

3. Public policy conceptions: priorities of social service provision in Europe

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INTRODUCTION

There is great diversity in social service arrangements across countries. Some offer broadly accessible social services for their citizens, while in others social transfers and social services are fragmented and not available to everyone. Some care services are targeted or conditional, and therefore selective, while others are universally available. Policy reforms may open social services for new groups or new purposes, but they may also push social care and welfare production back into the realm of informal support and charity. They may try out new forms of organisation and governance and draw, for instance, on the private sector, users' co-production or social movement support. Such institutional features shape the extent and the ways in which citizens access care services; they affect their well-being and ways of life. They have a part in defining what role public policies play in societies and how states relate to their subjects. The design of social services is in that sense *normatively consequential*, and this chapter seeks to identify their overall character and conceptual underpinnings. It explores the core ambitions and policy goals underlying social service designs and identifies differences in normative commitments across policy fields and countries and over time.

The chapter distinguishes ideal-typical *policy conceptions*, which capture the goals and priorities informing the design of social service institutions. While they reveal a lot of ambiguity in their moral underpinnings, policy conceptions help us to see diverse goals and normative commitments that may leave their marks on the design of social policies. Because the institutional designs are normatively consequential, policy conceptions are in turn *institutionally consequential*; they suggest typical features of institutional design and not others. Institutional design and moral underpinnings are interdependent. This allows us to relate social service institutions to

their normative background and evaluative dimensions. Against this backdrop, we explore the direction of institutional change in social services. This allows us to identify differences between the rhetoric surrounding social services and their actual institutional design and to assess the institutional and normative coherence of policy innovation.

The next section introduces two evaluative dimensions that capture the diversity of public policy conceptions particularly well: *priorities and core commitments* and the *main orientation and targets* of public policy engagement in social service fields. Section 2 lays out the details of institutional design that allow us to draw conclusions about policy conceptions. Because public policy conceptions are institutionally consequential, three cases of social service developments are reviewed in section 3 in light of their underlying policy conceptions. This allows us to learn something about the (in-)consistency between policy conceptions underlying social service innovation and potential bones of contention in reform processes; it can be read as an interpretation of directions of policy change. As this interpretation is based on the analysis of institutional development, and not on political rhetoric or declarations of intent, it will necessarily be tentative about stipulating a coherent strategy and 'logic' of social services development. Section 4 concludes by commenting on the relationship between policy ideas and institutional change and the status of policy conceptions.

1. POLICY CONCEPTIONS, CAPTURING THE CHARACTER OF SOCIAL SERVICE DESIGNS

'Traditional' informal care arrangements are often contrasted with a 'modern' system of social care in the public realm. But it is hard to understand private, for-profit forms of care services within a framework of this distinction, because the distinction collapses all forms of social care outside the private home of the family into one big category of 'modernised care arrangements'. It would suggest, for instance, that current trends of de-institutionalisation of care for the elderly entail 're-traditionalisation' of care – a problematic interpretation. Likewise, only analysing the generosity of resources allocated for social service infrastructures does not adequately capture the significant characteristics of social service arrangements. These examples demonstrate that many of the customary distinctions of political commentary are somewhat difficult to use for describing and evaluating institutional arrangements in the field of social services, because the evaluative dimensions are not very clear.

Both practitioners and policy analysts are interested in questions like whose interests and whose decisions should take centre stage when think-

ing about social service design. This can be individuals or social groups – the notion that many in the social policy community intuitively embrace – but it can also be organisations or policy-making elites. This is the question about *principal outlook* and *core commitments* of social policy: is it *utilitarian* at its core in that it enlists individuals and social groups in the pursuit of goals (such as economic efficiency or a certain social order) that are not necessarily their own, or is social policy *emancipatory* in the sense that individuals are free to develop their own definitions of the means and ends of social policy – or at the very least allowed to participate in the definition of goals and priorities? This question has a longstanding tradition in the social policy community, and it is relatively straightforward as a question for evaluating institutional design. There is a second evaluative dimension of social service design, which concerns the question of who – or what – the (re-)designers of social services have in mind in their policy initiatives: is the perception and outlook on social services an *individualist* or a *collectivist orientation*? Who (or what kind of social unit) is the primary addressee of social policies? Including this analytical element adds relevant information because institutional changes affect this latter dimension independently of the first. The question of individualism or collectivism is more than a facet of the tension between emancipatory and utilitarian orientations.

There are, thus, two principal questions that help explore the function and the impact of social policy: does it discipline, or does it support? Is it collectivist or individualist in orientation? Together they constitute an evaluative metric that allows us to gauge the character of policy design and evaluate its conceptual and normative underpinnings. Let us have a closer look at the two dimensions.

Principal Outlook and Core Commitments: Emancipatory or Utilitarian?

The position of social policy as first and foremost supporting social groups and individuals in their pursuit of happiness is at the core of the social policy community's shared commitments, among researchers and practitioners alike. We find the idea of social policy as emancipatory and in that sense 'progressive' in T.H. Marshall (1950), who conceptualised social rights as citizenship rights and established progress in the qualitative aspects associated with social rights as one of the principal obligations of the welfare state. The primary purpose of social policy, Marshall says, is to secure living standards that will allow even the poor their fair share in their countries' socio-cultural heritage. In the development of social policy and the growth of qualitative equality, he expected 'the amelioration of the working classes' to go on 'steadily, if slowly, till, by occupation, at

least, every man is a gentleman' (Marshall, 1950, p.4f.). This notion of 'amelioration', of qualitative enhancement of individuals' fate and social conditions over time, is what George Steinmetz would later call a 'Whig narrative of social progress' (Steinmetz, 1993, p. 31), an image according to which welfare state development is a facet of social progress and sociopolitical modernisation of societies.

