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Global developments in social policy research

Ruggero Cefalo, Marcia Rose and Andy Jolly

The long-reaching shadows of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to affect multiple areas of our societies around the world, challenging social policy responses and research in 2023. The consequences of COVID-19 are still a recurring thread across several chapters of this year's Social Policy Review. With respect to Social Policy Review 34 in 2022, a main thematic focus is intergenerational equity and solidarity, thoroughly discussed during the yearly Social Policy Association (SPA) conference. Two further trends can be identified across the contributions collected in this Social Policy Review. First, some chapters extend their view towards less-explored policy fields, looking for instance at the use of substances or at policies for Autistic adults. Second, chapters continue to expand the geographical reach of the review providing evidence on the United States, China, India and Singapore. Thus, they contribute towards a global view on social policy research and developments.

Thematically, we have divided the volume into three sections. [Part I](#) contains contributions from the new Social Policy Association policy groups, with chapters covering diverse facets of intergenerational equity and solidarity. [Part II](#) delves into research developments in social policy analysis, with a wide thematic range that explores elderly care, Faith Based Organisations, employment services and third sector-government partnerships. [Part III](#) continues the international theme of last two years, with contributions covering social policy developments in the USA, in Singapore, in England and Wales.

In [Chapter 1](#), Peach, Sakure, Llwyd Roberts, Green and Howson explore the relationship between research, policy and practice within programmes of intergenerational practice, that involve different generations being together in organised initiatives, sharing experiences, knowledge and resources. The chapter shares research insights and reflects on the future sustainability and yet-to-be fulfilled potential of intergenerational practice within social care. [Chapter 2](#) by Ward and Fleischer discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on intergenerational relationships, drawing on empirical research carried out in 2020, which explored older and younger people's perspectives on generational differences generated by the pandemic and the policy responses to it. The study findings suggest cross-generational understandings

of the social, economic and political issues that face all generations. In [Chapter 3](#), Laycock investigates current circumstances surrounding alcohol and drug use and their intergenerational transmission in Glasgow, where this issue causes disproportionate health impacts on those from more deprived areas. The author uses the theory of locus of control to better understand how childhood experiences impact adult behaviour, outcomes, and health inequalities, in particular substance abuse. [Chapter 4](#) by Akanksha reflects on castes as a form of systemic structural inequality in the context of India, arguing that castes have aggravated historic inequities among disadvantaged groups in access to basic services such as healthcare or education, equitable opportunity and even human dignity. In [Chapter 5](#), the final contribution to the intergenerational research section, Liu explores how older Chinese, and their families arrange and negotiate for intergenerational support. In China, rapidly ageing population and changes in family structure, labour market, and cultural and social norms have brought unprecedented challenges to older individuals and their families. [Chapter 6](#), by Arlotti and Neri, opens [Part II](#) by investigating the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the residential care sector during the first wave of the pandemic in seven European countries. The authors frame their analysis by considering the pre-existing structural and institutional conditions predominant in each country selected. In [Chapter 7](#), Barber-Rowell reflects on and explores the potential for contributions of Faith Based Organisations in the context of increased uncertainty brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, arguing for a new paradigm of Faith Based Organisations to enable mapping and coproduction of responses to uncertainties in social policy. [Chapter 8](#), by Vivaldi, Blasini and Bruno, adopts a social innovation perspective to analyse an experimental social policy project implemented in Pisa (Italy), that allowed participants to access a series of personalised services aimed at social inclusion and job placement. In [Chapter 9](#), Sanders applies a feminist institutionalist lens to explore the impact on equalities groups of an innovation of third sector engagement in policy making, specifically looking at the Third Sector-Welsh Government partnership. In this chapter, policy actor accounts are examined to consider which equalities organisations are advantaged or disadvantaged by the formal and informal facets of the institution of this partnership.

[Chapter 10](#) by Silver opens [Part III](#) by examining the introduction of special policies to prevent COVID-19 infections among people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, in the USA and in Europe. The author observes that, while the crisis enabled progressive reforms to break through the path-dependent status quo, the enduring legacy of the pandemic on Housing First, eviction prevention, rental subsidies and other emergency policies remains an open question. In [Chapter 11](#), Yeo and Greener take a critical stance on East Asian social policy provision, by showing its role in reproducing hierarchies. The chapter uses a cultural political economy approach, to illustrate the

semiotic reproduction of accumulation strategies through Singapore's Central Provident Fund (CPF). Finally, in [Chapter 12](#), Grant, Williams, Williams and Woods, a group of Autistic academics, deal with the epistemic injustice behind the exclusion of the Autistic input from the policy making process, which they consider to be a core part of Autistic disablement. The authors also propose changes to the policy making process to ensure that it reflects Autistic needs and realities.

