Globalisation, Memory and Consultancy
Towards a new ethnography of policy advice and welfare reform

Paul Stubbs

Transnational policy advice and consultancy[1]

In this article, my main concern is to extend an anthropological approach to policy, which "treats the models and language of decision-makers as ethnographic data to be analysed" rather than only as "frameworks for analysis" (Shore and Wright 1997: xiii), to aspects of transnational policy advice. My empirical materials draw on examples from welfare regimes in transition in which external consultancy modes have recently become increasingly significant. In a sense, this approach is based on nothing more than a standard anthropological tactic according to which the ethnographer seeks to focus on "a concept that appears, to the people concerned, to be axiomatic and unproblematic, and to explore its different meanings and how it works as an organizing principle of society" (Shore and Wright 1997: 13). This ethnography of policy advice also borrows from an emerging notion of 'global ethnography' which studies processes, forces, connections and imaginings which transcend national boundaries (Burawoy 2000a: 4), and

constructs a study of 'grounded globalizations' in order to better understand reproductions, challenges and transformations (Burawoy 2000b: 344). The article seeks to argue that processes of globalisation, especially those involving transnational policy transfers, are of immense importance in influencing new forms of the reproduction of relations and discourses of power, and of memory and forgetfulness, within particular social welfare regimes.

Transnational advice and policy transfers appear particularly unsuited to address the complexities of the ways in which welfare subjects interact with the welfare regimes which seek to organise their lives, a theme which touches complex issues of culture, identity and resistance, at the interface of local, national, regional and global social relations. I seek to pose some questions about how it is that a new cadre of 'consultants' or 'transnational advisors', whose memories are of a particular place, can and do have impacts on other places and spaces with which they are, more or less, unfamiliar. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a 'consultant' as someone who gives expert advice. 'Advice' is defined as an opinion about what to do. The essential trappings of consultancy was revealed in an email from a colleague prior to participation in a review for DFID: "Please advise ... should I bring a suit and a laptop?". The fact that, increasingly, 'consultants' are known as 'insultants' by many on the receiving end of their advice in post-Yugoslav countries, also indicates the existence of space for resistance and subversion.

Transnational consultancies are increasingly important forms of discourse and practice, and are often based on assumptions of the possibility of achieving sufficient cross-cultural understanding within very narrow time frames (consultancies are measured in days, not years). These features of consultancy amplify the implications of these processes for a denial of certain memories within welfare systems, especially of those at the receiving end, of welfare subjectsthat is, whose identities are often blurred and rendered technical by being defined as 'service users', 'beneficiaries', or 'clients'. Whilst there are

176

no objective figures on the number of consultants involved in transnational advice and policy transfers, an emerging literature does show how pervasive this mode of social practice has become (de la Porte & Deacon 2002). It is the revolution in information technology in the last decade, and its massive impact on the nature of 'work', which provides the conditions for an explosion of International Consultancy. The medium of this explosion is not just companies, but involves an emerging army of free-lance consultants able to sell intellectual services in real and virtual space, either directly to clients or through mediating agents, companies or institutions (cf. Stubbs 2003). Consulting, together with outsourcing, and subcontracting, become key features of the 'detraditionalization' of employment in the West (Castells 1996), impacting on aid and development generally and on transnational policy advice in particular.

The suggestion in this article is that these policy transfers, when understood through new kinds of ethnographic and anthropological approaches, are much more multi-dimensional, confusing, and contradictory than is sometimes portrayed in an emerging literature on the imposition of 'external' forces on local populations, powerless to resist. On the other hand, the bland, technicist assumption of equality underpinning recent notions of these transfers as partnerships between administrators, policy makers, and professionals from two or more different countries, cannot and should not be accepted as more than the ideology-in-use which it so obviously is.

The 'success' of such transfers, in part at least, always rests on the construction or invention of particular kinds of commonalities of memory, the construction of 'grand narratives' as it were, across time and space for administrators and professionals. Consultancy, insofar as it 'takes abstract models' and seeks to 'implant them elsewhere', has a vested interest in a 'push towards abstraction,' in the form of 'globally applicable knowledge' (Sampson 2000). Yet this has to be rendered meaningful in specific local settings through a series of 'interpretative encounters', revealed through critical ethnographic research.

Irreconcilable identities? The researcher-consultant as ethnographer?

This contribution to a collection which seeks to address the role of ethnographic methodologies in the study of aid and development takes seriously Jeremy Gould's concern with how one inserts oneself, and how one is inserted by others, analytically, normatively and emotionally, into the highly charged 'field' of aid and development (Gould 2001: 1). In my own case, I have sought to represent my professional life as involving a triangulation between three relatively distinct modes of practice: activism; research; and consultancy.

