'Policy Transfer and Programmatic Change in Communist Successor Parties in East-Central Europe'

(Leverhulme project F/00094/O: www.igs.bham.ac.uk/research/PolicyTransfer.htm)

Final Report

<u>The Grant</u>

In August 2001, Professor William Paterson, Dr. Daniel Hough and Dr. Marcin Zaborowski won an award of over £107,000 from the Leverhulme Trust (project no.: F/00094/O) to carry out research on policy transfer and programmatic change in the Communist Successor Parties (CSPs) of East -Central Europe. Work began in March 2002 under the direction of Professor Paterson and with Research Fellows Mr. Piotr Buras, Dr. Vladimir Handl and Dr. James Sloam. The project was completed at the end of May, 2003.

<u>Objectives</u>

The aim of the project was to analyse programmatic change in the Communist Successor Parties (CSPs) of East Central Europe. In particular the study has sought to pinpoint how and under what conditions external influences have come to bear on these parties, focusing on the party to party transfer from West European Social Democracy to these CSPs. Based on the hypothesis that transfer will be dependent upon 'proximity' (geographical, cultural and ideological), it was expected that German social democracy would have the greatest influence on the Successor Parties.

The aim was determine *why*, *how* and *when* policy took place between 'exporter parties' in Western Europe and 'importer' parties in East Central Europe. The case studies chosen on the *exporter* side were the German Social Democrats SPD), the British Labour Party and the French Parti Socialiste. Particular emphasis was placed on the role the German SPD in light of the proximity hypothesis set out above. The *importer* parties (CSPs) chosen were the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) in Germany, the Polish social democratic alliance (SLD), the Czech Communist Party (KSCM) and the Slovakian social democrats (SDL). The data was analysed through a preliminary literature review, and a triangulation of the *programmatic review*, *discourse analysis* and *elite interviews* explained below.

Research Activity

The project was undertaken using a policy transfer framework to study the diffusion of policy to the Successor Parties of East Central Europe. The first stage of the process involved an extensive literature review of policy transfer, the nature party programmes in political parties, the programmatic development of West European social democracy (the 'exporter' parties examined in the study), and the programmatic development of the Successor Parties in Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia.

The second stage, using further data, from archives and other first-hand sources entailed an analysis a more detailed programmatic analysis (*institutional analysis*) of election manifestos and other documents of a 'programmatic quality', coupled with a 'qualitative discourse analysis' of these programmes. The third stage involved elite-level interviews with key actors in the relevant political parties and institutions. The fieldwork (elite interviews, archive work) was conducted in London, Berlin, Warsaw, Prague and Bratislava.

At the beginning of each stage of the project, workshops were held to discuss the findings of the previous phase and finalise the strategy for the next phase in the research process. These took place in Birmingham (March and May, 2002, and March 2003). The first workshop was purely used for planning, the second workshop presented exploratory papers on the party case studies, and the third workshop presented the papers to be delivered at the PSA conference in April 2003 (see below). A further workshop took place in Berlin (November 2002) hosted by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (see Appendix II).

The political context of the individual CSP was 'critical' in determining both the 'openness' to transfer and the type of transfer that takes place. Party identity and national political systems, in particular, presented very different 'opportunity structures' for CSPs in the construction of their programmes. The project looked at CSPs in four such diverse contexts: the PDS in Germany, the SLD in Poland, the KSCM in the Czech Republic, and the SDL in Slovakia. The strong influence of social democratic ideas on the SLD programme, for example, lay in stark contrast to the orthodox socialist policies that continue to be supported in the KSCM. Using a combination of the research methods set out above, the study analysed policy change and looked for the existence of policy transfer in four key policy areas: the welfare state, the labour market, the European Union and external security. While certain party elites have proved apt at rhetorically advocating policies, the substance behind these policies was often found to be lacking. The project, thus, examined the linkage between policy programmes and policy outcomes. The final stage of the project, therefore, further incorporated these contexts and the results of the elite interviews into the overall structure of the project.

Conclusions and Achievements

The project found that party-to-party policy transfer was not common as the single source of policy transfer impacting directly on party programmes, because of the voluntary nature of such 'lesson-drawing', the obstacles to transfer between such diverse political environments, and the wide variety of sources from which new policies may emanate. The study nevertheless concluded that a more subtle 'diffusion' of policy was clearly discernable in the case studies through 'inspirational' *ideational transfer* (emulation), and – more effectively – through concrete interactions between informal, ad hoc *transfer networks*. In this way, policies were adapted and adopted (with widely varying degrees of 'faithfulness' to the original policy) by the individual Successor Party. Strong evidence was found that this form of transfer was highly dependent upon the forms proximity mentioned above, as evidenced in a comparison of the relative influence and impact of the German, British and French social democracy.

