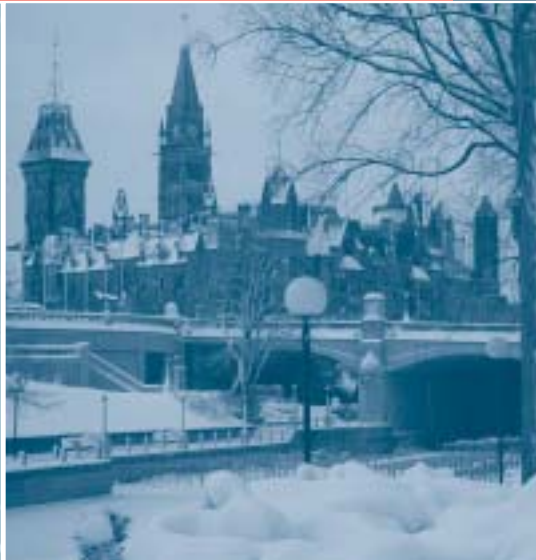




Policy Research  
Initiative

Projet de recherche  
sur les politiques



A PRI Conference

# Exploring New Approaches to Social Policy

Synthesis Report

Canada

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## Foreword

I am pleased to present the following summaries from the recent PRI conference, Exploring New Approaches to Social Policy.

Held in Ottawa in December 2004, the conference provided a forum for the three interdepartmental social policy projects conducted by the PRI over the past two years. The exercise allowed us to showcase and, to some extent, validate research results, and identify issues that warrant further exploration. More important, the conference was a vehicle for connecting research to policy.

Over the three days of the conference, PRI staff, federal department officials, and academics closely associated with these projects shared their latest insights and findings. We also heard from research experts from abroad on approaches used in their countries. Finally, we had the privilege of hearing from high-level policy makers, including the Honourable Ken Dryden, Minister of Social Development Canada, and the Honourable Eleni Bakopanos, Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Social Economy.

Early in 2003, the PRI launched three interdepartmental projects: Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility, New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion, and Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool. These projects address a number of issues that are key to Canada's economic and social development. They include the likely economic, fiscal, and social impacts associated with population aging, responding to the changing social realities and perceptions regarding the problems of poverty and exclusion, and developing new tools, such as those based on social capital, for use in various public policy areas.

At the conference, I introduced a life-course framework that the PRI developed to guide the analysis within the three projects. This framework allows us to take into account individuals' experiences over the course of life rather than their personal characteristics at a point in time. By doing this, we can design interventions that take into account these experiences to prevent situations that may lead to social exclusion. This approach distinctly resonated with conference participants. As noted by Minister Dryden, new approaches to social policy must centre on the lives of individuals in all their rich diversity.

Issues of governance and horizontal partnership formed another key aspect of the conference. Whether it is the aging of the population or the inclusion of the socially disadvantaged, it is clear that social and economic policies are increasingly linked. Many speakers, including Minister Dryden, highlighted the need for horizontality in policy development, breaking down bureaucratic and academic silos, and working together. In addition to social and economic parameters, policy makers were strongly advised to consider the role of legal norms in policy deliberation and development.

One challenge facing the industrialized world is population aging. While the related economic impacts are inevitable and cannot be ignored, population aging goes beyond fiscal sustainability. To address this issue effectively, as emphasized by speakers from Europe, we need a cultural shift in our perspective on older workers, as well as a better understanding of the intergenerational linkages between the old and the young. Further, maintaining a productive work force requires governments, business, and labour organizations to develop strategies that alleviate the time crunch experienced by many of today's workers, and to offer more choices and flexibility with regard to how time is distributed between work, learning, leisure, caregiving, and retirement over the course of life.

It has become clear from recent research that poverty is more than just a lack of money. Rather, it is both a cause and consequence of social exclusion. Moreover, exclusion occurs when individuals do not have adequate support to manage key transitions throughout life. These insights have led government and non-governmental sectors to find new ways to combat poverty and exclusion. A number of emerging approaches were presented at the conference, including asset building, financial literacy, the role of social capital, and the contribution of the social economy.

The social economy received much attention from conference participants. Social enterprises have been vital in bringing local solutions to local issues and in helping the disadvantaged. In her breakfast address, Madame Bakopanos reiterated the Government of Canada's commitment to making the social economy a key component of the social policy tool kit. She and other workshop

speakers recognized that policy and research work remains to be done to better support these efforts. In this regard, the PRI is publishing a guide for research on social economy based on discussions from the conference and a recent PRI-SSHRC roundtable.

Another important discussion at the conference concerned the relevance of social capital for policy purposes. Studies presented by speakers link social capital to a number of policy areas, such as healthy aging, youth civic engagement, crime prevention, overcoming poverty, as well as policing and educational outcomes in Aboriginal communities. Clearly, social ties are valuable resources for social and economic participation. Whether the state should or can intervene in human networks remains unclear. Researchers such as Perri 6 called for caution, while others, like Maurice Lévesque, saw a role for government in creating networking opportunities.

We are grateful to all participants at the conference for their insights and enthusiasm, and in particular, to the public servants and researchers who have contributed to these three projects. To all the speakers from abroad, thank you for coming to Ottawa in the throes of winter. I hope the warmth of our welcome and the energy generated from the conference made up for the milder climates you may have left back home. We look forward to continuing our dialogue on social policy issues of mutual interest.

Our work is not done. In the coming year, the PRI will:

- carry forward the existing projects (so stay tuned for new publications);
- pursue some of the lines of inquiry identified in the conference; and
- continue to develop partnerships with federal departments, academics, policy makers, and policy practitioners.

This report represents our impressions of the conference. Judging by the comments we received, the conference was a worthwhile effort for those who took part. For the full presentations, as well as other publications from the PRI, please consult our web site at <[www.policyresearch.gc.ca](http://www.policyresearch.gc.ca)>. Happy reading. ●

**Jean-Pierre Voyer**  
Executive Director

# A Life-Course Approach to Social Policy



**In his opening remarks at the conference, Jean-Pierre Voyer presented an analytical framework that underpins and informs the three PRI social policy projects (Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility, New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion, and Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool), as well as the theme of the conference.**

**The following text is made up of excerpts from that speech.**

During our discussions and analyses concerning the PRI horizontal projects devoted to social policy, a few trends and common points emerged.

1. We need to understand fully the dynamic nature of the problems studied. Available statistical indicators influence and significantly limit our understanding of problems since they are often restricted to static measurements of phenomena, be it poverty, unemployment, or participation rates in the job market. We can follow the evolution of these statistics through time at the macro-economic level, but these data reveal nothing about the evolution of the individuals involved. The fact that the poverty rate increases or decreases from one year to the next does not tell us if individuals who were poor in 2000 are the same people who were living in poverty in 1999.
2. Life courses have a heterogeneous nature. A traditional analysis by group (recent immigrants, youth, older workers) reveals significant differences in characteristics and life experiences.

Sociologists speak of diversification and de-standardization of life courses. We have gradually moved away from the postwar model of a standardized life cycle. Specific moments in the life cycle, such as completion of studies, having a family, and retiring from the work force are less stereotyped than before. Young people study for longer, and many only embark on their first full-time job much later in life. Women have children later in life and participate in greater

numbers in the labour market. Divorce and separation are more common. The result is a great diversity of experience throughout the life course.

3. Links between different stages of life are important. When studying the causes of poverty and exclusion, or the factors that come into play when making retirement decisions, we have to study individuals' characteristics or their surrounding conditions, and past events in their lives.
4. The importance of multiple resources must be considered. Income is not the only factor to consider. Public policies are almost exclusively designed to support income. However, over the last few years, public policy has recognized the importance of human capital, the need to invest in skills. Research has also revealed the importance of social networks. Family, friends, and acquaintances offer resources and critical support during difficult times or improve and change one's living conditions. In addition, assets, such as housing, must also be taken into account when analyzing needs and available resources.
5. Resources are multiple and so are their sources. Not everything is derived from the job market or government. Family and community often provide important resources, such as social capital.

These observations led us to examine social policy based on a life-course rather than life-cycle approach.

- Policy has been using, for a long time, a life-cycle approach to look at social policy issues. Life cycle and life course are often confused. The life-cycle concept refers to the standard stages of life taking place between the birth of an individual and death. These stages of life are linked to social norms associated with different age periods. These norms may vary from one society to another or from one generation to another. Policy has been looking at the needs of youth, workers, and retirees in separate silos, asso-

do what they do. Most policies have been developed to address specific areas, such as the labour market, but difficulties entering and staying in the labour market are often linked to the events and story of the family trajectory. For example, disruptive life-course events, like divorce, are often the trigger for some women to leave the labour market, because they do not earn enough to pay for day care. The strong connection between the family and the working trajectories has not been suffi-

*The life-course concept has been introduced to take account of the diversity in individual's life paths.*

ciating each stage of life to average ages (e.g., mid-20s, getting out of school; mid-60s, retirement). As I mentioned earlier, these stages of life have been de-standardized, and this led to the introduction of the life-course concept to take account of the diversity in individuals' life paths or life patterns.

- Borrowing from the life-course approach literature, we think of people going through life-course trajectories as opposed to stages of life.
- Trajectories are personalized, multiple, and interrelated. Family and work trajectories intersect. We could add a community trajectory, a learning trajectory, a residential trajectory, and even a health trajectory. Interactions between life trajectories can explain why people

ciently analyzed from a life-course standpoint.

- The life-course approach also emphasizes and analyzes points of transition between different life phases and the conflict between the various trajectories.
- Many challenges for policy arise when difficult transitions take place in several trajectories at about the same time in the lives of individuals, for example, when a marriage breakdown, job loss, and birth of a child happen in a relatively short period of time. Most policies address problems that occur in a single trajectory – education policies, health policies, employment policies – yet the need is typically greatest when problems have multiple sources.

- A fully descriptive framework must cover multiple resources:
  - money for current consumption and to build financial assets;
  - skills for immediate use and to build human capital;
  - social capital that provides the contacts and relations to access other resources for support;
  - goods, housing, services, and caregiving for current consumption; and

has will determine her or his coping ability. Throughout life, these buffers will increase or diminish. When resources deplete to the level where they no longer act as effective buffers, social exclusion sets in.

- The life-course approach allows us to look at financial assets in a dif-

relevant to understand how the needs and resources of individuals vary over time.



## Get a Life

### Excerpts from the Speech by the Honourable Ken Dryden

Researchers focus on what they know. Policy makers have to also focus on what else they know. Researchers focus on the “whats.” To understand a life, policy makers have to focus on the “whys.” We deconstruct without reconstructing. If we want real horizontality in our social policy, we need the horizontality of a life. We need it as a reference point, to distract bureaucrats and academics from the self-focus of their own expertise; from their given responsibilities; for coherence and perspective. We need it so the public can understand. So the media can understand, but

so policy makers can understand too. So priorities can be set. So support can be gained. So the right things can be done. So more things can be achieved. So more things can be done in the future.

The “new approaches” in social policy we take in the future, to make what we do more understandable to ourselves and to others, to give it possibility and impact, to give it a better chance of being the right thing, we need to put life back into what we do. ●

- information to support individual decision making. Information flows are powerful instruments of policy that are often overlooked even though they play a large role in actual programming.
- All these resources can be seen as buffers. As setbacks are encountered, such as poverty or marital break-up, or disability, the number and quality of buffers an individual

ferent perspective. In current policies (e.g., in welfare regimes), you have to divest assets to be eligible for income support. In a life-course framework, assets are not only another source of money at one point in time, they incorporate a time dimension. The life-course approach allows us to analyze the allocation of human, economic, and social capital throughout the life course instead of at particular points in individual lives. This is

- The framework needs to take into consideration relationships between individuals and the main institutions of society. The key point is that people can receive multiple resources from multiple sources. This is a way of managing risk.
- In this framework, individual well-being is the ultimate policy objective, not gross domestic product per capita. However, it is also

possible to look at distributional issues along several dimensions (income, skills, social capital) within various age groups and between generations.