The identity of the activist-researcher or researcher-activist is certainly replete with positive connotations, a dialectic between interpreting and changing the world, no less. In contrast, the notion of activist-consultant appears a contradictory and strange mixture of idealism and commercialism, in which one's soul is sold to the devil (Shell's parading of environmental activists seeking to harness natural energy sources, for the sake of profit, of course, in recent commercials springs to mind). The notion of researcher-consultant, whilst less instantly pejorative, appears to fuse two modes of being which are better kept analytically, normatively and, certainly, emotionally, distinct.

Here, I wish to suggest that, in order to envisage new kinds of ethnographies of aid, the previous hard and fast boundary between 'consultancy' and 'research' may need to be eroded. This involves an inversion of the common-sensical academic notion which suggests that consultancies are fundamentally different from ethnographic research in a number of important dimensions.

First, consultancies tend to be short-term and maintain a 'distance' from respondents, whereas by its very essence, ethnographic research is long-term and absorbed in the realities of respondents. Second, consultancies are 'problem-taking' and responsive to a policy-making commissioning constituency, whereas ethnographic research is 'problem-making' and responsive to an academic community and its norms. The interests of different

commissioning bodies, such as an international aid agency and an international research council, are very different and demand very different kinds of loyalties and standards from those commissioned.

Third, within consultancies many concepts, precisely those which Sampson (2000) has termed 'global' and 'abstract', are taken for granted and unquestioned, whereas, at the heart of the ethnographic research project is the rendering of all taken-for-granted concepts as problematic and as contested social constructions. Fourth, in their writing up, consultancy reports and research reports are very different. Consultancy reports tend to be more persuasive and circular in logic, with no problems from the 'terms of reference' left unanswered, and all placed within a 'logical framework'. Research reports are more explanatory, informative and linear in logic, opening up new lines of enquiry and new problems not foreseen in the research proposal (if only to secure the next research grant).

Beyond these methodological differences, there are ethical, legal, and practical issues which also reinforce the construction of an impermeable border. Consultancies are framed by 'terms of reference' and, crucially, the 'consultancy contract' which invariably contains clauses which bind the consultant to confidentiality. The consultant is legally required, often, not to reveal anything s/he finds out in the course of the consultancy in other arenas, to outsiders, or in other written material. Indeed, the contract sometimes asserts explicitly that intellectual property rights rest with those commissioning the consultancy. Presenting oneself as a 'consultant' as opposed to a 'researcher' implies very different relationships with respondents; indeed, utilising material gathered during a consultancy for research purposes would seem to be unethical. To survive as a consultant and/or a researcher often involves keeping this division clear and intact so as not to appear unreliable, untrustworthy, or just plain difficult.

The counter-intuitive case for a more complex relationship between research and consultancy can and should be made, however. It is a fact that academics and researchers are engaged increasingly as consultants because of their

expertise and knowledge. It is possible to envisage a new persona of 'consultant anthropologist' (Sampson 2000), whose knowledge derives from participation in a system rather than, or as well as, the external study of it. Indeed, the notion of *reflexive ethnography* is based on precisely the importance of this kind of internally-generated knowledge. A 'new' ethnography associated with writers such as James Clifford (1997) who question classic notions of 'the field' is much more open to, and comfortable with more flexible entrees and less 'pure' notions of ethnography as academic science. In this sense, all practices in which the person participates, whether in the guise of researcher or consultant, or inhabiting some other identity (policy maker, NGO activist, welfare user, and so on), become available to be interrogated for the purpose of generating knowledge, theoretical and practical.

Reflexive ethnography is increasingly concerned with the ruptures and disjunctures between these identities, and questions hard and fast boundaries. Indeed, with the erosion of classical models of 'fieldwork', the question of time becomes much less important – some consultancies or, certainly, a series of consultancies, can last much longer, and involve more 'saturated' experiences, than those of the ethnographer who, in the age of cost effectiveness, is encouraged increasingly to truncate her/his fieldwork by using techniques of 'rapid' appraisal and assessment which originated in an earlier encounter between social development research and consultancy. Indeed, many research proposal forms, in their use of logical frameworks, for example, resemble application forms for social development projects.

There is an emerging ethnographic research tradition which utilises biography, and a wider range of lived encounters, so that 'consultancies' which are relevant to wider research interests have to be valid as material in the exploration of scientific research issues. Conversely, scientific knowledge is frequently utilised in consultancies so that the consultancies themselves become forms of practice in a dialectical relationship with theoretical knowledge. Indeed, process-oriented consultancies, in which those with particular knowledge are utilised to promote new forms of understanding of an

issue are increasingly common. A more practical point is that, in stratified societies, consultants have access to persons and data which researchers do not, while also utilising traditional research techniques of interviews, observations, structured workshop discussions, and so on. In any case, confidentiality clauses are often more flexible than they first appear, with commissioning agencies willing to negotiate on specific scientific papers, and interested in the furtherance of scientific knowledge. Issues of disguising sources and of seeking permission are no less important in consultancy work than in more traditional ethnographic research, of course.