The research does not provide conclusive evidence for direct forms of policy transfer between political parties, but has identified a more subtle diffusion of policy across space that exists in reality. The project not only provides a detailed analysis of the programmatic development of European social democracy and the Successor Parties of East Central Europe, but also provides a much needed empirical study on the broader process of 'policy learning'.

Publications and Dissemination

The project has produced a number of journal articles, either published;
- Handl, V (2003), 'Od pragmatismu k dialogu' (From pragmatism to dialogue), *Literarni Noviny*, No. 33, p.4
- Handl, V (2002), *Die Tschechische Kommunistische Partei : orthodoxes Fossil oder erfolgreiche neo-kommunistische Protestpartei?*, Bonn: Friedrich Ebert (electronic versio: www.fes.de)

- Hough, D (Winter 2002), 'The PDS and the Concept of the Volkspartei?", *German Politics and Society*, 20 (4), pp. 27-47.
- Zaborowski, M (Winter 2002/2003), 'External Influences in the Transition Politics of Central and Eastern Europe', *Perspectives- The Central European Review of International Affairs*, 19

forthcoming;
- Handl, V (October, 2003), *Hard and Soft Left Antagonism? The Transformation of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and its Relations to the Social Democrats*, Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung
- Paterson, W.E. and Sloam J (2004), 'Failing Successfully: European Social Democracy in the 21st Century', in Lawson, K and Merkl, P, *When Parties Prosper*

or, in preparation.
- Buras, P, 'The Changing Values of Polish Social Democracy: tracking change through discourse analysis' (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung)
- Sloam, J, 'Qualitative Programmatic Analysis: A New Approach to the Study of Political Parties'
- Sloam, J, 'The Changing Values of European Social Democracy: tracking change through discourse analysis' (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung)
- Sloam, J and Hough, D, 'Policy Transfer and Programmatic Change in the Communist Successor Parties of East Central Europe' (short article on project findings)

A special issue of the Communist and Transition Studies journal (which will also be published as a book), edited by Paterson, Hough, Sloam and Zaborowski, has been accepted for publication in 2005. This will present the findings of the project be entitled: 'Learning from the West: Policy Transfer and Programmatic Change in the Communist Successor Parties of East Central Europe'.

Finally, a conference was recently held (September 2003) on the findings of the project (see Appendix I) which will lead to series of discussion papers, and – it is intended – to an edited volume (Sloam, Paterson, Hough and Zaborowski) on social democracy in East Central Europe.

The project team furthermore organised two panels at the Political Studies Association (PSA) conference in Leicester (April, 2002), to discuss and publicise the preliminary findings of the project:

Panel 1: Policy Transfer, Social Democracy and Programmatic Change
Chair: Professor William Paterson, University of Birmingham
Speakers: Dr. James Sloam, University of Birmingham
‘Learning the Easy Way: Policy Transfer in West European Social Democracy’
Dr. Marcin Zaborowski, University of Aston
‘External Influences in the Transition Politics of CEE’

Panel 2: ‘Policy Transfer and Programmatic Change in East Central Europe’
Chair: Professor Karen Henderson, University of Leicester
Speakers: Dr. Daniel Hough, University of Nottingham
‘The PDS, Programmatic Development and Policy Transfer’
Mr. Piotr Buras, University of Birmingham
‘Policy Transfer and Programmatic Change in Polish Social Democracy’
Dr. Vladimir Handl, Institute of International Relations, Prague
‘Policy Transfer and Programmatic Change in the Czech Communist Party’

As mentioned above, a conference of academics and policy-makers was held at the Institute for German Studies, 11-12 September, 2003 (‘Mapping the Left in an Enlarged European Union’), to discuss social democracy in East Central Europe, on the basis of research undertaken for the project (see Appendix I). Finally, a further panel was organised with British Academy funding (‘Learning from the

West?: the Transfer of Policy from German to Polish Social Democracy'), to disseminate the project finding at the American German Studies Association (GSA) conference in New Orleans, 18-21 September, 2003.

Future Research Plans

Aside from the plans for dissemination and publication set out above, members of the project group are also in the process of planning funding proposals on 'lesson-drawing in social democracy', 'social democracy in east central Europe' and the 'diffusion of policy innovations in East Central Europe'.