The life-course approach is not completely foreign to policy research and policy making. Some policies have already been implemented using a preventive approach, such as policy for early childhood development. Some new programs for lone parents integrate both aspects of family and working lives.

What is new for policy research based on a life-course approach is the methodological tools that can support our analysis. First, the development of longitudinal surveys helps in understanding the dynamics of different trajectories and allows us to go beyond the present focus on different segments of the population at one point in time. Second, in Canada, we now have a highly sophisticated model developed by Statistics Canada – LifePaths – that simulates the Canadian population by modelling individual trajectories. ●

## Policy Research Influences Policy Development

### Excerpts from the Speech by Michael Wernick

We need to adjust our social programs to new realities. To accomplish this, we need new ideas. I am delighted that the focus of this conference is about “new approaches,” not because old approaches are necessarily the wrong ones, but as we always did in the past, we need innovation to make further progress.

To respond effectively to emerging challenges and opportunities, we need analysis and research that capture changing realities. New family

structures and roles, new labour market demands, increased cultural diversity, and other social changes all need to be incorporated into solid diagnostic work.

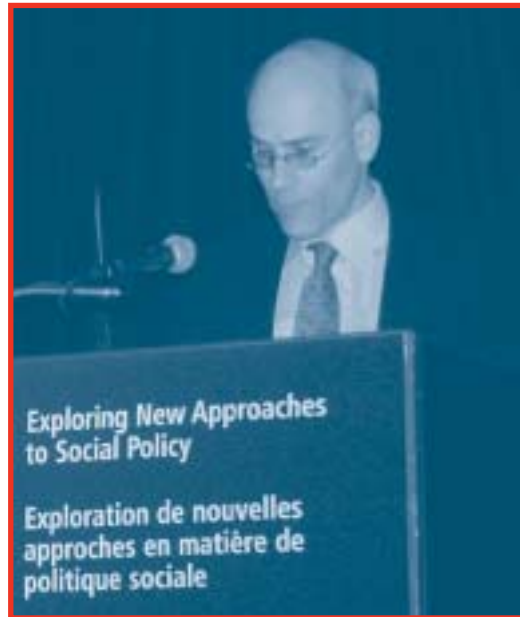
Over the past decade, policy research has had an influence on the development of a number of different policy files.

Researchers often complain they have difficulty accessing policy decision makers, that their messages are not being

heard, and the receptor capacity doesn't seem to be there. I agree. The policy-making process is not an easy one to navigate; it has never been easy to compete for the attention of decision makers. They are busy people, often having to focus their energy and attention on the problems of the day.

However, do not mistake this as a lack of appetite on their part for evidence-based policy. Quite the opposite. Ministers want to know what is the right thing to do. They want to ground their decisions on evidence and sound advice. Therefore, we need to do our homework, offering sound advice in a most accessible and effective manner. Policy proposals grounded on solid evidence are much more likely to be acted upon.

Furthermore, when innovative ideas surface, they have to be thoroughly analyzed. They need to be sustained long enough to challenge the status quo. Good policies do not happen overnight. ●



Until a few years ago, the philosophy informing the social policies of OECD member states generally focused on the fiscal sustainability of government programming and supports. In particular, efforts focused on welfare-to-work policies, pension sustainability, and reversing trends toward early retirement that could negatively

closure on existing efforts from the traditional social policy agenda items before investing scarce resources on new issues (e.g., elder care, asset-based approaches). Most seem to agree, however, that the sustainability of government programming is no longer the pressing concern it once was, and we can afford to move on

## Thinking Outside the Box New Policy Directions in OECD Countries



affect dependency ratios. Progress has been made toward these ends. As explained by Anne-Marie Guillemard (Paris 5 and Institut universitaire de France), employment rates for older workers have increased significantly in Scandinavian countries. In continental Europe, where

deeply held cultural views on aging and early retirement exist, the foundations for a cultural shift have been put in place. Some, such as Mark Pearson (OECD), would like to see

to new priorities, such as inclusion, equality, and equity.

The way OECD states address these issues, however, differs greatly from how they did so in the past. Ruth Lister (Loughborough University) noted that social policy, while still viewed largely as a handmaiden to economic policy, is increasingly being viewed as a key facilitator of economic success. This development has resulted in social policy not only responding to social challenges emanating from the operations of a country's economy, but also proactively supporting those operations. Ideally, this change will reduce the incidence of negative social outcomes, such as poverty. At the same time, social policy in OECD states is also increasingly characterized by expectations that clients take greater responsibility for their own success, as displayed by Jeff Grogger's (University of Chicago) presentation on welfare reform in the United States.



At the most fundamental level, OECD states are generally moving from a welfare state model to what Lister referred to as a social investment state. Within such a model, the state shifts its role from taxing and spending to that of enabling, with a focus on future outcomes instead of immediate returns. Reflecting this new philosophy, the social policy agendas of OECD states are moving toward family and child development, having an increased focus on promoting fertility and providing long-term care. Children are viewed as a particularly important target group for investments, not just because of their vulnerability within society, but also because of their role as future citizen workers who will support the state's economic objectives. Supporting the inclusion of migrants and those with disabilities are also increasingly identified as priorities.

Most striking about this new approach is how issues are being framed and related to one another. As described by Mikko Kautto (Prime Minister's Office, Finland), Finland has determined that the aging society challenges they face are much more fundamental than those of financial sustainability. Social connections between generations, and the sustainability of those linkages, are increasingly viewed as vital. For example, in the past, concern about supporting the aging population focused on fiscal implications for national treasuries; now a more social policy-oriented approach takes into account the resources of the elderly, and the amount of time and effort younger generations will have to dedicate to caring for them. This issue has quality

Countries of the OECD face a number of similar challenges and are, at the broadest economic and social levels, structured in similar ways. All are democratic states with developed market economies and established rules of law. Besides these structural similarities, challenges are frequently shared. As economies become increasingly interconnected through globalization, socio-economic challenges faced by one country are often faced by all. For these reasons, the OECD was established in 1961 to explore the implications of socio-economic trends and share knowledge and experience. As Canada moves further into the 21st century, this network remains vitally important, particularly as we confront the challenges associated with increasing international trade and demographic change. ●

of life implications for young and old, as well as economic implications. Participation rates for prime age workers could decline if they are not effectively supported in their caregiving responsibilities for both younger and older generations.

The social investment state model is not without its challenges or critics. Concern was expressed that closer integration between social and economic policy, with the former being seen as a support player for the latter, could result in social policy losing its soul. Such concerns merit attention, as, within this emerging social policy model, citizens are increasingly viewed as instruments to achieve state goals and objectives rather than individuals needing assistance. This risk is particularly clear with regards to children, who can be viewed not as individuals requiring assistance and protection today, but rather as individuals who may become the citizen workers of tomorrow.

This does not mean, however, that the social investment model being adopted in OECD states is flawed –

only that it must be carefully managed. We need to manage the inherent tensions that exist between the ethic of paid work and the ethic of care, the concept of responsibilities and the concept of rights, and the merits of an approach focused on equity and one focused on equality. If this seems a challenge, it should be remembered that these tensions have always existed. The shift from a welfare state to a social investment state simply means the delicate balances that have served us so well until now will have to be revisited. To accomplish this, comments by Cynthia Williams (Simon Fraser University and Canadian Policy Research Networks) are illuminating: above all else, clear and concrete objectives are needed for social policy to succeed. It is here our efforts should begin. ●

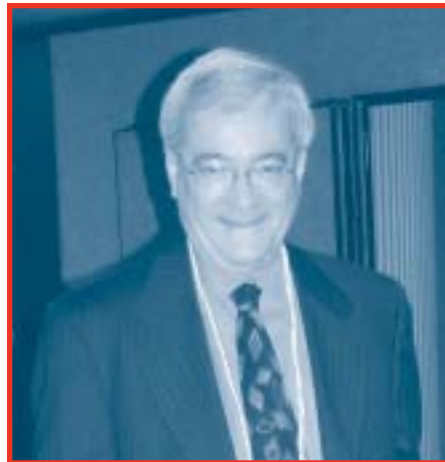
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# Time Well Spent

Sessions on Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility

## Preparing for an Aging Society

If anyone can make population aging sound exciting, it's Peter Hicks, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Strategic Direction, at Social Development Canada. Hicks, sharing the view of other departmental participants in this PRI project, sees in the approaching social transformation not threat, but opportunity. Here is an opportunity where public policy can line up with market forces to bring benefits to people of different ages.



This is a familiar yet complex story; newspapers and journals speculate constantly on the trends, and it is easy to misread the implications. The main actors are the baby boom generation; their parents, children, and grandchildren; the labour market and economy; employers and the workplaces they establish; the programs in place to look after peoples' needs, such as pensions and health care; and the myriad of policies that influence peoples' behaviour. So, let's see how the plot unfolds.

The leading edge of the story is the coming wave of baby boomer retirements. If you were an alarmist, you would say we are going to go from feast to famine. The baby boom provided a huge supply of workers to the economy, expanding it and at the same time creating a very low dependency ratio. There were more people of working age than there were seniors and children, who are considered economically dependent on the production of those workers.

And it wasn't just that Canada created a large postwar baby boom; the participation rate of women in the workforce surged! The labour market, the economy, and Canadian lifestyles were transformed in the space of that generation. Family incomes soared, the service sector expanded enormously, and lots of money was earned and spent, accelerating the development of the consumer society.

With all these people employed, the number of children plummeted (from a high of four per woman in the boom years to a current low of just over 1.5). Now these boomers are heading for the doors marked early retirement, and we are wondering how the following generations are going to keep the economy humming.

The plot thickens. Department of Finance Canada estimates presented by Benoit Robidoux suggest the increasing ratio of seniors to working age population (from 22% to 44% in the coming decades) will definitely slow economic growth. This will limit the capacity of government to respond to increasing needs for income support and health care, as well as the competing demands of education and a full range of other population needs. Slow economic growth translates into decreased standards of living. The strategy advanced by Finance is to use the years of surplus generated by the current peak production period of the baby boom to pay down the national debt, and thus create some financial room to manoeuvre.

However, opinions are divided on the diagnosis, especially as to whether dependency ratios are the only or best way to gauge the future economic health of the nation. We have

already noted that the baby boom caused a huge change in the percentage of the working age generation who were active in the labour market (i.e., mainly through the increased participation rate of women). This changes the value of the traditional calculation, since the amount of labour within the working age population increases. Moreover, it is not clear how dependent the older population is going to be, since they go into retirement with substantial savings and will continue to pay taxes.

*Boomers are heading for the doors marked early retirement, and we are wondering how the following generations are going to keep the economy humming.*

Statistics Canada has been working on the development of a powerful new data instrument called LifePaths. It can provide measures of total hours worked in the labour market regardless of age. Individual life paths vary, and people move into and out of employment, and take time off for education, children, or to deal with other individual or family needs. Therefore, capturing their labour activity in actual total hours worked, and dividing this number by the total population of the country, provides a more accurate portrayal of the total labour supply relative to the needs of the economy. It also lets us see more clearly how the experiences of individuals over their life course interact with the economy. And, by fine-tuning the model to use similar economic assumptions as those used in macro-

economic models, it provides a base for joining economic, fiscal, and human considerations into the measurements. It can also (with caution) project them into the future, taking into consideration such effects as the increasing education levels of following generations on their overall labour market participation.

Using this instrument, Terrance Hunsley (PRI) suggests that the expected overall decrease in hours of work available to the economy in the future, while still of concern, will not be as great as previously thought and,

therefore, we are not really heading for a crisis. The total ratio of hours worked to total population may only decrease by 2025 to the levels of the 1980s, and even that is if there are no changes in policies or employers' practices. But here is the opportunity Peter Hicks was talking about: there is scope to make some interesting things happen.

