

GSP Forum: Views from the South

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2004). The ‘North–South dialogue on the prospects for socially progressive globalization’ begun in the Forum of *GSP* 1.2 in 2001 is, in my view, the most important but has proved the most difficult dialogue to maintain.

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Views from the South

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Ever since its inception, the *Global Social Policy* journal has been visualized as a collaborative effort to give voice to social policy issues from both developed and developing countries. This was institutionalized by the manner in which the editorial board was constituted, with representation from both the North and the South in the form of Regional Editors and members of the Advisory Board. This is what distinguishes *GSP* from most other international journals, which normally do not have representation from the southern countries on their editorial team. Over the years the content of the journal has reflected the concerns of Latin America, Africa, South Asia, East Asia and North America on various social policy issues. However, in future, there is a need to seriously review how this can be strengthened and made much more vibrant. Is it possible to consider having one issue every year that would focus on a region, which would address some major social policy concern? This would help the Regional Editors to take a more proactive role in planning and identifying potential authors and book reviews for the journal. The journal has tried to work around special themes; the one I worked on with Eeva Ollila and Meri Koivusalo on health was quite a success, and we were able to get a fairly good regional representation on health service related issues. I find that it is extremely useful for teaching and research for courses related to comparative studies in health systems. Similarly, the articles on pension reforms in Latin America, Russia and other Eastern European countries have been a valuable addition to the research in global social policy.

Books published from the different regions also need better representation in *GSP*. For the South Asian region, I tried to establish a link with Sage India in order to send titles to the editor of book reviews but I do not think it worked very well. Maybe one could plan for theme-based book reviews and the Regional Editors could select some suitable publications for review in *GSP*. Similarly, if there are special issues from the different regions then

selected books or reports on subjects related to global social policy could be included in the review section. It is also worthwhile exploring regional publishers across the regions, which never get represented in international journals. The South Asian region still has a number of such publishers and it is worth exploring how they can be better represented in the book review section. It may be a good idea to discuss how the link between *GSP* and a range of publishers can be more effectively worked out in future and defining the role that the Regional Editors must play in this process.

An important outcome of the collaboration between individuals who have been brought together on the Editorial Board and team is the creation of a network between some of the institutions from which the individuals belonged. Some of these have been formalized and others are in the process of being so. This is a task that the journal must carry forward, and we must continue to discuss possibilities for the future of this network. Given constraints in funding, what is the nature of the activities that this network proposes to promote across institutions? In what ways can the network contribute to the future of the journal? Maybe it is time for the Regional Editors to have some minimum support for creating a resource base of potential authors and publishers, which could strengthen collaborative initiatives and also the journal.

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The GSP Challenge of Being Global and Relevant to Global Policies

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When *Global Social Policy* was started, social policies were still mostly discussed, debated and analysed in a national context, and international social policies were primarily about comparative social policies. Another problem with promoting a more global approach to social policy has been that in most of the 'development literature', the emphasis has been on poverty and analysis of poverty reduction efforts rather than on social policy. The name of the journal also invites thinking about potential social policy implemented at a global level. However, a journal called 'global' social policy has been in some ways problematic in relation to the critical mainstream emphasis on diversity and variation. Global social policy research and analysis is also produced by different academic disciplines, which results not only in an interesting journal, but also more work to ensure a sufficiently broad academic home ground and readership for the journal as well as seeking to 'translate' between disciplines.

Globalization has for its part influenced the journal, and the changing context of social policies in many countries has made the relevance of the *GSP* stronger and helped to articulate the case for a journal on global social policy.