In development and transition contexts, I would argue that those who study aid and development are highly likely to be personally and professionally involved in the processes they study. The role of the freelance academic-researcher-consultant is increasingly sought after by a range of agencies to offer 'advice' in preparing and developing projects and programmes; evaluating them; and sometimes even implementing and running them. In a post-Fordist academic labour market, many scholars do not have permanent, well-paid jobs and are increasingly drawn into consultancies, with inevitable conflicts of interest. This suggests the need for new forms of ethics, accountability and trust.

Here, I am not suggesting that consultancies *are* themselves ethnographies, but that an ethnography of consultancy work can be derived from one's experiences as a consultant and of interacting with other consultants. This is no more (or less) than another breech of the myth of 'objective', 'impartial' and 'neutral' research, requiring new forms of evidence which steer a path between dry objectivism, on the one hand, and decontextualised anecdotes on the other. The path to scientificity in reflexive ethnography is not, however, equidistant between these two poles, since "(classic) anthropology and (classic) anecdotes from the field" have always been "loving partners" (Schwartz 1998).

Welfare paradigms and policy advice in transition in Bosnia-Herzagovina

This sections builds on the methodological parameters discussed above to discuss the realities of consultancy in post-Yugoslav countries, and in particular in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I utilise a range of ethnographic material on consultancy in the broad field of social welfare, particularly on those which focus on 'systemic reform', to show how those realities, whilst complex and contradictory, reproduce certain kinds of power relations. My own work in this field, including four different assignments in BiH covering 140 days in total[1], has a number of threads to it, which I seek to re-assemble here in a coherent narrative.

Within these consultancies, the realities of 'user perspectives' are rarely addressed – discussions are held with Ministers and their officials; with academic experts; with staff of major international agencies; and sometimes, with professionals on the ground. Workshops are held for diverse 'stakeholders', including newer and older non-Governmental organisations. But rarely is there any meaningful interaction with welfare subjects who are rendered silent by the consultancy mode. There are exceptions, of course, but these are often highly problematic in the context of the highly mediated and controlled environment of consultancy 'missions', a term which seems to force explicit comparison with colonial 'missionary' activities.

Early on in my consultancy life, as part of a UN Mission on Developmental Social Issues in Macedonia, I was driven in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' black BMW through a Roma settlement on the outskirts of Skopje. Our goal was to hold discussions, unstructured, and unprepared, with two families in which only our embarrassment was obvious. Whilst not typical, perhaps, this incident is an excellent illustration of the problems of a failure to connect with welfare users. It could be argued, in fact, that the rise of 'consultancies'

---

[1] The assignments were for CARE, to organise a conference on Social Protection in BiH (Stubbs & Gregson, 1998); for the Finnish Government for two social welfare projects in 1998 and 2001; and for DFID planning a major programme on social welfare reform in 1999-2000.

alongside what Mark Duffield (2001) has termed the 'new wars', in which the need to protect the developed world from creeping 'dangerousness', is played out at the micro-level in terms of the protection afforded consultants by the white Jeep which meets them at the airport. Indeed, it may not be insignificant that Malinowski's white suit is now worn by EU monitors, UN officials, and the like, symbolising both 'purity' and 'otherness'. It is useful to conceive of international consultancy, transnational policy advice, and project and programme documents as a specific 'genre' (Apthorpe 1997: 43), with its own language and power, including the power of silence. The above anecdote from Macedonia, for example, cannot be found in the 'official report' (Deacon, Heikkila, Kraan, Stubbs, and Taipale 1996).

The author's work on programme development in BiH, reconstituted as a coherent narrative, contains at least four areas of connection with academic and political commitments. First, over a long period of time, the author was involved in a series of actions designed to ensure that social policy and social welfare were taken seriously within an international aid agenda. The critique was that by systematically ignoring this issue in the context of wider reconstruction agendas, international assistance efforts had, in fact, supported an implicit, residual, privatised social policy which, essentially, reduced social policy to the level of 'humanitarian assistance.' International NGOs, in a very *ad hoc* and incoherent way, played the major role in implementing those policies. As the author became involved in a number of programme development activities in BiH, this tension continued to re-assert itself, with considerable pressure to focus not on structures of welfare governance, but on aid to specific vulnerable groups. In a sense, this juxtaposition itself reinforced the tendency to marginalise the voice of welfare subjects, because to focus on vulnerable groups at all appeared to give space to promote residual humanitarianism again.