First, many older workers want to work longer than they now do, and we could adjust some policies and practices which in the past have tended to get in the way. We could balance existing early retirement incentives with options for later retirement. As well, although generalized shortages are not foreseen, there will be a long-term continuing strong demand for labour. This situa-

tion has not been experienced in Canada for many years, and it changes the balance of incentives in several situations. Older workers will be in demand. Parents with problems balancing family responsibilities with work demands will be in a more powerful situation, and enlightened employers will respond by making workplaces more family friendly. There will also be opportunity to rethink and maybe recast programs

glimpse into the future for Canadian society. Inspired by Finland's experience, Guillemard advocates an age-neutral society, where management practices as well as social policies focus on age diversity rather than age management. Improving working conditions and providing various age groups with access to training helps to retain older workers, and attract and keep younger ones. Based on this vision, income security policies

tion aging issues, and tend to feel the baby boom retirement will open up good jobs for the younger generation. If there is a problem, it was seen to be low fertility, and perhaps the demands of modern day workplaces and lifestyles. Younger people, especially those with higher incomes, tend to feel time pressures from work, and these pressures interfere with family life. Most people aspire to Freedom 55, although perhaps the freedom is more important than the retirement. Beauchamp commented that most people want to keep working; they just don't like their jobs. It seems also that higher income people have more opportunities to continue working. Lower income people recognize that training has become essential to job options, but do not have the money or time to pursue it.

*Fifty nine percent of recent retirees would have continued in paid work had conditions been different.*

that help groups previously at a labour market disadvantage to become more integrated. Aboriginal peoples, new immigrants, and people with disabilities may find more opportunity, and training and employment support policies should attain higher levels of success.

So, the future presents us with opportunity. Alain Denhez (PRI) pulled some of this potential together in a LifePaths projection. It illustrated the increased flexibility workers could have: to choose how they enter retirement; to increase investment in literacy and skills; to take advantage of enhanced workplace flexibility to provide care to a family member. All of these elements could combine in ways that increased total hours worked – a social and economic win-win situation!

Providing an international perspective on the issue, Anne-Marie Guillemard (Paris 5 and the Institut universitaire de France) provided a

would focus on prevention and development of human capital and mobility rather than risk protection.

That is the general story; the sub-plots were played out in the workshops.

**Retirement Preferences**

According to the 2002 General Social Survey, some 59.3% of recent retirees would have continued in paid work had conditions been different. While almost half felt poor health was a major factor, the others would have liked to work part time, or in a different job, or were required to leave, because of mandatory retirement policies of employers or collective agreements.

To get more information on older worker's thoughts and preferences about retirement, the PRI commissioned a series of focus groups. Patrick Beauchamp (EKOS), the facilitator of these focus groups, reported that Canadians are aware of popula-

**Early Retirement Incentives**

Since the mid-1980s, Canadians have retired at increasingly younger ages. Marie France Paquet (Department of Finance Canada) examined this phenomenon and the impact of the retirement income system on the decision to retire in Canada. Many factors affect the decision to retire, such as health status, family situation, the labour market, the availability of flexible work arrangements, and job satisfaction. However, strong financial incentives also exist for early retirement in both public and private pension plans. In the public pension system (Canada/Quebec Pension Plan) reforms to reduce early retirement incentives could include eliminating the work cessation test, changing the formula to calculate benefits or making the actuarial adjustments neutral (so people who delay retirement are not penalized

compared to those who retire early, and vice versa). Paquet suggested that these reforms typically require a long lead time and are, therefore, unlikely to significantly alter the behaviour of baby boomers, but they could be very important for younger generations.

Ali Béjaoui (PRI) says that many older Canadians would be willing to work later in life if only they were



offered more choice in the retirement decision, and we need a comprehensive strategy involving governments, the business community, and unions to bring about a positive change. Institutional barriers to working longer, such as work disincentives embedded in public and private pensions, or mandatory retirement provisions in collective agreements, could be eliminated, and employers could offer more choice and flexibility in working arrangements. Perhaps most important would be providing opportunities to upgrade skills and increase employability for all workers, making sure older workers have access to them.

### Balancing Work and Family Time

Are you a boiled frog? According to a leading academic, Linda Duxbury (Carleton University), many of us are, and like the poor frog, we don't know it until we suffer the consequences. Seems a frog won't jump happily into boiling water, but if it is in the water and the temperature is raised gradually, it won't jump out.

The real world equivalent, according to Duxbury, is that over recent decades we are putting, both collectively and individually, more time in at work. Thanks to communications technology and workplace culture, we have less control over our time, but have come to think that our resulting dangerously high stress levels are normal. Her research indicates that high stress from role overload has increased from 41% of workers to 56% in the past decade. She identified managers, in particular, among occupational groups, indicating they are, at the same time, major victims of the syndrome, and its perpetrators. While

their own work stress is increasing, they absorb it and pass the pressures on down the line.

Geoff Rowe (Statistics Canada) and Denhez have followed the trends in labour market participation through the LifePaths model. They point out that in a short space of 20 years, women with children under six have increased the average number of hours they spend at work annually by nearly 60 percent. In fact, a whole lot of Canada's strong economic performance in the past 20 years is due to major increases in the level of female participation in the labour force. So, it is clear that women, because they are still the dominant caregivers in the family, are stressed by work pressures. But, as Duxbury pointed out, the trend is also increasingly evident in men.

How we spend our time, and the control we have over it, is critically important to our sense of well-being, according to Christian Dea (Social Development Canada). He presented evidence showing how the curve of subjective well-being moves downward as we move from youth into adulthood, and begins to rise again at middle age, continuing to rise into the retirement years. So, the years when we are working and looking after children, and increasingly, when we are working and caring for elderly or disabled relatives, are years with low subjective well-being. According to Duxbury, the work-family imbalance that results from stress and too much time on the job, also shows up in lower productivity, higher rates of absenteeism, and higher costs for a wide range of health services.

## Relieving Pressures and Improving Well-Being

Workshop participants were clear that this situation is a responsibility both of employers and government. Christian Dea pointed out that flexibility in work schedules could reduce time pressures by 25%. Micheline Gamache (Government of Quebec) described how the Quebec government is concerned by popula-

resulting from the transfer of stress to the families and care receivers, will accumulate. So, we have the choice of being proactive and investing in health and well-being, or being reactive and paying the consequences.

The win-win choice is to take action now, and Denhez, in a LifePaths projection, demonstrated how enabling people who want to stay in the labour market for a few more years could

suggest a coming large wave of retirement. Lifelong learning and skills upgrading are therefore important to ensure workers keep pace with evolving skill requirements in their fields, and move to take advantage of new opportunities.

While the estimated labour supply at higher education levels seems enough to meet Canada's future labour market needs, Scott Murray (Statistics Canada) expressed concern that a large percentage of Canadians do not have the minimum literacy level required for lifelong success in the labour market. This could have a substantial impact on a person's life course, given the important connections between level of literacy and access to post-secondary education and training, salary level, and risk of unemployment. Moreover, literacy levels tend to decrease over time, hence the need for lifelong retraining.

And some skills are crucial. Essential skills play a major role in labour market adjustment, reducing social exclusion, and improving overall well-being. To illustrate his point, Murray cited a study that showed that a 1% increase in the average literacy level results in a 1.5% increase in gross domestic product and a 2.5% increase in productivity.

Satya Brink (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada) pointed out, however, that the school-to-work transition is no longer as linear and short as it used to be, and we need new ways to monitor what is happening. For example, if we use the average age at graduation in skill supply

## *Enabling people who want to stay in the labour market for a few more years could generate enough labour supply to make up for giving families flexibility for needed time off.*

tion aging and low fertility rates, and is working to support families through a combination of expanded child-care services, family support payments, family leave provisions, and related means of conciliating work and family. Quebec has identified families as the principal generator of wealth, and intends to continue the evolution of family support policies, with constant consultation and involvement of communities, enterprises, and the state.

But, the perennial question arises: Can we afford to provide the relief our families and caregivers need? Duxbury's answer was clear. If governments and employers do not provide for flexibility of time use, the cost in decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, health system costs, and early labour force exits, aside from the hidden long-term costs

generate enough labour supply to more than make up for giving families some flexibility for time off when they need it.

### Lifelong Learning

While the baby boomer exodus that will begin in 2011 will not cause a generalized labour shortage, over the next 10 years, more jobs will open up as a result of retirement than expansion of demand. That was the conclusion of Cliff Halliwell (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada), who highlighted a possible imbalance between labour supply and demand in certain occupations. Some sectors, such as health and social care, are expanding rapidly, and demand there will be high. Others, such as teaching, will also be high demand sectors, because the age profiles of the present work force

estimates, we could overlook the fact that a large percentage of people go back to school after the age of 30. In addition, measuring drop-out rates at specific points in time does not reflect the fact that people may return to school after working for awhile.

A life-course perspective is now necessary to understand fully the labour market dynamics and training requirements. This perspective opens the door to a variety of learning options and increases the opportunities for learning policies to have a lifelong effect.

## Conclusion

So what is the common thread between the challenges associated with population aging, retirement, family-work balance (boiled frogs!), and lifelong learning? The response lies in the proposal to centre policies on life-courses. Policy advisors must think about not only the immediate impact policies have on individuals, but also on their impact on individuals over the long term.

Observations at the conference also made it clear that policies must promote flexibility. They must provide real choices to individuals. With increased flexibility, we can improve our economic well-being in the context of an aging population, and simultaneously improve our social well-being by providing more opportunities to individuals to organize their lives in ways that fit best. ●

– TH, SE, AD, AB

## International Experiences with Population Aging

All industrialized nations face basically the same challenges with regard to an aging population. However, the degree of difficulty posed by these challenges varies based on the size of the aging demographic group, cultural factors, and existing policies.

In her overview, Anne-Marie Guillemard (Paris 5 and the Institut universitaire de France) emphasized the need for every country to abandon the culture of exiting the work force early. She presented a twofold solution: make workplaces more attractive for both workers over 40 and young people entering the work force, and create age-neutral social policies. Workplaces can be made more attractive by fostering a culture of life-long learning. Social policies must focus on preventive investments in human capital, with an emphasis on making people's pathways more secure.

Measures similar to those suggested by Guillemard have produced excellent results in Finland, where a national five-year plan (1998-2002) for employing persons over 45 was introduced. "Experience is a national wealth" was the slogan for this highly successful initiative. In 1995, Finland's employment rate for men aged 55 to 64 was very low (35%) but, by 2001, it had increased by more than 10% to reach 47%.

Many OECD countries have developed some type of policy to improve the participation of older workers in the labour market. Sylvain Côté (PRI) presented various policies, which can be divided into those that address the income security system (including pension plans) and those that reduce employment barriers for older workers and increase their employability.

Reforms to the income security system take a variety of shapes. One approach, for example, is to discourage the use of income support programs (such as employment insurance) as a way to build a bridge between work and retirement. Another approach is to increase the age at which people can receive a pension. Other countries have improved incentives to continue working by increasing the amount of pension workers receive if they extend their involvement in the labour market.

These measures will produce few results if older workers face employment barriers. Some countries try to reduce these barriers by offering employers employment subsidies for older workers. However, workers must still have the skills required for the jobs available in the labour market, and some countries have established training programs specifically for older workers.

In conclusion, Guillemard pointed out that a broad-based approach targeting all the factors that influence labour market participation is most likely to produce the best results.

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Older workers' participation in the labour market is only one aspect of an aging population. Janice Keefe (Mount Saint Vincent University) presented another: elder care. Although this will not be a critical problem until 2020 and beyond, when there will be a rapid increase in the ratio of elderly persons requiring care relative to the total population, expectations regarding caregivers are high and growing. In Canada, caregivers already provide 80% to 90% of care for elderly persons or those with a disability. According to Keefe, there are two possible approaches to improving assistance to caregivers: provide more services, such as respite care, or provide additional financial support.

