi.ox.ac.uk) Email: [editor@spi.ox.ac.uk](mailto:editor@spi.ox.ac.uk)