Towards a New Welfare Architecture

Friday, September 13, 2002 – In both the European Union and North America, policy communities are redesigning their welfare regimes around a new emphasis on investing in children. There is a remarkable convergence around a new focus on human capital, "investments" for the future, life-long learning, activation and so on.

Jane Jenson, Director of CPRN's Family Network, and Denis Saint-Martin, Family Network Research Associate, describe the shift as one "from Fordism to a LEGO model".

What is taking place, they argue, is nothing less than the renegotiation of the post-war social contract – a rethinking of the very architecture of welfare – the respective responsibilities of families, market, and communities as well as states.

The Social Cohesion Project at the Université de Montréal (www.fas.umontreal.ca/POL/cohesionsociale), in which CPRN is a partner, organized a panel on this topic at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Boston at the end of August.

Entitled, "Redesigning Welfare Regimes: The Building Blocks of a New Architecture", the panel featured a presentation by Jenson and Saint-Martin, ***Building Blocks for a New Welfare Architecture: From Ford to LEGO?***

Also featured, were presentations by Ruth Lister, ***Investing in the Citizen-Workers of the Future: New Labour's "Third Way" in Welfare Reform***, by David Craig and Wendy Larner, ***After Neoliberalism? Local Partnerships and Social Governance in Aotearoa New Zealand***, and by Anton Hemerijck, ***The Self-Transformation of the European Social Model(s)***.

You can access copies of these presentations on the Social Cohesion Project Web site by clicking here then clicking on What's New