Keefe has started to analyze these two options in her review of practices in 10 other countries. While her study is not finished, she is able to extract a few lessons for Canada. Without doubt, the most important is that Canada needs to adopt a "menu" approach, and not an approach based on financial support as opposed to services (or vice versa). Making the assistance to caregivers flexible seems to be a critical point. She held up the example of Germany as a model of the menu approach. In that country, caregivers have access to financial support, but generally find that once a certain income level is reached, the availability of services becomes more important. ●

– AB

## Tackling Old Problems in New Ways

Sessions on Poverty and Exclusion

## New Approaches to Poverty and Exclusion

The federal policy research community has accumulated significant evidence about the incidence and nature of persistent poverty thanks, in part, to the existence of several new longitudinal surveys. We know, for example, that most spells of poverty are quite brief, and the majority of people who find themselves in situations of poverty do not remain there. Five population groups, however, are at highest risk of persistent poverty (i.e., living with a family income below the Low Income Cut-Off for a period of between two and six years). These groups include recent immigrants, persons with disabilities, lone parents, Aboriginal people, and older unattached individuals.



This basic and critical finding carried over into several of the analyses presented at the conference. For example, François Weldon (Social Development Canada) noted that these same groups were at highest risk of belonging to the working poor. The working poor situation arises where there is a strong labour market attachment, but individuals are still not able to meet basic needs for themselves or their families. Contributing causes are a combination of the characteristics of the job held (e.g., low pay), along with the person's family circumstances. Most low-paid workers do not have a low family income. Between 1996 and 2001, however, one Canadian out of ten experienced at least one year of working poverty. Moreover, without government transfers, the number of working poor would have been significantly higher.

Louis Grignon (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada) outlined an analogous portrait of precarious employment in Canada which, unlike working poverty, involves focusing on the low-quality jobs. Fewer than one in four precarious workers is poor, which again highlights the importance of family context in identifying where some form of government support might be needed. Indeed, some precarious work is necessary or even desirable for certain groups (e.g., students) to gain work experience or develop other life skills. Still, concerns over precarious employment prevail when that work status persists. What can be done about it from a policy perspective? Answers range from increasing human capital, to focusing on innovation and broader macro-

economic policies. Solutions need to facilitate job mobility so those in precarious work can progress to more gainful employment.

We also know a great deal about housing conditions in Canada, which are a key component of any discussion or analysis of poverty and exclusion. John Engeland (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) placed housing in context as a foundation for social inclusion. He documented the incidence of core housing need across Canada, which is concentrated in Canada's largest urban areas and among certain sub-populations (consistent with highest risk groups for persistent poverty). Policy solutions operate on both supply and demand sides of the housing market. They range from various schemes to increase the stock of affordable housing, to more general social programs that allow people to pay for housing or participate in the labour market. As well, macro-level policies improve economic conditions for all.

The situation of recent immigrants is also key to understanding and addressing issues of poverty and exclusion. Low-income rates for most at-risk groups have improved over the past decade, but have remained stubbornly high among recent immigrants. Elizabeth Ruddick (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) shared important new analyses of the earnings progression of recent immigrants that make clear the labour market challenges faced by recent cohorts. Ruddick noted the significant stagnation in immigrant earnings, particularly among the family and refugee immigrant categories. The shift in mix in the early 1990s toward family and refugee categories

increased the number of immigrants likely to have lower earnings. Moreover, earning patterns for skilled workers reflect cyclical influences, indicating the state of the economy also matters a great deal. Finally, Ruddick indicated that although the share of family and refugee category immigrants with very low income is falling, these groups still have a long way to go before returning to the level of performance observed in the 1980s.



## New Approaches

In terms of new approaches for addressing poverty and exclusion, the PRI presentation by Jeff Frank and Jean Kunz highlighted a number of areas the horizontal project has been investigating: financial capability and asset-based approaches, make work pay policies, the social economy, policies that build on the role of social networks, and legal approaches to fighting poverty and exclusion.

*Proponents of asset building believe that enabling people with limited financial resources to invest in assets can positively influence their long-term well-being and, perhaps, help them break out of poverty permanently.*

## Legal Considerations and Policy Development

In general, consideration of the legal framework underlying social policy is too often neglected by policy researchers. This framework reminds us of the importance of the role of the courts in interpreting, for example, the *Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, as well as the responsibilities implied by certain international accords Canada has signed. Some jurisdictions (including Belgium, France, and Quebec) have even adopted legislative approaches to dealing with poverty. It remains to be seen, for example with Quebec's introduction of Bill 112 and its corresponding Action Plan, how these initiatives will be implemented and enforced. However, legislating intentions to combat poverty and exclusion potentially represents an

important development in how governments approach these problems. (See also the commentary in this report from the conference workshop on Integrating Legal Considerations into Social Policy Development.)

## The Social Economy

The federal government has recently recognized that the social economy constitutes a promising approach for addressing the needs of people in situations of poverty and exclusion.

Social economy enterprises operate on a not-for-profit basis and seek to achieve broader social objectives. They often provide essential goods and services to groups that might not otherwise receive them. Many of them are useful by way of serving a work reintegration function. The PRI is interested specifically in identifying the conditions under which enterprises in this sector should be supported, and how this might best be done. (See also the commentary in this report, *Exploring the Potential of the Social Economy*, based on conference discussions on this topic.)

## Assets

The importance of assets received a fair amount of attention in both the conference plenary session on poverty and exclusion and in a workshop

on asset-based policies and programs. This is an important area of investigation for the interdepartmental project, which has already held a conference on the subject, and commissioned a report on financial capability and poverty from Social and Enterprise Development Innovations.

Many Canadians are already familiar with registered retirement and education savings plans, but there have also been recent experiments, initiatives, and proposals designed to apply these kinds of programs to aid the disadvantaged. Asset-based programs are preventive in nature, building individuals' assets over the life course and, ideally, averting remedial policy action. Proponents of asset building believe that enabling people with limited financial resources to invest in assets can positively influence their long-term well-being and, perhaps, help them break out of poverty permanently. This approach is consistent with both a life-course and a capabilities perspective.

Considerable debate persists, however, on the degree of emphasis that should be placed on individual asset building. Critics view this as an inappropriate shift toward individual responsibility, as people who are truly marginalized in society are not well placed to take advantage of such programs. At a minimum, there may be tension between developing policies to support the building of individual assets and more general investment in collective assets. According to Graham Room (University of Bath), collective assets tend to be more redistributive and serve to connect communities of both disadvantaged and advantaged people. To this extent, therefore, the amount of

emphasis being placed on policies and resources aimed at building individual assets could be misplaced.

Still, the evidence is not all in on the long-term effectiveness and impacts of asset-based approaches; these approaches warrant further investigation and experimentation. Will Paxton (Institute for Public Policy Research, United Kingdom) outlined available evidence on the welfare effects of accumulating assets for individuals, pointing out that people in situations of poverty can and do save, and a range of benefits confer to participants of asset-building programs. Carole Vincent (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation) surveyed the evidence emanating from individual development account projects in Canada (i.e., learn\$ave) and elsewhere, particularly in the United States. Her concluding remarks indicated that it is still too early to determine whether these kinds of programs are effective and constitute a good use of public resources.

Peter Nares (Social and Enterprise Development Innovations) outlined what is meant by financial capability (often referred to as financial literacy), and what a national financial capability strategy could offer in the effort to combat poverty. Financial capability, he argued, is about more than just being able to handle everyday financial matters. It is also about encouraging financial responsibility and informed behaviour. Evidence from various programs and pilots (in the United Kingdom, the United States, and to some extent in Canada) suggests that financial literacy initiatives, appropriately designed and implemented, do contribute to these objectives.

## Setting the Context

One useful way to think about the interdepartmental project, *New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion*, is that it involves three phases or aspects.

- The first is conceptual in nature, where the PRI has endeavoured to define more precisely what is meant by poverty and exclusion, to outline where these concepts intersect, and where policy research efforts need to be focused. In parallel, other PRI projects have also developed conceptual road maps for a life-course approach to social policy and for operationalizing social capital, which have proved very useful for framing and informing the work on poverty and exclusion.
- Second, the project involves diagnostic work using the latest and best information (including that from new sources, such as longitudinal surveys) to understand the scope, depth, and dynamics of the problem, and where it is most concentrated and persistent.
- Finally, the project entails assessment work that, without purporting to be comprehensive, examines the potential of several new or underutilized approaches to addressing issues of poverty and exclusion. ●

Why is financial capability important from a policy perspective? First, it can help to increase the use of banking services among underserved populations. Second, enhanced financial capability can contribute to increased participation in, and uptake of, public programs and benefits (e.g., the new Canada Learning Bond) and, more generally, for claiming benefits to which people are entitled. Finally, financial capability is often a necessary precondition for asset building more generally. Indeed, there is a convincing argument for developing a more comprehensive financial capability strategy in Canada, and enhancing financial capability supports for disadvantaged populations.

### Compatibility in Diverse Analytical Approaches

A great deal of compatibility was evident across the models and approaches used by the PRI and by various scholars. For example, Tanya Burchardt (London School of Economics) reinforced the multidimensionality of social exclusion, noting that the lack of material resources, social capital, and opportunities to participate was an important manifestation of social exclusion. Burchardt's analytical framework also recognized that causes of social exclusion occurred at various levels, starting with the individual and building outward to family, community, broader local conditions, and toward national and global levels. She gave special consideration to the limitations for employment to address inclusion, to the importance of political participation, and to the case of children.

Burchardt emphasized the need to build greater internal consistency for concepts used in measurement and policy development in social exclusion. In particular, she noted the challenges of measuring the concept of opportunity and the need to clarify the role of subjective measures. She concluded by highlighting the tensions between local capacity development and central accountability when addressing problems of social exclu-

- the multi-dimensionality of poverty;
- the dynamics of social change;
- investment in addition to consumption;
- the social relations of production and consumption (not just the distribution of goods and services); and
- a focus on collective as well as individual assets.

*Societies need dramatically new policies to equalize opportunities and freedoms through the life course, and to combat and prevent new lines of social exclusion.*

sion, and emphasized the need to develop effective *prevention* strategies (to address the risk of entering an adverse state), as well as *propulsion* strategies (encourage beneficial effects of exiting from an adverse state).

Graham Room took a slightly different yet consistent tack, examining the specific insights a life-course perspective offers for the analysis of poverty and social exclusion. Underlying this approach was the notion that different patterns of socio-economic development and different policy mixes can significantly modify the shape of life-course poverty. According to Room, recent social exclusion debates emphasize five principal themes, which he suggested were underrepresented in much of the pre-existing literature on poverty:

Again, Room started with the recognition that poverty is multi-dimensional and not just a financial matter. This perspective recognizes the broad range of human needs against which deprivation must be assessed. It also explores the range of assets and supports that enable transitions to be successfully accomplished, consistent with the life-course framework outlined at the outset of the conference by Jean-Pierre Voyer. Room observed that the social relations of production during working life play a central and continuing role in structuring patterns of inclusion and exclusion throughout the life course.

Room also had some very useful observations about how households need to be considered as dynamic actors in their own right. Policy affects how households behave,

and households are agents, just as public agencies and institutions are. According to Room, this dynamic needs to be more adequately captured for diagnostic tools to be effective.