Second, and crucially, in terms of the theme of this text, the programmes which the author was involved in planning sought to take seriously the pre-war welfare regime in BiH. Usually, international agencies paid little attention to the historical context, or misread it as 'state socialist' or 'just like the rest of

Eastern Europe' (the latter also being a misreading of 'Eastern Europe', of course). It was clear that external reform efforts were in danger of minimising the importance of deep seated memories of welfare inscribed within the cultural practices of long-standing institutions such as Centres for Social Work, the pillar of statutory social work in former Yugoslavia, existing for more than forty years, of which some 98 still existed in BiH in 1998, employing almost 400 qualified social workers (IBHI 1998a & b).

At one juncture, the then Deputy Director of the World Bank Resident Mission in BiH Saumya Mitra extolled that "the fact that in some senses we are beginning from the beginning here in a post-war period allows us to think radically and make radical proposals" (in Stubbs & Gregson 1998: 290). This telling quote shows the depth of thinking in which war is itself an 'opportunity' for radical reform, in which what went before is rendered, explicitly, useless. Hence there was a clear need for an approach which suggested that whilst certain institutional structures could be dismantled in this way, the memories, and cultural values placed upon those structures-- not experienced as separable (and therefore reformable) elements, but as a whole-- are much more resistant to change. The author's work on systematising welfare memories, however, which addressed the wider 'patchwork' of care provision, the importance of personal 'connections' (*veze*), and stressed the importance of post-1974 professional autonomy (which had developed at the expense of community-based approaches), still paid much less attention to the memory of welfare by users.

Third, there was a clear attempt to promote an explicit value commitment in BiH and in other post-Yugoslav countries to a 'welfare mix' or partnership approach, which sought to link Centres for Social Work with emerging forms of local non-governmental organisations and, indeed, to promote a new relationship between public, private and non-profit activities in social welfare, beginning at the local level, but with lessons learnt permeating through the whole system. In many ways, this was explicitly presented as an emerging European model of welfare, in opposition to, both, the residual, privatised, neo-liberal approach, and also a traditional social democratic statist approach.

Again, in retrospect, this was a somewhat technicist solution which downplayed the whole issue of the social relations of welfare and the lived experiences of welfare subjects. Indeed, in the process of programme development, even when encounters with 'beneficiaries' were requested, these tended to be highly contrived occasions, no more than snapshots and used, if at all, to make judgements about the particular organisation concerned.

Fourth, the author was involved in an explicit move from 'projects', short-term and trend-based, to 'programmes', longer term and more holistic. Much of the underpinnings of this came from a critique of the over-emphasis on professionalised psycho-social approaches to 'war trauma,' which medicalised suffering and led to a strengthening of the 'psy-complex' (Ingleby 1985) over social and community approaches. BiH and Croatia were sites of all manner of professional-led, Western-based trauma interventions, many of which linked up with local psychologists and other professions. Again, however, this shift tended to evacuate the terrain of the lived experience of welfare recipients, and failed, just as the dominant approaches did, to excavate the lived realities and the multiple coping strategies developed by people in their everyday lives.

Even when stated in this coherent fashion, the problems with systems-based thinking as an external reform lever should be clear. Indeed, the denial of memories and the mis-understanding of place are all too common in short-term consultancies which need to 'show results' – this was clearest when two World Bank consultants, over dinner on the first day of their 'mission', redesigned Bosnia's higher education system, or when a Finnish consultant, confused by the charm of Sarajevo and Travnik, appeared more confident in Prijedor ('at last, now I know where I am; it could be the former Soviet Union'). Indeed, the importance of interpersonal relationships is crucial to the success of consultancy work, even more so in a society such as BiH where 'trust' is built up over time and where loyalty to friends outweighs loyalty to ideas. Consultants are remembered less for their ideas than for their jokes, their idiosyncracies, their manners, and so on. At a more structural level, there is a danger of misrepresenting reality, in terms of a denial of the levels of corruption, the absence of a state (or the development of virtual or 'neo-

feudal' state structures), and the deep significance of systematic oppression and power relations. Making sense of all of this, theoretically, is even more complex.

Globalisation, welfare regimes and discourses of power

An emerging literature on globalisation and social policy (cf. Deacon, Hulse & Stubbs 1997) has focused little on the interconnections between the different levels at which policy is made; much less on the impacts on, and interactions with, welfare subjects. In retrospect, the work fails to address unresolved debates about how global social policy analysis should be conducted from a national and comparative perspective. The book, and much of the work of the Globalism and Social Policy Programme <http://www.gaspp.org> which followed it, is in danger of an uncritical 'scaling up' of some of the narrower foci of mainstream British social policy analysis, obsessed with administrative details; constructing typologies of welfare regimes; and underpinned by a fundamental belief that such analysis, particularly when supported by 'hard facts', can and will make things better. Within this positivistic approach, there is little room for what has been termed an emerging 'cultural' perspective on welfare which focuses much more on the social relations of welfare; the role of biographies, subjectivities, and memories; and the need for forms of reflexivity as well as attention to the minutiae of everyday life constructed within, and itself constructive of, 'welfare' as a lived experience (Freeman, Chamberlayne, Cooper & Rustin 1999). Indeed, it is International NGOs who usually raise these issues, albeit in ways which seldom connect with local meanings.

