

## **Knowledge, Organisations and Policy Seminar**

Social policies exist and are developed in a framework of large policy networks, including not only policymakers but also researchers and practitioners working in organisations delivering public services and campaigning for policy change. Knowledge is inherent in policymakers' and practitioners' work in devising and implementing social policies. The making of social policies is knowledge work. Policymaking and policy implementation primarily entail the mobilisation of different forms of knowledge, such as evidence and experience, practical, academic and scientific knowledge; and their transformation into norms, rules and instruments that are used in producing, delivering and assessing social policies within an organisation.

The production of social policies by policymakers and the translation of social policies into concrete practices by practitioners are broadly treated as two separate domains in social science research. In other words, policymaking and policy implementation more often than not are examined separately. However, social policies are inclusive of both elements. Furthermore, policy and organisational work combine in shaping and reshaping social policies over time and space. The meaning and the social practices they involve are emergent, gradually constructed and re-constructed through policymakers' and practitioners' actions and interactions with actors from within and outwith the organisations in which they are based.

Through this seminar, the production of social policies at both the policy and organisational levels will be discussed at length. To do that, we will look at policymakers' and practitioners' work in using, producing, translating, and circulating knowledge, as well as how social science researchers contribute at the core of social policies. By considering policymakers', practitioners' and researchers' work in transforming knowledge, we intend to examine the following areas:

- The democratisation of social policies (who is involved and/or enabled to actively participate in the knowledge work).
- The concrete practices involved in producing and circulating knowledge in relation to social policies. For example: commissioning research, collaborating with academic institutions, internal and external meetings, writing documents, etc.
- The influence of different contexts (different countries, organisations, and policy levels) in determining who is to be involved and how social policies are made. To address divergent contexts, we intend to invite and compare the narratives of policymakers and practitioners from Belgium, Scotland, and possibly other European institutions.

In addition to examining the knowledge work involved in producing and implementing social policies, as social science researchers, there is a need for us to question our work in collecting, assembling and disseminating scientific knowledge of social policies. On the one hand, we need to address key methodological questions concerning data collection and analysis, and reflect on policymakers' and practitioners' knowledge work. On the other hand, we need to be aware of the role of the scientific knowledge of social policies that we generate in policymakers' and practitioners' knowledge work. Therefore, we need to ask ourselves about the kind of impacts we should and should not have on social policies, and how the way we produce and disseminate scientific knowledge is defining the scope and nature of our possible impacts.

To this end, we intend to address the following questions:

- How do we collect data (knowledge production) and observe knowledge production and transformation?
- How do we use knowledge?
- How do we interact with practitioners and policymakers in producing and assembling knowledge?

- How is knowledge produced and/or exchanged through social interactions/networks?
- How do we involve research participants and/or end users in research?
- What is at stake in producing knowledge in policy and organisational research?
- How do we disseminate scientific knowledge of social policies within academic settings and beyond?
- How can scientific knowledge influence social policymaking and implementation, and achieve active participation in policy and organisational knowledge work?