



THE SECOND TOWNSEND MEMORIAL CONFERENCE

SALIENT ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY POVERTY MEASUREMENT

The Second Peter Townsend Memorial conference hosted a wide range of speakers from the five continents of the world, who presented and discussed measurement issues in poverty, social exclusion and living standards research. The common denominator was the focus on consensual measures of deprivation, drawing on the work initiated in the 1960s by Peter Townsend. The event was a platform for emerging findings from the Poverty and Social Exclusion 2011 survey and encouraged discussions across different national applications.

Among the presenters, Brian Nolan dwelled on the weaknesses of relative income measures (such as 60% of median income) in times of economic crisis. The Irish scholar underlined the importance of using alternative measures and proposed using a tiered EU-wide approach to consistent poverty.

The issue of adaptive preference was addressed by research from South Africa, which found a certain level of agreement in the identification of necessities between homelands and more wealthy areas. Bryan Perry guided the audience through his study of living standards, exploring material deprivation among the poor but also the material wealth of the rich, widening the scope of the debate to both necessities and luxuries.

Finally, Bradshaw's presentation was a classic example of what Hartley Dean calls a 'thick' (or extended) notion of well-being, different from other research aimed at the understanding of happiness. Bradshaw's studies explore children's subjective wellbeing, and develop theoretical frameworks based on their perspective.

The examples above illustrate the richness and breadth of the event, which also included presentations on the re-emergence of the moral underclass discourse and cultural deficit theory, the different understandings of the term poverty and necessities across cultures, the use of well-being in research on developing countries and issues around food consumption in Latin America. All speakers reminded the audience of the huge contribution to these topics made by the much missed Professor Peter Townsend (1928-2009).

A complete list of speakers and presentations can be found at www.poverty.ac.uk/content/conference.

For a full version of the review see Antonucci and Pomati (2011) *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice* Vol.19 (2).

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ECONOMIC RESILIENCE IN THE SHEFFIELD CITY REGION

25 MAY 2011
UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD, UK.

On 25th May 2011, an open forum involving over 40 academics, businesspeople and local stakeholders took place in the Interdisciplinary Centre of the Social Sciences at the University of Sheffield. The event, co-funded by the SPA and HEIF 4, marks the beginning of 'Project Resilience' - a research project focusing on aspects of economic resilience within regional economies. The aim of the open forum was to debate different strategies to make the Sheffield City Region economy more resilient in light of continued economic transformation and public sector cuts, the outcome of which will now inform the focus of the research project.

The day began with Ekosgen and Yorkshire Cities presenting their 2011 'Index of Economic Resilience', which highlighted variation in the Sheffield City Region. Other presentations from the City Council, Chamber of Commerce and CFE (formerly the Center for Enterprise) highlighted the challenges, pathways and practicalities of becoming more economically resilient by focusing governance, skills and work. One of the key topics within the day's discussions was the implications of the transition from Regional Development Agencies to the newly formed Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The next phase of Project Resilience is to embark on a programme of policy-relevant research building on the outcomes from the forum. The research will begin by examining the challenges facing the Sheffield City Region, with the aim of developing a stronger evidence base for better informed policy-making. A report will be published in Autumn 2011, and a further dissemination event co-hosted with Ekosgen and Yorkshire Cities to which SPA members are most welcome.

For more information contact Dr Peter Rodgers (peter.rodgers@shef.ac.uk) or Dr Tim Vorley (t.m.vorley@shef.ac.uk), or visit the project website (www.project-resilience.co.uk).