There is clearly a need, therefore, for consultancy models to be based on a study of social welfare in which any *prescriptions* are based on rigorous, thick, ethnographic *description*; favouring policies where *universal* entitlements co-exist with a recognition of *diversity,* and a commitment to a *plurality* of provision; in which *material* needs and the non-material need for *voice* −

186

'enabling ... people to develop their own ... social scripts' (ibid: 279) – are both treated as important; and in which due weight is placed on both the *content* and the *process* of reform measures and policy advice. This suggests a revised 'Third Way', not between capitalism and socialism, but between *absolutist* and *relativist* approaches to human needs in which outcomes matter – 'poverty' may well be a 'discourse', but people still die from it (Clarke 1998: 183) – but in which these outcomes are seen as always more complex, contradictory, and contested than the mere imposition, in local fields, of 'global scripts'.

One particular historical and spatial form - 'the welfare state' - has been attacked 'from above' (through neo-liberalism) and 'from below' (as 'statist'; as failing to address ethnicised and gender-based inequalities; insufficiently responsive to users' demands; and so on). Still, the lesson from this cannot be a return to old certainties or, indeed, a naïve, decontextualised and ahistorical view of the possibility of an 'international welfare state' (Townsend, quoted in Deacon, Hulse & Stubbs, op. cit: 9). In other words, a 'global social reformist project' (ibid: 25-27) is in danger of a peculiar silence about the social relations of welfare, and the implications of a global, expert-led social reformist project for welfare subjects, no less silenced by it than by other powerful gazes.

There is, thus, a need to interrogate recent work on 'welfare regimes' as the basis for an attempt to outline a new theoretical paradigm for the study of social welfare and social policy that would be of more value for understanding the process of welfare reform and transnational policy transfers. The concept of 'welfare regimes', at first glance, does not look to be particularly appropriate for the task in hand, with its origins in mainstream Anglo-Saxon social administration, albeit as refined by Esping-Anderson's (1990) classic analysis of the clustering of welfare states into three regime types. Subsequently, the approach has been adapted to embrace societies in transition and developing countries, with a fundamental break from the study only of "the mix of social policy measures carried out by the state" (Davis 2001: 80) to focus on "the interdependent way in which welfare is produced and

allocated between the state, market, civil society and the family" (DFID 2000). This notion of the 'welfare mix' has become the dominant way of conceptualising global welfare, underpinned by a recognition of the importance of a wider range of actors and organisations, and more attention to informal strategies, as key determinants of livelihoods. This prefigures a 'political economy approach' which 'embeds welfare institutions in the 'deep structures' of social reproduction', forcing researchers "to analyse social policy not merely in technical but in power terms" (Gough 2001: 169). From this perspective, the essential components of an 'extended welfare mix', can be outlined thus:

Table 1: The Extended Welfare Mix

	Domestic	*Supra-national*
State	**Domestic governance**	**International org's, national donors**
Market	**Domestic markets**	**Global Markets, MNCs (multi-national corporations)**
Community	**Civil Society, NGOs**	**International NGOs**
Household	**Households**	**International household strategies**

Even expressed in this form, a number of serious problems remain unresolved. Of the four spheres and eight components, that of 'community' lacks sufficient theoretical rigor – a case could be made for placing 'civil society' as a core concept, even though there are as many conceptual difficulties here as with 'community'. In this case, a wider range of non-state domestic and supra-national actors would need to be included, as the conflation of 'civil society' with 'NGOs' is a product of a very narrow understanding of this sphere, neglecting Community-based Organisations (CBOs), social movements, and other local initiatives (cf. Stubbs 1999). In addition, some of the components are 'structures' (global markets), some are 'strategies' (international household strategies), and most others are 'agents' (MNCs, for example). Even here, many agents are left out, notably international consultancy companies.

188

Crucially, the approach needs to be adapted further to see welfare regimes as 'generative cultures', crucial for understanding "the generation and operation of professional/power regimes" (Knowles 1999: 240). Seeing welfare regimes and their target populations as "composed through the various discourses which converge around them" (ibid: 245) which are "the product of "shifting meanings, priorities and professional responsibilities" (ibid: 246), shifts the focus onto 'disciplinarity' in all its dimensions, so that "the local micro-operations of welfare" (ibid: 249) are as important as, and constantly cut across, macro-reform projects and programmes, often in unexpected ways. Seeing the complex interactions between three broad groups of agents: 'policy makers', 'professionals' and 'welfare subjects', framed within particular discourses and practices (cf. Hansen 1997), adds another dimension to an 'extended welfare regime approach', thus:

Table 2. Discourses and practices in the extended welfare regime.