**New Policies for Equal Opportunities**

Room concluded the poverty and exclusion plenary session by noting that we need to recognize that socio-economic institutions send people along highly divergent trajectories, and societies have a choice: either tolerate unequal access to flexible life courses or develop vigorous policies to offset prevailing inequalities in the division of labour and opportunity. He also highlighted the recent Statistics Canada study by Coulombe, Tremblay, and Marchand, which emphasized the role of human capital accumulation in economic development. The study demonstrated that targeting those workers with the lowest skill levels results in the greatest contribution to a country's economic growth. Therefore, efforts to fight social exclusion ought to be an important part of national economic policy. Achieving flexibility, inclusion, and equality of opportunity requires more than just expanding education and training opportunities, which tend to be disproportionately appropriated by those already advantaged. Instead, societies need dramatically new policies to equalize opportunities and freedoms through the life course, and to combat and prevent new lines of social exclusion. ●

– JF

Discussions on the implications of the legal and normative aspects of policy development occurred throughout the conference. This topic is particularly relevant in the realm of poverty and social exclusion, as citizenship rights are being established,

in social policy discussions is an example of the type of collaboration needed to integrate legal considerations effectively into social policy development at the outset.

During this session, which was chaired by Deputy Minister Morris

## Here Comes The Judge

### Integrating Legal Considerations into Social Policy

interpreted, and enforced through various instruments, domestic and international, formal and informal.

The main point to emerge was that legal considerations should be integrated into social policy development, and legal norms should be front-loaded into horizontal policy initiatives. Too often, policy researchers and policy makers overlook the legal foundations of social policy. More often legal dimensions receive consideration once a social issue is deflected back to policy makers as a result of court decisions or other legal developments. Involving legal scholars and senior public servants

Rosenberg, Natalie Des Rosiers (University of Ottawa) examined the frequently expressed idea that the law plays a mechanical role, as either a brake on, or an engine for, change. A traditional view sees the law as a brake on policy development, thereby remaining external to the policy development process. Des Rosiers argued, however, that the law provides signposts for policy development, and should be viewed more as a set of levers than as a brake. She also tempered the analogy of the law as an engine of change that could catapult social and economic policies into a new era. Instead, she observed that courts have been hesitant to

**T**he presentation by P. Eliadis was based, in large part, on the report entitled *Poverty and Exclusion: Normative Approaches to Policy Research*, which she authored for the PRF's New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion project. In brief, the report makes the case that legal considerations need to be systematically integrated from the outset into horizontal policy development. Moreover, the report argues that corresponding changes need to be made to the policy development guidelines set out by central agencies. ●

intervene directly into questions of redistribution, and have consistently acted in a more symbolic manner.

Des Rosiers offered her own metaphor of the law as an alignment system, whereby legal processes allow debate and input from various sectors of society, and their use results in social policy being developed more democratically. For this reason, she suggested that the law should be more systematically integrated into policy development in the first instance.

The central thesis presented by Pearl Eliadis (The J.W. McConnell Foundation) was that policy makers need to understand and take into account the legal architecture that houses our social and economic institutions. Furthermore, normative approaches shift over time, and thus need to be continually analyzed, updated, and front-loaded into government policy making.

Eliadis remarked that, in the context of poverty and exclusion, the understanding of equality issues that inform our current social policy infrastructure predates the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Moreover, case law dealing with human, equality, and international rights has evolved significantly in the interim. Finally, Canada's adherence to several international human rights agreements has not, by and large, been reflected in Canadian law or in domestic policy making. Eliadis argued for an integrated poverty strategy at the national level, starting with wider-ranging research that responds to a broader conceptual base of poverty; the systematic integration of legal norms into horizontal policy development; and corresponding

changes to policy development guidelines prepared by central agencies.

Bernard Colas (Law Commission of Canada) drew from a new Law Commission discussion paper, *Is Work Working?*, in his presentation on the role of law in a particular set of social issues. Using the example of precarious work, he focused on different groups of low-paid and marginalized workers to illustrate how regulation and enforcement, and the modernization of labour law concepts, could play an important role in improving the situations of these workers. Donald Lemaire (Department of Justice) rounded out the presentations by confronting the notion of judicial activism, noting that courts must deal with the questions put before them, and policy makers often choose this option either tacitly or explicitly.

A vigorous discussion ensued about the cultural, disciplinary, and structural obstacles that hindered more integrated approaches to policy development. For some, this was an issue of education and awareness regarding rights-based approaches, as well as a matter of leadership. Others pointed out that the public service is organized around programs and, as such, there are structural reasons why more crosscutting issues with legal dimensions are not being addressed more systematically.

As part of the plenary session on poverty and exclusion, Mary Eberts (University of Ottawa) shared her insights into the role of the courts in addressing issues of social exclusion. Specifically, she examined what the Supreme Court has said and done in cases seeking to address poverty by means of section 15 or section 7 of

the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, asking whether and how this jurisprudence could offer a source of guidance (or constraint) to policy makers seeking to address the social exclusion caused by poverty.

According to Eberts, the Government of Canada has a clear moral choice. It can adhere to the Charter in the same way that it adheres to international obligations it has signed, namely endorsing the principles formally, but giving itself ample choice about whether and in what form it will honour those principles. On the other hand, it can take the principles enunciated by the Supreme Court seriously, and be guided by them, as a matter of showing equivalent deference to the expertise of the Court in articulating constitutional values. If government action can, by its commitment, revive our commitment to equality and social justice, there is reason for optimism that the Court too, will begin to be more courageous in giving life to substantive equality.

These legal perspectives added a refreshing and important dimension to the conference deliberations, which normally take place only within the parameters of social science, and most often economics. It became clear to many conference participants that calls for integrating legal considerations into social policy development were worth heeding, and the policy community should continue to identify opportunities and mechanisms for that co-ordinated effort to take place. ●

– JF

# It Pays to Know People

Over lunch at the conference, a seatmate related how an elderly parent had recently moved in with her. The parent could no longer afford to live on his own. Another colleague at the table expressed concern as to whether his retirement savings would be enough to see him through. Having no children to look after him should his financial investments prove insufficient, he quipped that he had best start being nicer to his nieces and nephews.

This anecdote points to one of life's basic truths: our family, friends, and contacts may frequently constitute an important asset essential to our well-being. This is the simple idea behind the concept of social capital, one of the principal

social policy themes explored at the PRI conference. If you seek support in hard times, are searching for a new job opportunity, or looking for an enjoyable night on the town with friends, it pays to know people.

The presenters at the conference pointed to research studies across a wide range of disciplines that illustrate the ways in which the availability and use of various social ties may make

a difference to individual well-being. Whether it is a question of early childhood development, avoidance of delinquency, educational attainment, labour market entry, or aging well in retirement, knowing people you can turn to for resources and support may make a difference in how you get by and get ahead. Moreover, what is true for individuals is also true for communities: those with the right mix of social connections may be better able to negotiate effectively the various challenges they face, from economic growth and community development, to crime prevention and engaging an active citizenry.

That our social ties are important, that connections matter, is not a new idea. Indeed, one plenary presenter, Perri 6 (University of Birmingham) pointed to the importance of the work of Emile Durkheim, a founding father of sociology. Durkheim explored such concerns as the destructive implications of both insufficient and excessive social integration and regulation, particularly in his 1897 work on suicide.

Given that academics and policy makers have, for years, talked about a host of concepts related to social capital, including the importance of family and peer groups, community partnerships, gangs, and terrorist networks, one workshop audience member was spurred to ask whether there was any value for policy



Sessions on Social Capital

makers in adding a new label to what is ostensibly a fairly old set of concepts.

Perhaps yes. As Catherine Demers (PRI) noted in her presentation, thinking of social ties as a form of capital asset points to how these ties can be invested in and drawn on in ways that complement other capital assets available to individuals and communities.

*Does government have any business influencing people's choices about investing in their social capital? The overall conclusion from the conference presenters was a solid "maybe".*

More than 40 years ago, American economist Theodore Schultz began to make the case for thinking of education and training as human capital; that is, as a resource which could be invested in and developed, and from which would then flow a series of benefits (similar to financial and physical capital). While this was a new lens for thinking about some old concepts, the value of the human capital concept lay in its corrective to economic planning that focused only on physical and financial capital, undervaluing the productive importance and contributions of investments in education and training. Explicitly thinking about how investments in education could produce long-term benefits for individuals and economies, Schultz argued, provided an important means for developing public policy in that area in terms of how it could enable or constrict the choices of individuals and firms to invest in education and training. With

today's focus on the importance of knowledge workers and innovation, few would now dispute the utility of this perspective.

A social capital lens for policy makers – that is, thinking about the important productive, sometimes destructive, effects of investments in various social relationships – may become equally important for public policy purposes. In one plenary pres-

entation, Michael Woolcock (World Bank) suggested that this is precisely why his organization has become so interested in the concept of social capital in recent years. Many at the World Bank have stressed the importance of bringing in a social or relational component to the design of development projects, in the absence of which such projects may not succeed.

Moreover, the growing interest in the concept of social capital within a number of governments and inter-governmental organizations is consistent with recent social policy trends that have witnessed what Third Way guru Anthony Giddens terms the emergence of a social investment state. The social investment state targets social expenditures, as in investing in the human capital of its citizens, to ensure people are equipped with the skills and resources to negotiate life's chal-

lenges. Encouraging or supporting potentially useful investments in social capital as a complementary resource to help build self-sufficiency would be consistent with this thinking.<sup>1</sup>

Does government have any business influencing people's choices about investing in their social capital? Most people clearly do not think of the social ties they form as instrumental investments in the way they would for savings and education (although there are exceptions, as in certain professions based on networking). More importantly, one might suggest that the social relationships we choose to pursue lie at the very heart of our most basic freedoms, and there is no room for the state in making those choices.

Yet, as many presenters pointed out, governments already influence patterns of social capital in a myriad of ways. Decisions about public transport and housing, parental leave and education, day care and elder care, to name but a few, significantly shape the social connections people make. Given that governments have significant impacts on social capital formation, sometimes for better and sometimes for worse, would we be better served by a more explicit and deliberate focus on social capital within public policy? Can governments help to harness and shape the power of social capital to ensure greater individual and community well-being?

The overall conclusion from the conference presenters was a solid "maybe". There were repeated warnings that public policy makers should be very careful in choosing explicitly to target social capital investment for

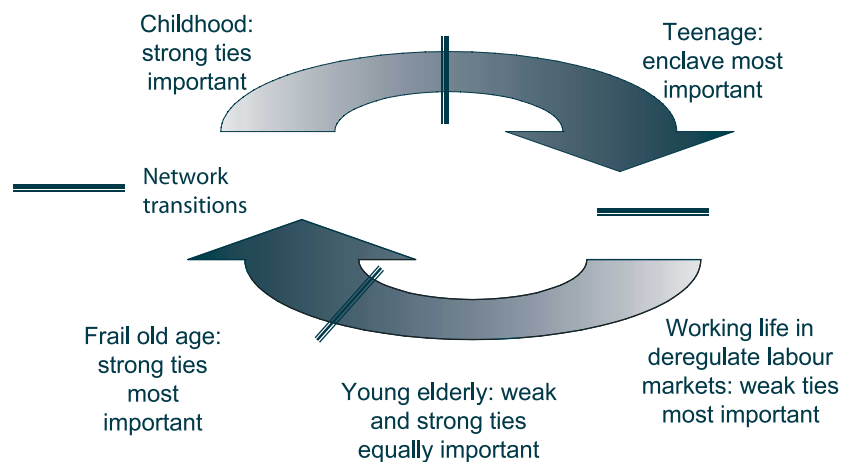


policy purposes. Perri 6, for example, cautioned that there have been few robust evaluations of the efficacy of those interventions deliberately designed to shape social capital formation (mentoring programs, special drop-in centres, friendship skills training, etc.). Moreover, he noted, promoting one type of social capital, such as bridging ties between disparate communities, to achieve one set of policy objectives may have the unintended consequence of undermining other patterns of social capital, such as strong bonding ties within communities that are required for other policy goals. Indeed, Perri 6 argued that we need all sorts of different types of social network connections over our life course and, therefore, government should be wary of emphasizing the benefits of one over the other. In extreme youth and old age, for example, strong ties to provide intimate care may be especially important, while in our working lives having multiple weak ties to a diverse array of individuals may be more useful in some career contexts (see Figure 1). Perri 6 concluded that government should focus on reducing extreme forms of “network harm” caused by existing services, rather than introducing new programs in an attempt to promote future network benefits.