Keywords

Policy Transfer,
Programmes,
Successor Parties,
East Central Europe,
Social Democracy

'Mapping the Left in an Enlarged European Union: Convergence or Divergence?'

Conference at the Institute for German Studies
(School of Social Sciences Building)
University of Birmingham, 11-12 September 2003

Thursday, 11 September

Session 1: 10:30-12:00

'Introduction: Changing Patterns of the Left'

William Paterson/ James Sloam, 'The Social Democratic Left: Convergence, Divergence and the Diffusion of Ideas' (University of Birmingham)

Daniel Hough/ Marcin Zaborowski, 'The Path of the Communist Successor Parties in the New Europe' (University of Sussex/ Aston)

Colin Hay, 'Be Wary of What you Wish for: *Third Way* Political Economy and the Dangers of Neoliberal Contagion in an Enlarged Europe' (University of Birmingham)

Session 2: 13:00-14:30

'The Left in Transition' (Roundtable)

Chair: Daniel Hough (University of Sussex)

Aleks Szczerbiak (University of Sussex)

Geoffrey Pridham (University of Bristol)

John Callaghan (University of Wolverhampton)

Session 3: 15:00-16:30

'Mapping the Left from the EU Level'

Chair: James Sloam

Simon Murphy (MEP, Party of European Socialists)

Nick Crook (PES)

Friday, 12 September, 2003

Session 1: 9:30-11:00

'The Hard Left'

Chair: Vladimir Handl (Institute of International Relations, Prague)

Michael Brie (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung)

Miloslav Ransdorf (Czech KSCM)

Session 2: 11:30-13:00

'Mapping the Left in the New Europe'

Chair: Marcin Zaborowski (Aston University)

Jerzy Wiatr (University of Warsaw)

Atilla Agh (Budapest University of Economic Sciences)

Peter Weiss (Slovak SDA)

Session 3: 14:00-15:30

'Connecting East with West: Social Democracy in the New Europe'

Chair: John Gaffney (Aston University)

James Sloam (University of Birmingham)

Mike Gapes MP (Labour Party)

Conclusions: 15:30-15:45

'Concluding Remarks'

William Paterson (Director, Institute for German Studies)

Appendix II

'Project workshop: 1-2 November, 2002, Berlin'

Friday, November 1   *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Hiroschimastr. 17*

10:00 – 10:45 Orientation Meeting

Chair: Willie Paterson

·   Progress: outstanding issues from Birmingham Workshop

·   Agenda for Berlin Workshop

11:00 – 12:15: Discourse Analysis I - European Social Democracy

Lead: James Sloam, Chair: Willie Paterson

·   Discourse Analysis

·   Results and Implications

13:15 – 14:30: Discourse Analysis II - Czech Republic and Slovakia

Lead: Valdimir Handl, Chair: Michael Dauderstädt

·   Discourse Analysis

·   Results and Implications

14:45 – 15:45: Discourse Analysis III - Poland

Lead: Piotr Buras, Chair: Marcin Zaborowski

·   Discourse Analysis

·   Results and Implications

16:00 – 17:00: Discourse Analysis IV: The PDS

Lead: James Sloam, Chair: Stuart Gapper

·   Discourse Analysis

·   Results and Implications

17:15 – 18:00: First Day Conclusions

Chair: Willie Paterson

· Role of Discourse Analysis in Project

Saturday, November 2

9:00 – 10:00: Programmatic Analysis - European social democracy

Lead: James Sloam, Chair: Michael Dauderstädt

· Initial findings of programmatic analysis

· Direction of analysis, interviews

10:15 – 11:15: Progammatic Analysis II – Poland

Lead: Piotr Buras, Chair: Marcin Zaborowski

· Initial findings of programmatic analysis

· Direction of analysis, interviews

11:30 – 12:30: Programmatic analysis III – Czech Rep, Slovakia

Lead: Vladimir Handl, Chair: Piotr Buras

· Initial findings of programmatic analysis

· Direction of analysis, interviews

13:30 – 14:30: Programmatic Analysis IV: The PDS

Lead: Daniel Hough, Chair: Stuart Gapper

· Initial findings of programmatic analysis

· Direction of analysis, interviews

14:30 – 1530: Project planning

Chair: Willie Paterson

· Programmatic Analysis

· Elite level interviews

· Diffusion of Work: Articles, Papers etc.

· Timetable (conferences etc.)