	Discourse	*Domestic*	*Supra-national*
Policy makers	**Administrative Efficiency/ System Effectiveness**	**State/ Civil Society/ Private Sector**	**Global Governance Institutions/ INGOs/ Donors/ Consultancy Companies**
Professionals	**Care/Control**	**Professional Associations**	**International Associations**
Welfare Subjects	**Need/Rights**	**User Groups**	**Transnational User Groups**

Notwithstanding conceptual problems similar to those in Table 1, this addition serves to focus attention on the 'comparative advantage' of globalised policy-making over international professional associations and transnational solidarities amongst welfare subjects. Both of these exist, of course, but tend to be subordinated in global arenas in which policy actors claim discourses of both Care and Control and of Needs and Rights, speaking for professionals and even more so, for welfare subjects, rather than dialoguing with and listening to them. If policy-making agents dominate, then professionals are often co-opted, with social workers, doctors, and so on, often incorporated in multi-disciplinary policy reform teams, which rarely, if ever, include any

189

representation of users of services. Again, the precise contours of these configurations will vary considerably – it is not unusual, for example, to find alliances between local and international professionals and international policy makers to force system change on local policy actors. The table shows the need to address agents, discourses and practices in more sophisticated ways.

New directions: A political economy of memory and welfare regimes

Most importantly, this extended notion of welfare regimes and discourses of power introduces a level of indeterminacy to welfare systems, by which is meant that it is becoming increasingly difficult to predict the real meanings of welfare systems from a modelling of their components, however sophisticated this becomes. This calls into question two dominant strands within the political-theoretical literature, one of which introduces a 'magical' notion of 'civil society' provision as preferable to state-based approaches, and the other, inverting this, which reproduces uncritical support for public provision regardless of the lived experience of welfare subjects. In fact, a much more fundamental distinction can and should be drawn between professionally-based state and civil society approaches, and approaches which are primarily user-led and driven by the demands of oppressed groups.

The social relations of what might best be described as 'welfare paradigms' turn out to be much looser and incomplete than even the most nuanced 'welfare regime' approach can describe. One searches, in vain, in some of the most recent work on welfare regimes in development contexts to hear the voice of service users and to gain glimpses into the everyday lives of the poorest groups in particular societies. In addition, there is a need to restore notions of historical and spatial specificity, so that these concepts are never taken to mean the same thing in different places at different times, even though a global policy discourse pretends exactly this. Reformist programmes tend to miss the need to focus on the study of welfare paradigms 'from the bottom up' (Freeman et al. 1999: 276), and there is little reflexive examination

of how policy makers and advisors, professionals and service users meet, or more often miss each other, discursively and in practice, in local settings framed within global meanings.

Within this, recent work on the politics of memory is of major importance in restoring notions of temporal and spatial specificity, and of bringing user perspectives in social welfare from margin to centre. Seeing memory as socially-constructed suggests that different collective memories, in the sense of 'versions of the past' (Zaviršek 1999: 71), are always struggling for dominance within welfare paradigms, and that recovering (literally re-membering), and giving space to, the memories of devalued social groups, or even recognising the importance of these groups' self-imposed silences, are crucial to any progressive project (cf. hooks, 1989). In a sense, this introduces a more profound set of questions of "how the past is dealt with in transitional moments" (Barahona de Brito, Gonzalez-Enriquez & Aguilar 2001: 19). Conceiving of 'transition' as involving both 'enormous changes' and 'significant continuities' (Lampland 2000: 209), shows how important collective memories are in societies undergoing rapid social change and suggests the need for ethnographic work to counter a 'transitology' literature which "explains little about how people have actually experienced … dramatic political, economic and sociocultural changes" (Berdahl 2000: 3).

In this sense, then, any work on welfare reform must examine how these 'versions of the past' are constitutive of struggles in the present. It becomes immensely important that former Yugoslavia's welfare system was praised in a 1975 World Bank report as 'very highly developed' and 'combining development with decentralization' (World Bank 1975). A somewhat unique welfare mix of workplace welfare, traditional family care, limited universal social rights, professionalised social protection, and a recognition of charitable and voluntary work, was in place after 1974. This formal combination was, also, always underpinned by informal contacts and patronage systems, as well as tolerated professional moonlighting (Kolarić 1998), which continues to be relevant in any reform process.