Demers and Sylvain Côté, presenting an overview of the PRI social capital project, were similarly restrained regarding potential policy applications for social capital. Rather than endorsing grand programs to shape directly patterns of social capital investment, they suggested a better role for government is to adopt a social capital lens to ensure that program interventions do not fail

**FIGURE 1**

## Network priorities and the life course: network transitions



Source: Perri 6

through a lack of awareness of their impact on existing social ties, and to ensure that there are favourable conditions in place for individuals and organizations to invest in their social ties as they choose (as through parental leave programs, the design of job training programs that include an opportunity to make useful connections, the provision of access to community and recreational activities, or sponsoring youth exchanges). As Maurice Lévesque (University of Ottawa) put it, governments should emphasize “la création d’occasions” (creating opportunities) rather than “l’imposition de pratiques” (imposing linkages).

Social capital may be most relevant for public policy purposes within the context of a few particular domains. Demers and Côté suggested that it is particularly pertinent for policies seeking to better integrate groups at

risk of social exclusion (e.g., new immigrants, the long-term unemployed, youth at risk, certain Aboriginal communities, the frail elderly), and for policies seeking to support potentially difficult life-course transitions (e.g., as in early childhood, labour market entry, or old age). In each case, the availability (or not) of supportive social ties may be especially important to individual well-being.

To explore this potential in greater detail, the PRI, in partnership with a number of federal departments, sponsored a series of federal studies that were presented at the conference.

For example, Norah Keating (University of Alberta) discussed the impact of social capital on aging well, and what this might mean for policy and program development. She

## Social Capital in Action Thematic Policy Studies Presented at the Conference

*Applying a Social Capital Lens in First Nations Communities – The Case of Aboriginal Policing*, Ralph Matthews, University of British Columbia, and Rochelle Côté, University of Toronto

*The Role of Social Capital in Community Crime Prevention*, Ray Corrado, Simon Fraser University

*The Role of Social Capital in Healthy Aging*, Norah Keating, University of Alberta

*Social Capital and Community Development*, Johanne Charbonneau, Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS), Université du Québec

*Social Capital and Education Outcomes of Aboriginal Youth*, Jerry White, Paul Maxim, and Nicholas Spence, University of Western Ontario

*Social Capital and Poverty*, Maurice Lévesque, University of Ottawa

*Social Capital, Youth Civic Engagement and Democratic Renewal*, Dietlind Stolle and Cesi Cruz, McGill University

argued that the increasing expectations placed on caregivers to frail seniors seem the antithesis of building or maintaining the kind of bonding social capital that might lead to positive outcomes of aging well. The relationships of these caregivers with their closest intimate relations may come under considerable strain stemming from the employment, out-of-pocket, social, and health costs placed on them. If aging well includes maintaining positive interactions with one's intimates, then programs and services that alleviate the burdens placed on senior's care networks, as through the provision of home care, as well as those programs that support the care networks directly (respite, compassionate care leave), may be particularly important.

In some areas, we still know too little about the role and influence of social networks to be confidently prescriptive for policy action. In addressing the challenges of youth civic (dis)engagement in Canada, Dietlind Stolle (McGill University) noted that while we know a fair amount about the potential influence of school-based civics programs, only a few studies have focused on the effects of non-school related youth participation. While the material available suggests these social ties may have important and lasting effects on civic engagement, more research is needed. We may have better insights into this dynamic as Stolle and Madeleine Gauthier (Institut national de la recherche scientifique) proceed with

their SSHRC-funded longitudinal study of adolescent civic engagement in Ontario and Quebec.

Certainly, all the presenters made it very clear that social capital is not a miracle cure for all public policy problems. Jerry White (University of Western Ontario) and John Field (Stirling University) both pointed out that, in terms of educational attainment, social capital can only explain a moderate amount of variance in outcomes, with several other factors being much more important. Moreover, social capital may be an influential factor only at certain threshold points. If you have virtually no social capital, then even a modest increase may make a large difference in outcomes. But more social capital does not always mean better outcomes. While one's social ties may, through reinforcement and sanctions, promote successful educational attainment, they can have quite the opposite effect in tightly knit families or communities where parents and others have low educational attainment and aspirations. This is not to argue that social capital is unimportant, but to acknowledge that it must be considered in relation to a number of other resources and factors that may make a difference in achieving particular goals and objectives.

Again and again, presenters stressed the importance of policy and program implementers respecting the leadership, competencies, and cultures of particular local social networks, if such policies and programs are to be successful. Jerry White, for example, recounted how efforts to promote preschool programs for Maori youth were only successful after government officials built up personal infor-

mal links with local communities and families as a precursor to enabling Maori parents to set up their own early childhood programs. Johanne Charbonneau (Institut national de la recherche scientifique) found that community development initiatives were more successful when governments left the direction of such activities to local level networks, and restricted themselves to providing reliable funding and expertise (including as mediators between networks) to the local organizations.

This said, several presentations pointed to ways in which government officials are not simply distant mandarins in Ottawa, but rather are what Michael Lipsky has called street-level bureaucrats. Many argued that we should be paying much more attention to the quality of the relationships between local public service providers and recipients (i.e., linking social capital). Teachers, doctors, social workers, lower court officials, legal service officers, and front-line case workers are all government officials with wide discretion over the dispensation of public benefits and sanctions. As Michael Woolcock argues, these officials link the state to local citizens, and the quality of their face-to-face relationships has a considerable connection to the relative success or failure of public services. As parents, we are typically more concerned with the quality of the relationship between the teacher and our child than the provincially set curriculum. Similarly, the quality of our relationship with our doctor is one of our primary concerns with regard to the state of the health care system. Ray Corrado's work on crime prevention points to the importance of a host of

front-line workers from the police to early childhood educators.

Woolcock suggested, however, that all too often public policy conspires against the individual accountability and responsiveness people want in their relationships with public service providers, instead focusing on standardized, situation non-specific, depersonalized service delivery. Perri 6 noted a number of public professionals in the United Kingdom have a long history of subtle thinking and

*We should be paying much more attention to the quality of the relationships between local public service providers and recipients. The quality of these relationships shapes the relative success or failure of public services.*

skill with regard to people's social networks and how they relate to their well-being, as in probation services and some care programs. But he expressed concern that this capacity for development or pastoral support has been undermined and devalued in recent decades.

Investing in greater linking social capital between public service providers and recipients is not a simple matter. Real tensions exist between attempts at more personalized service delivery on the one hand, and the need for the government to remain and be seen as impartial on the other. This point was made in particular by Ralph Matthews (University of British Columbia) and Rochelle Côté (University of Toronto) in their study of Aboriginal community policing,

where police officers deeply embedded in the local community may be under considerable stress in upholding the impartiality of their office.

Social capital research clearly supports the idea that it generally pays to know people. Does it pay for the government to know this? Probably, but conference sessions emphasized that we should proceed with caution. That said, with care and modesty of ambition we can learn how to better value and support beneficial social capital

development through the practical experiences of our program and service delivery. ●

– RJ

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Note

1 This idea was explored at the conference by Ruth Lister, Loughborough University, United Kingdom. See "Thinking Outside the Box: New Policy Directions in OECD Countries" in this report.

# Where Do You Get Your Coffee?

## The Potential of the Social Economy

An unanticipated discussion about coffee shops during the social economy session illustrated some of the complexity of this topic. While some participants saw socially responsible practices adopted by for-profit coffee shops as laudable, others suggested these organizations produce only a pale imitation of the efforts of those committed to emphasizing the primacy of objectives other than profit making. More generally, views about the social economy appear to be influenced by values and what might best be referred to as ideologies. This presents a challenge to researchers who endeavour to approach issues from a value-neutral perspective.



The social economy is a fairly new label for a diverse collection of organizations that have been producing and delivering goods and services across Canada and the world for over a century, generally at the community level. These organizations are separate from governments and different from commercial enterprises in that they involve a diverse collection of stakeholders in decisions, and they reinvest any profits to advance the mission of the organization. Examples include certain co-operatives, non-profit organizations, and credit unions.

The term social enterprise has been used more recently to describe organizations of this sort. The social economy has received considerable attention over the past decade (notably in Europe and Quebec) as a promising way to address poverty and exclusion and other important issues. Federal government interest has increased recently, as demonstrated by references in the last federal budget and recent throne speeches.

Social Development Canada is developing a policy framework to support the social economy over the long

## Adding Social Economy to Canada's Social Policy Tool Kit

### Excerpts from the Speech by the Honourable Eleni Bakopanos

The federal government is beginning to comprehend the power and potential of social economy enterprises and organizations. In response, governments are increasingly turning to community-based processes and initiatives to address local problems with local solutions. The functioning of social enterprises is closely linked to the concept of social responsibility and, in fact, the social economy reflects what many are now referring to as the ethical economy – corporate citizenship and activities that promote economic and social well-being, inclusion, and just as important – justice.

The issue of the social economy can best be addressed through local enterprises. As researchers and policy makers, it is our role to identify methods at this level that will further develop and encourage social economic growth. This might involve rethinking how we treat small and medium not-for-profit organizations in comparison to small and medium for-profits. For instance, what are the implications of treating them as equals? Other questions must be answered in developing a policy framework. What can we do to encourage more participation from supporting organizations in the community and enhance the relationship with local enterprises? What resources and tools can we provide to assist in building networks at the regional, national, and international levels? And finally, how can we reach a state of place-based coherence, that is, effectively build a cohesive relationship between social economy enterprises, other community enterprises, and not-for-profit and voluntary sector organizations and public programs? ●

**T**he conference benefited from a range of informed perspectives on the social economy from the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Social Economy, academics from Canada and the United Kingdom, and officials from Industry Canada, Social Development Canada, and the Policy Research Initiative. It was evident that when and how governments should support the social economy is a horizontal issue requiring collaboration between researchers, and policy advisers and policy makers from within and outside governments. For example, while outlining Social Development Canada's plans concerning the development of a long term policy framework, Allen Zeesman also highlighted the important relationship between the social economy and community development. ●

term. The Parliamentary Secretary responsible for the Social Economy, Madame Eleni Bakopanos, leads the National Roundtable on the Social Economy, which is charged with fostering dialogue and developing recommendations. Industry Canada and the regional development agencies have the lead for developing and delivering the program initiatives announced in the 2004 budget. A program administered by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) will support community-based research on the social economy, and will include documenting and sharing best practices across the country.

During a breakfast address, Madame Bakopanos described the social economy as an increasingly recognized complement to individual, family, and large-scale transfers to support universal systems. She highlighted social enterprises as a means for developing local solutions to local problems. Speaking of specific priorities, Madame Bakopanos mentioned research into best practices that identify and share what works best, the tax status and treatment under law of social enterprises, and their strategic planning and financing needs. Also included was mention of the tools and resources needed to build networks at the regional, national, and international levels. She also identified as important the question of how to build cohesive relationships between social enterprises and other community enterprises and not-for-profit, voluntary organizations.

A case for governments having a role to play in overcoming barriers constraining the growth of social enterprises was made by Mel Evans (Middlesex University). He described recent efforts by the European Union

in the United Kingdom to support the social economy, including changes to corporate governance policies that will support the formation of community interest companies. These companies use a new type of structure for not-for-profit organizations. Evans brought several documents to Ottawa that provide an overview of the Strategy for Social Enterprise adopted in the United Kingdom, and offer guidance for researchers and suggestions for social enterprises.

Efforts at the federal level to support the social economy will need to be informed by developments in Quebec, especially since the mid-1990s, which were described by Jean-Marc Fontan (Université du Québec à Montréal). For example, lessons can be taken from the development model that has an integrated collection of organizations working together to carry out research and provide financial and technical support to social enterprises. Fontan, co-director of the community-university research alliance on the social economy, noted that an enabling public policy environment is required to advance social and economic objectives effectively and simultaneously, particularly as regards to the combining of social innovation with collective entrepreneurship at the community level.

Work by the PRI on the social economy has focused on identifying the research issues whose examination would support the development of high-quality, fact-based policy advice. The PRI's Alan Painter suggested that researchers might usefully focus future efforts on assessing corporate governance policies and related reporting requirements introduced in a variety of jurisdictions over the last 10 to 15 years. Other focuses include

**T**he PRI is preparing a publication coming out of both a joint PRI-SSHRC roundtable held in September 2004 and the PRI's December 2004 social policy conference, and including additional research as well. *What we need to know about the social economy: a guide for policy research* will be designed as a reference source and guide for researchers. ●

the principles that should underlie funding and service delivery decisions by governments, and discovering and communicating best practices. By concentrating on these issues, governments could determine when and how to support the social economy.

A question and answer session highlighted that the social economy includes funding and other support organizations along with social enterprises, that many social enterprises do not see themselves merely as alternative means for delivering government funded services, and that the social economy aims to achieve both market and non-market objectives. There is clearly overlap between the objectives of governments and social enterprises, but the role of the former in supporting the latter is far from straightforward.

The social economy was also considered during the session, On the Ground Experience: Reducing Poverty and Exclusion through Social Capital. Especially relevant was a presentation by Suan Cross-Zambrowski (Projet Chance). Projet Chance is a social enterprise that provides low-cost housing and day-care services to single mothers who are full-time students. Ms. Cross-Zambrowski's presentation provided another concrete example of how social enterprises advance diverse objectives at the community level.

Several conference presenters and participants highlighted the importance of recognizing and reflecting diverse and practical experiences when examining, developing, and implementing policies designed to support the social economy. For example, Madame Bakopanos stressed the need for policy makers to participate in research to help ensure these efforts remain policy relevant. Effectively supporting the social economy requires ongoing collaboration among researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and intended beneficiaries. Allen Zeesman (Social Development Canada) noted that research and policy development need to remain closely connected. The horizontal social economy file requires ongoing collaboration across organizations with diverse mandates from both within and outside governments. ●

– AP

# How to Court a Centipede

## The Governance of Social Policy in Canada

At a basic level the practice of evidence-based policy relies on the five classic “W”s of investigation: who, where, why, what, and when. Governance issues, however, raise the separate question of how. This distinction reflects the transition from theory to practice, and forces researchers and analysts to examine how their findings might be implemented as policy. These considerations are of primary importance, and have a direct impact on the effectiveness of social policy in Canada.

facilitate learning. However, pre-established norms and expectations regarding the roles of those involved in social policy development (e.g., the state, markets, communities, and families) place practical limits on the transferability of some approaches. What may work in one country may not be appropriate elsewhere. In this regard, a consensus emerged that, while we can learn much from other countries, social policy in Canada must have a unique flavour reflecting the underlying norms and relationships that define the Canadian identity.

A high degree of consensus existed on the general structure of such a domestic governance model. It is well understood that, due to the complex jurisdictional structure of Canada, co-ordinated, multi-jurisdictional approaches will be required

if social policy is to be effective. Canada’s new immigration framework provides an example of how such a co-ordinated approach can be established and structured. As explained by Rosaline Frith



Conference participants were very interested in the experiences of other countries as they addressed social policy challenges. Nevertheless, as noted by Jocelyne Bourgon (Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the OECD), philosophies and cultures differ greatly from place to place, raising both opportunities and challenges. Diversity permits a great deal of experimentation that can

(Citizenship and Immigration Canada), this framework will support greater co-ordination and knowledge sharing on improving the individual economic outcomes of recent immigrants and fulfilling the needs of Canada’s economy. Toward these ends, modelling and consultations with other federal departments, other levels of government, and the public will establish a strategic road map to

direct immigration policy for the next decade. Within this framework, inter-jurisdictional co-operation is not just an element of a broader strategy. It is a core principle that guides who does what, and how decisions are made and action taken.

While this framework serves as one example of the integrated horizontal policy processes of the future, its top-down co-ordinative approach is not

Conference participants expressed definite preferences for either top-down or bottom-up governance models. In general, there was an understanding that both approaches have strengths and weaknesses. A place-based policy approach supports innovation and more fully mobilizes local resources and partners, such as the private sector or the social economy, to address the specific nature of

University) even went so far as to state that the 21st century will be the century of the citizen, defined not by citizens trying to access the state, but by states trying to figure out how they relate to citizens.

Opinions differ on how governments should respond to this new dynamic. Some individuals focus on the need for policy frameworks for progress on social policy issues in the face of globalization and North American integration. Courchene argued that disparate economic interests and challenges faced by regions in Canada will require that social policy in Canada increasingly follow an asymmetric approach similar to that embodied in the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA), and expressed in the Canada Health Accord. Flexible enough to permit a variety of relationships between state, market, citizens, and communities, Courchene observed that this type of model, through a focus on outputs and accountability to citizens rather than inputs by governments, has led to national progress on issues such as the child tax benefit and health. At the same time, provinces, and Quebec in particular, have been permitted to pursue distinct policy paths toward these goals that are responsive to the expectations of local populations.

Not addressed in the SUFA model are two issues. First, it remains somewhat uncertain as to how such a model maintains the attachment of individuals to the Canadian state. No answer to this question is readily apparent. Second, this high-level

*The 21st century will be defined not by citizens trying to access the state, but by states trying to define how they relate to citizens.*

ideal for addressing social policy issues that can vary significantly from place to place (e.g., shortages of appropriate or affordable housing). Such challenges often require a more bottom-up or community-based approach, described by Judith Maxwell (Canadian Policy Research Networks) as place-based in scope and design. A number of partnership models based on this approach were discussed at the conference. The Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative was generally perceived as an effective model through which to support the development of community-based social policy responses for issues that vary from place to place. Russell Mawby's presentation on the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership also demonstrated the merits of a bottom-up, community-based approach.

local challenges. In contrast, a national approach is more appropriate when addressing structural issues and challenges that are more widespread and require more resources. The policy challenge should determine which governance model is the best. Concrete policy-relevant research identifying causal relations and the level (community, regional, or national) at which horizontal linkages exist between policy issues can inform this decision.

Adding a new dimension to this debate is the future role of the citizen. While governmental decisions and intergovernmental relations are expected to continue to shape the design and delivery of social programming in Canada, citizens will likely be more engaged than in the past. Thomas Courchene (Queen's



discussion glosses over the many processes and supports required for individual citizens to address social policy issues effectively. Both Cynthia Williams (Simon Fraser University and Canadian Policy Research Networks) and Ambassador Bourgon noted that a more citizen-centred approach to governance must take into account capacity if social policy is to be effectively pursued. Canada, not having the wealth of think-tanks possessed by many other countries, must make a conscious effort to support its research community and non-governmental organizations engaged in addressing social policy issues. Williams argued that not enough is being done in Canada to support and learn from innovation, particularly in regards to both supporting and mining innovations adopted at the provincial level. Williams also noted that citizens must be informed and given a forum if they are to engage governments effectively on social policy issues. Toward this goal, she expressed excitement about a number of recent initiatives, such as the Canadian Institute for Health Information, that focus on establishing information infrastructure that can empower and equip citizens to play a larger role in the creation and oversight of social policy.

A fundamental question emerged from governance discussions at the conference: Do we have the capacity to shift significantly the balance that

exists between the state, market, citizens, and communities? Compared to Europeans, Canadians have a weak tradition of public spaces where people can come together and engage on issues with respect to governance. Expanded citizen engagement seems a difficult development for Canadian governance systems to incorporate. However, in the face of a wide array of emerging economic and social challenges, and given the potential benefits if the expanded engagement is successful, we have no choice but to make the effort.

At the very least, there is a need to develop a consensus of what we want to accomplish. Without this, it will be difficult to develop coherent policy responses to the challenges we face. In this area perhaps, the experiences of Finland, the Netherlands, and others may be applicable. Even if their experiences cannot tell us what to do, they may provide valuable insight on what direction to take. ●

– SS

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Information related to the conference, including all available presentations and speeches, can be found on the PRI web site at [www.policyresearch.gc.ca](http://www.policyresearch.gc.ca).

# PRI Publications on Social Policy

available at [www.policyresearch.gc.ca](http://www.policyresearch.gc.ca)



**DECEMBER 2004**

## A Life-Course Approach to Social Policy Analysis: A Proposed Framework

This paper presents a proposal for a framework to describe the goals and results of social policies. It suggests that a life-course approach, focusing on the trajectories of individuals through life, may be the proper foundation to build this framework. At a minimum, the proposed framework is providing a way of conceptualizing the relationships between individuals and society that is consistent with emerging thinking about social policy. It could also be a practical policy tool, leading to the real beginning of an evidence-driven social policy.



**AUGUST 2004**

## Financial Capability and Poverty Discussion Paper

This discussion paper, prepared by the Social and Enterprise Development Innovations (SEDI), focuses on developing financial literacy as a complementary strategy to asset building through a review of existing research and current initiatives in Canada and abroad.



**JULY 2004**

## View on Life-Course Flexibility and Canada's Aging Population Discussion Paper

This paper describes the methodologies used in, and the results coming out of, focus groups that were organized to better understand Canadians preferences concerning the allocation of time for work, care-giving, education and leisure, their preferences concerning the time at which they intend to retire. Canadians that participated to these focus groups were also ask for their opinions on policies that could support the reallocation of time over the course of life.



**NOVEMBER 2004**

## Poverty and Exclusion: Normative Approaches to Policy Research

The understanding of equality issues that informed our current social policy infrastructure predated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Case law dealing with human, equality, and international rights has evolved significantly in the interim. Moreover, Canada's adherence to several international human rights agreements has not, by and large, been reflected in Canadian law or in domestic policy making. This report examines these normative shifts, and makes a case for the systematic, front-loaded integration of legal norms into horizontal policy development.



**MARCH 2004**

## Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility Discussion Paper

The Policy Research Initiative is exploring the hypothesis that major economic and social gains could flow from policy-induced changes in the allocation of time throughout life. This Discussion Paper presents the key research questions that are guiding the PRI's interdepartmental project on this subject. The paper reports on the evidence obtained so far, and outlines where more work is necessary.



**SEPTEMBER 2004**

## Expert Workshop on the Measurement of Social Capital for Public Policy Synthesis Report

This document is a synthesis report from the Expert workshop on measuring social capital for public policy purposes, held on June 8th, 2004. It provides an outline of the presentations and discussions held by the experts. The exercise was to identify essential elements of a "toolbox" for analyzing social capital for purposes of developing and assessing government programs and policies.

# Appendix

## Conference Program

### Opening Session

#### Challenges and Opportunities for Canadian Social Policy

**Michael Wernick**, Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, Plans and Consultation, Privy Council Office

#### The Policy Research Initiative Social Policy Projects

**Jean-Pierre Voyer**, Executive Director, Policy Research Initiative

### Plenary Session

#### Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility

**Chair** **Marc Renaud**, President, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

**Speakers** *The Economic and Fiscal Challenges Associated with Population Aging*  
**Paul-Henri Lapointe**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Finance Canada

*Time, Work and Life Choices*

**Terry Hunsley**, Senior Project Director, Policy Research Initiative  
**Alain Denhez**, Associate Project Director, Policy Research Initiative

*Greater Flexibility in the Use of Time as a Response to the Challenges of Population Aging*

**Anne-Marie Guillemard**, Centre d'Étude des Mouvements Sociaux, Université Paris V, Sorbonne

*The New Statistical Tools for Life-Course Analysis*

**Michael Wolfson**, Assistant Chief Statistician, Analysis and Development Field, Statistics Canada

**Commentator** **Peter Hicks**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Strategic Direction, Social Development Canada

### Plenary Session

#### Poverty and Social Exclusion

Only by focusing on social exclusion can we examine the social mechanisms that produce or sustain such deprivation.