In the sphere of social welfare, there is a dearth of ethnographic accounts of reform processes. Deacon et al.'s study of the role of global agencies and their personnel is sensitive to debates and disagreements within and between supra-national actors, but is focused on the content of reform at the expense of process (especially Deacon, Hulse & Stubbs 1997: Chap. 4), and so preoccupied with systems studies of social policy and social protection that the impact of social service reforms on welfare users is neglected completely.

Conversely, Haney's important study of welfare reform in Hungary combines a nuanced account of the impact of reforms on professionals and their clients, and a plea for 'ethnohistories' to support contemporary ethnographies, with a crude suggestion that

> in the newly 'democratized' state sphere, global experts met up with 'needy' local experts – with the former using the latter to ground their poverty discourse, and the latter using the former to secure and promote their own professional ascendancy" (Haney, 2000: 57). The absence of any ethnographic detailing of meetings between local experts and the 'men in expensive suits' from the IMF and the World Bank, supposedly 'armed with neoliberal economic theory' (ibid: 50), diminishes this account in terms of its stated intention to explore how "discursive exchanges translated into institutional changes that altered the terms, the organization, and the connotations of welfare (ibid: 50).

Janine Wedel's (1999) pioneering study of US aid to Russia, in which a group of consultants best defined as 'transactors' with an elusive status, working in 'flexi organisations' and able to switch identity situationally is important, providing it is not at the expense of an understanding that there is, still, institutional memory and relatively stable organisational culture in some supranational agencies such as the World Bank and that, in many cases, the advice of consultants can be predicted as a result of their country of origin and/or donor agency for whom they work. Hence, global welfare can be seen as much more a question of trans-national than post-national meanings. The need to address global welfare reform as complex and contradictory is outlined further in my call, below, for an ethnography of welfare reform underpinned by an anthropology of policy.

Conclusions: New anthropology/new welfare?

Recent work on a reflexive and global ethnography may be crucial in a number of respects. As noted in the Introduction, an emerging anthropological approach to policy is part of an increasingly important attempt by ethnographers to 'study up' (Clifford 1997: 29), by focusing on elite institutions in the same, or similar, way, as subordinate groups were studied earlier. Of course, just as the older connections between anthropologists and missionaries forced a need for the former to make clear that they seek 'to understand and not to govern, to collaborate and not to exploit' (Clifford 1997: 65), newer links between ethnographers and consultants, particularly as 'fieldwork' becomes 'travel', and "vignettes replace theory" (Burawoy 2000b: 341), are also problematic.

The possibilities of a theoretically-routed ethnography and ethnohistory of welfare regimes, and of the development industries that feed them, focusing on the interface between regimes and subjects, is both necessary and complex. It requires a 'multi-voiced' account of diverse practices and discourses, through a multiplication of research sites. Above all, these ethnographic accounts, whilst seeking to reveal the micro-dimensions of power relationships, would need to adopt classical ethnography's concern with 'appreciating' the life-worlds of all of the different groups studied – the World Bank 'men in suits' as much as the 'drug-user client' of a welfare agency. Perhaps even more importantly, the linkages between diverse welfare worlds would need to be traced, analysed, and rendered problematic, rather than asserted as inevitable. The lengthening of the chains of interactions within welfare reform, so that it is never clear, exactly how and where policy is made, renders this even more difficult. In addition, the need to be 'surprised' by what ethnography reveals, must remain a central feature of the approach adopted. This 'appreciation' should not, however, interrupt the need for critical ethnography to envisage and envision new forms of democratic welfare practices, and to remain committed to "a critique of Western economic and

political forms by seeing them through the eyes of those experiencing their construction' (Verdery 1996: 10).

References

Apthorpe, R. (1997). 'Writing Development Policy and Policy Analysis Plain or Clear: on language, genre and power' in Shore, C. & S. Wright (eds.), *Anthropology of Policy: critical perspectives on governance and power.* London, Routledge, pp. 43-58.

Barahona de Brito, A., C. Gonzalez-Enriquez & P. Aguilar (2001). 'Introduction' in their (eds.), *The Politics of memory: transitional justice in democratizing societies.* Oxford, University Press, pp. 1-39.

Berdahl, D. (2000). Introduction. In: Berdahl, D., M. Bunzl & M. Lampland (eds.), *Altering States: ethnographies of transition in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union.* Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, pp. 1-13.

Burawoy, M. (2000a). Introduction: reaching for the global. In: Burawoy, M. et al., *Global Ethnography: forces, connections and imaginations in a post-modern world.* Berkely, University of California Press.

Burawoy M (2000b). Grounding Globalization. In: Burawoy, M. et al., *Global Ethnography: forces, connections and imaginations in a post-modern world.* Berkely, University of California Press.

Castells, M. (1996) *The Rise of the Network Society.* Oxford, Blackwell.

Clarke, J. (1998). Thriving on Chaos? Managerialism and Social Welfare. In: Carter, J. (ed.), *Postmodernity and the Fragmentation of Welfare.* London, Routledge; 171-186.