**Chair** **Peter Hicks**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Strategic Direction, Social Development Canada

**Speakers** *New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion*

**Jeff Frank**, Project Director, Policy Research Initiative  
**Jean Kunz**, Associate Project Director, Policy Research Initiative

*Developing Indicators of Social Exclusion*

**Tania Burchardt**, CASE, London School of Economics

*Addressing Exclusion through the Courts*

**Mary Eberts**, Gordon F. Henderson Chair in Human Rights, University of Ottawa

*Applying a Life Course Lens to Exclusion*

**Graham Room**, Department of Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath

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**Day 1**  
**December 13, 2004**

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**Day 1**  
**December 13, 2004**

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**Plenary Session**

**Social Capital for Social Policy: Building Networks and Strengthening Communities**

**Chair** **Margaret Biggs**, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Priorities and Planning, Privy Council Office

**Speakers** *Assessing the Role of Social Capital for Public Policy in Canada*  
**Catherine Demers**, Project Director, Policy Research Initiative  
**Sylvain Côté**, Senior Policy Research Officer, Policy Research Initiative

*Lessons from International Research and Policy*

**Michael Woolcock**, Senior Social Scientist, World Bank

*Policy Applications, Social Capital and Poverty*

**Perri 6**, Senior Research Fellow, University of Birmingham

**Commentator** **Penelope Rowe**, Chief Executive Officer, Community Services Council

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**Day 2**  
**December 14, 2004**

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**Plenary Session**

**New Policy Directions in OECD Countries**

**Chair** **Jocelyne Bourgon**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative from Canada to the OECD

**Speakers** **Mikko Kautto**, Project Manager, Prime Minister's Office, Finland  
**Ruth Lister**, Loughborough University  
**Mark Pearson**, Head, Social Policy Division, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
**Gavin Kelly**, Deputy Director, UK Prime Minister's Strategy Unit  
**Jeff Grogger**, Harris School, University of Chicago

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**Concurrent Workshops**

**Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility 1**  
**Increasing Choices in the Retirement Decision**

**Chair** **Cliff Halliwell**, Director General, Policy Research and Coordination Directorate, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

**Speakers** *What do We Know about the Impact of the Public Pension System on the Decision to Retire?*

**Marie-France Paquet**, Chief, Structural Analysis, Department of Finance

*What are the Preferences of Canadians with Regards to Retirement?*

**Patrick Beauchamp**, Vice-President, Qualitative Research, EKOS

*Working Later in Life*

**Ali Béjaoui**, Senior Policy Research Officer, Policy Research Initiative

**New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion 1**  
**What We Know about Poverty and Exclusion**

**Chair** **Christian Dea**, A/Director General, Policy, Knowledge and Research  
 Foundations Directorate, Social Development Canada

**Speakers** *Profile of the Working Poor*  
**François Weldon**, Director, Research and Quantitative Analysis, Social  
 Development Canada

*Precarious Employment: Magnitude and Implications*  
**Louis Grignon**, Director, Labour Market Policy  
 Research, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

*Canadians in Core Housing Need*  
**Leigh Howell**, Director, Socio-Economic Research, Canada Mortgage and  
 Housing Corporation

*Earnings Progression among Recent Immigrants*  
**Elizabeth Ruddick**, Director, Strategic Research and Review, Citizenship  
 and Immigration Canada

**Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool 1**  
**Thematic Illustrations I: Social Capital as a Complementary Resource  
 for Participation and Well-Being**

**Chair** **Rosaline Frith**, A/Assistant Deputy Minister, Integration,  
 Citizenship and Immigration Canada

**Speakers** *Social Capital and Poverty*  
**Maurice Lévesque**, University of Ottawa

*The Role of Social Capital in Well Aging*  
**Norah Keating**, University of Alberta

*Social Capital and Educational Outcomes in Aboriginal Communities*  
**Paul Maxim**, University of Western Ontario  
**Jerry White**, University of Western Ontario

*Social Capital and Life-long Learning*  
**John Field**, University of Sterling

**The Honourable Ken Dryden**, Minister of Social Development Canada

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**Day 2**  
**December 14, 2004**

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**Day 2**  
**December 14, 2004**

## Concurrent Workshops

### Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility 2 Increasing Choices for Family-Work Balance

**Chair** **Mostafa Askari**, Director General, Applied Research and Analysis Directorate, Health Canada

**Speakers** *Work and Family Balance: The Context*  
**Alain Denhez**, Associate Project Director, Policy Research Initiative  
**Geoff Rowe**, Senior Research Analyst, Statistics Canada

*Time, Stress and Well-being*

**Christian Dea**, A/Director General Policy, Knowledge and Research Foundations Directorate, Social Development Canada

*Family-Work Balance: Is it a Real Issue?*

**Linda Duxbury**, Carleton University

*Family-Work Balance: Policy Approaches*

**Micheline Gamache**, Sous-ministre adjointe aux politiques familiales, Ministère de l'emploi, de la solidarité sociale et de la famille, Gouvernement du Québec

### New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion 2 Asset-Based Policies and Programs

**Chair** **Jean-Pierre Voyer**, Executive Director, Policy Research Initiative

**Speakers** *Welfare Effects of Accumulating Assets*  
**Will Paxton**, Institute for Public Policy Research, United Kingdom

*Financial Capability and Poverty*

**Peter Nares**, Executive Director, Social and Enterprise Development Innovations

*Early Insights from Individual Development Account Initiatives*

**Carole Vincent**, Senior Research Associate, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation

**Commentator** **Derek Hum**, University of Manitoba

### Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool 2 Thematic Illustrations II: Strengthening Communities and Collective Capacities through Social Capital

**Chair** **Robert Cormier**, Deputy Director General, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

**Speakers** *Social Capital and Community Development*  
**Johanne Charbonneau**, Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Université du Québec

*Social Capital, Youth Civic Engagement and Democratic Renewal*

**Dietlind Stolle**, McGill University

*The Role of Social Capital in Community Crime Prevention*

**Ray Corrado**, Simon Fraser University

**Irwin Cohen**, Simon Fraser University

*Applying a Social Capital Lens in First Nations Communities – The Case of Aboriginal Community Policing*

**Ralph Matthews**, University of British Columbia

**Rochelle Côté**, University of Toronto

**Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility 3**  
**Increasing Choices for Life-Long Learning**

**Chair** **Andrew Treusch**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy and Planning, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

**Speakers** *Future Needs of the Labour Market*  
**Cliff Halliwell**, Director General, Policy Research and Coordination Directorate, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

*Literacy and Economic Growth*  
**Scott Murray**, Director General, Institutions and Social Statistics Branch, Statistics Canada

*Work and Education Pathways*  
**Satya Brink**, Director, Learning Policy Directorate, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

**New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion 3**  
**Building Horizontal Partnerships**

**Chair** **Cynthia Williams**, Canadian Policy Research Networks and Simon Fraser University

**Speakers** *Partnerships in Building a New Social Architecture*  
**Judith Maxwell**, President, Canadian Policy Research Networks

*Tackling Homelessness by Harnessing the Combined Potential of Governments and Non-Government Stakeholders*  
**Stephen Loyd**, Director, Policy, Partnerships and Government Relations, National Secretariat on Homelessness, Human Resources and Social Development Canada

*Immigrant Integration through Multi-Level Partnerships*  
**Rosaline Frith**, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Citizenship and Immigration Canada

*Engaging the Private Sector in Affordable Housing*  
**Russell Mawby**, Director, Housing, City of Ottawa

**Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool 3**  
**On the Ground Experience: Reducing Poverty and Exclusion through Social Capital**

**Chair** **Marcel Lauzière**, President, Canadian Council on Social Development

**Speakers** *Vibrant Communities Project*  
**Mark Cabaj**, Director of Community Engagement, Tamarack Institute

*Projet Chance*  
**Suan Cross-Zambrowski**, Executive Director, Projet Chance

*The Contribution of Social Capital in the Social Economy to Local Economic Development in Western Europe (CONSCISE)*  
**Mel Evans**, Middlesex University

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**Day 2**  
**December 14, 2004**

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**Day 3**  
**December 15, 2004**

### **Breakfast Address**

**The Honourable Eleni Bakopanos**, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Social Development, Social Economy

### **Concurrent Workshops**

#### **Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility 4**

#### **Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility: International Experiences**

**Chair** **Benoît Robidoux**, Director, Economic Studies and Policy Analysis Division, Finance Canada

**Speakers** *Population Aging and Labour Market Reforms in OECD Countries: Key Insights for Canada*

**Sylvain Côté**, Senior Policy Research Officer, Policy Research Initiative

*International Experiences in Policies to Increase Flexibility throughout the Life-Course*

**Anne-Marie Guillemard**, Centre d'Étude des Mouvements Sociaux, Université Paris V, Sorbonne

*International Experiences in Policies for Caregivers*

**Janice Keefe**, Mount St. Vincent University

#### **New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion 4**

#### **Exploring the Potential of the Social Economy**

**Chair** **Susan Scotti**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Income Security Programs, Social Development Canada

**Speakers** *The European Experience with the Social Economy*

**Mel Evans**, Middlesex University

*Models of Social Economy and the Role of Public Policy*

**Jean-Marc Fontan**, Université du Québec à Montréal

*Social Economy and Community Development*

**Allen Zeesman**, Director General, Social Development, Social Development Canada

*Social Economy and Policy Research*

**Alan Painter**, Senior Policy Research Officer, Policy Research Initiative

#### **New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion 5**

#### **Legal Norms as Drivers of Social Policy**

**Chair** **Morris Rosenberg**, Deputy Minister, Justice Canada

**Speakers** *The Law as Part of the Broader Social and Economic Environment*

**Nathalie Des Rosiers**, Dean of Civil Law, University of Ottawa

*Normative Approaches to Poverty and Exclusion*

**Pearl Eliadis**, Chief Knowledge Officer, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation

*Society, Law and Work*

**Bernard Colas**, Acting President, Law Commission of Canada

**Commentator** **Donald Lemaire**, Special Advisor to the Deputy Minister, Justice Canada



## Plenary Session

### How to Court a Centipede: The Governance of Social Policy in Canada

**Moderator** **Marie Fortier**, Deputy Minister, Intergovernmental Affairs,  
Privy Council Office

**Speakers** **Cynthia Williams**, Canadian Policy Research Networks and Simon Fraser  
University

**Jocelyne Bourgon**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative from Canada  
to the OECD

**André Pratte**, Editor-in-Chief, La Presse

**Thomas Courchene**, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University

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## Luncheon Armchair Discussion

### Drawing the Lines for the Role of the State and Citizens in Social Policy

**Moderator** **Gilles Paquet**, Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa

**Speakers** **Judith Maxwell**, President, Canadian Policy Research Networks

**Keith Banting**, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University

**William Watson**, McGill University

**Jack Jedwab**, Executive Director, Association for Canadian Studies

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## Post-Conference Workshop

### Open Session of the Policy Research Data Group: New Data Development for New Social Policies

**Chair** **Dr. Ivan P. Fellegi**, Chief Statistician of Canada, Statistics Canada

**Speakers** *Data for Social Policy Research*

**Richard Barnabé**, Assistant Chief Statistician, Social, Institutions and  
Labour Statistics Field, Statistics Canada

*Applying Administrative Data to Social Policy Research*

**Peter Hicks**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Strategic Direction,  
Social Development Canada

*Understanding the Complexity of Human Experiences*

**Paul Bernard**, Université de Montreal

*Measuring Social Capital for Public Policy*

**Catherine Demers**, Project Director, Policy Research Initiative

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**Day 3**  
**December 15, 2004**

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