Clifford, J. (1997). *Routes: travel and translation in the late twentieth century.* Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Davis, P. (2001). Rethinking the Welfare Regime Approach: the case of Bangladesh. *Global Social Policy* 1(1): 79-107.

de la Porte, C. & B. Deacon (2002). Contracting Companies and Consultants: the EU and Social Policy of Accession Countries. GASPP Occasional Paper 9.

Deacon, B. with M. Hulse & P. Stubbs (1997). *Global Social Policy: international organizations and the future of welfare.* London, Sage.

Deacon, B. et al. (1996). *Action for Social Change: the case of UNPREDEP.* Report of the Intersectoral Mission on Developmental Social Issues. Helsinki, STAKES.

DFID (UK Government Department for International Development) (2000). Terms of Reference for BiH Project Planning Phase, Mimeo.

Duffield, M. (2001). *Global Governance and the New Wars: the merging of development and security.* London, Zed Books.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism.* Cambridge, Polity.

Freeman, R., P. Chamberlayne, A. Cooper & M. Rustin (1999). Conclusion: a new culture of welfare. In: P, Chamberlayne, A. Cooper, R. Freeman & M. Rustin (eds.). *Welfare and Culture in Europe: towards a new paradigm in social policy.* London, Jessica Kingsley, pp. 275-281.

Gough, I. (2001). Globalization and Regional Welfare regimes: the East Asian case. *Global Social Policy* 1(2): 163-189.

Gould, J. (2001) Ethnographies of Aid: a problematization. Paper for a Roskilde University Intensive Researcher Course.

Haney, L. (2000). Global Discourses of Need: mythologizing and pathologizing welfare in Hungary. In: Burawoy, M. et al. (eds.). *Global Ethnography: forces, connections and imaginations in a postmodern world.* Berkeley, University of California Press, pp. 48-73.

Hansen, H. (1997). Patients' Bodies and Discourses of Power. In: Shore, C. & S. Wright. *Anthropology of Policy: critical perspectives on governance and power.* London, Routledge; 88-104.

hooks b (1989). *Talking Back: thinking feminist, thinking black.* London, Sheba.

IBHI (Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues) (1998a). *Transition of the Policy and System of Social Protection in FBiH: second preliminary study of problems and proposals for changes.* IBHI, Sarajevo.

IBHI (1998b). *Social Protection System and Policy Transition in Republika Srpska.* IBHI, Banja Luka.

Ingleby, D. (1985). Professionals as socialisers: the 'psy complex'. In: Scull A. & S. Spitzer (eds.). *Research and Law, Deviance and social control.* New York, Jai Press, pp. 79-109.

Knowles, C. (1999). Cultural Perspectives and Welfare Regimes: The contributions of Foucault and Lefebvre. In: Chamberlayne, P. ey al. (eds). *Welfare and Culture in Europe: towards a new paradigm in social policy.* London, Jessica Kingsley; 240-254.

Kolarić, Z. (1998) The Non Profit Sector as a Service Providor in Different Types of Welfare Systems. In Stubbs, P. & K. Gregson (eds.). *Social Policy,Protection and practice: the care of vulnerable groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina.* Sarajevo: Skolska Knjiga.

Lampland, M. (2000). Afterword. In: Berdahl D et al. (eds.). *Altering States: ethnographies of transition in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union.* Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, pp. 209-218.

Sampson, S. (2000). *The Power of Abstract Concepts: authority in the world of democracy consulting.* Paper presented to the American Anthropology Association, November.

Schwartz, J. (1998). Tomorrow's Anthropology: NGOgraphy. *Argonoter* 19 November.

Stubbs, P. (1999). Non Governmental Organizations and Global Social Policy: towards a socio-cultural framework. In: Deacon B, Koivusalo M, Stubbs P, eds. *Aspects of Global Social Policy Analysis.* Helsinki, STAKES; 63-87.

Stubbs, P. (2003) International Non-State Actors and Social Development Policy. GASPP Policy Brief for the Government of Finland.

Stubbs, P. & K. Gregson eds. (1998). *Social Policy, Protection and Practice: the care of vulnerable groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina.* Bosnian and English Language Versions, Sarajevo, Svijetlost.

Verdery, K. (1996). *What Was Socialism, And What Comes Next?* Princeton: University Press.

Wedel, J. (1999). *Collision and Collusion: the strange case of Western aid to Eastern Europe.* Basingstoke, MacMillan.

World Bank (1975). *Yugoslavia: development with decentralization.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Zaviršek, D. (1999). Civil Society, Memory and Social Work. *International Perspectives in Social Work: Social Work and the State.* Brighton, Pavillion, pp. 65-74.