Steinmetz himself is critical of the perspective, and points to observations and interpretations about the regulatory and disciplinary aspects of social policy. A large body of research has described the roots of social policy in government activities that seek to police deviant behaviour (Higgins, 1980; Piven and Cloward, 1971). Welfare state scholars have also uncovered the incentive character and the educational ambitions of the big cash transfer schemes, in which conditionality rewards certain ways of life while putting others at a disadvantage (Mätzke, 2011). There are some arguments that consider attempts at regulating individual conduct to be increasingly important in current social policy approaches, because, informed by the activation paradigm, they place emphasis on individual responsibility (Evers, 2008). Historically the tradition of social discipline has been most pronounced in poverty policies (Leibfried and Tennstedt, 1985) and social work. Here the connotations with controlling deviant behaviour and instructing marginalised groups are most pronounced, and the perception of social policy as educational and even disciplinary is strongest. In modern social insurance systems and social service arrangements there is little by way of outright coercion that could require people to use certain social services (Anttonen and Sipilä, 1996). Still, the close historical and current connection with social work and looking after marginalised groups accounts for a legacy of social discipline in many contemporary social service fields. Social services and their expansion, therefore, do not automatically amount to an emancipatory agenda.

The Targets of Social Policy Intervention: Individualist or Collectivist Orientations?

The second dimension along which policy conceptions vary captures the distinction between individualist and collectivist approaches to state intervention and public policy. It is an independent contrast in that emancipation does not imply an individualist approach to public policies, just as not all collectivist public policy conceptions would prioritise order and discipline. The two dimensions cut across each other. 'Individualism' would entail conceiving of patterns of interests and social problems strictly through the eyes of individuals (Spicker, 2013). A corollary of this view is that individuals' capacity to act and decide becomes important both on

the conceptual and on the practical level (Spicker, 2013, p. 32). This may mean different things, however. It may entail an obligation of public policy to invest in enabling and empowering policies, a public policy conception quite far removed from the notions of minimalist government with which the individualist outlook tends to be associated most of the time (Spicker, 2013, pp. 195–200), but it may also imply an emphasis on employability, labour market activation, and workfarist educational measures, which are associated with the ‘individual responsibility’ – public policy ideal. In the case of active labour market policies, the dividing line between empowerment and social discipline tends to be blurry in any case, and on the individual level it is often difficult to distinguish enabling from tutelary policies (Goldberg, 2001, p. 304), and to set those apart from educational and disciplinary measures. The individualistic point of reference, therefore, can assume both flavours, that of an emancipatory public policy agenda, and that of educational and disciplinary intervention.

Communities of various description form alternative addressees of policy. Conceptualisations of social class as one of the principal units of collective identities and preferences are legion in the welfare state literature: Esping-Andersen (1990) refers to individual autonomy when introducing his concept of de-commodification, but he insists that this is not only about workers’ welfare, but also about the working class movement’s power. So, he has social groups in mind when thinking about de-commodification (Orloff, 1993, p. 311), and emancipation is not primarily individual advancement and empowerment but class emancipation (Goldberg, 2001, p. 305). In many social service fields the central collective unit is the family, both as welfare provider and policy target. Patricia Strach (2007) shows how even in the United States, where individualism is entrenched in political ideas, ‘the family is an essential part of day-to-day politics’. It is used to accomplish political goals and appears in policy debates not only as a normative ideal to be defended, but also as a criterion of eligibility to social transfers and services and an administrator that takes goods and services and distributes them among the family members (Strach, 2006, p. 152f.). This too is social policy, taking a collectivist reference point. So does the subsidiarity principle, which plays such a central role in ideas about social services. The subsidiarity principle has evolved into a major justification for third sector involvement and new forms of self-help and bottom-up initiatives (Sachße, 2000, pp. 208–11). The point of reference for such forms of welfare production is various forms of social groups, recognising their shared interests, yet at the same time recognising and defending those interests as *particularist* ones.

State and society as reference points for public policy conceptions are also a ‘collectivist’ perspective. The ‘whig narrative of the welfare state’

(Steinmetz, 1993) – of political development as growth of social justice and security – is an example of an ‘ameliorationist’ macro-perspective; it echoes Marshall’s idea of civilisatory progress, and it is widespread among social policy researchers. It is also possible to conceive of the collectivist outlook on society in a utilitarian and disciplinary vein. Social groups can mobilise and rebel, or they can acquiesce. And public policies can create the incentives that encourage certain behaviours and militate against others (Mätzke, 2011). In that sense, we speak of public policy conceptions in which the macro-polity is reference point and beneficiary of certain public policies. Many public policies have such instrumentalist traits (Mätzke and Ostner, 2010). Mary Daly (2004, p. 146f.) points out the utilitarian aspects of the social investment strategy, or one can observe them also in the expectations formulated about the family’s functions in a newly developing discourse about family failures and parenting support (Ostner, 2011).

A Map of Possibilities

Regardless of whether public policies refer to individuals or collectives, they walk a fine line between support and emancipation, on the one hand, and discipline and control on the other. Often, we find both combined in the design of public policies and social services, and thus we should more adequately speak of a continuum and a field of tension in which different policies and institutions lay different emphases on one motif or the other (e.g. Javornik, 2014). The cross-section of the two dimensions yields a map of policy conceptions that can be used for describing and evaluating core commitments and main targets of policy designs. It presents *an institutional picture*, showing six ideal-typical constellations of commitments and targets (see Figure 3.1). Social service arrangements or institutional developments in countries or social service fields can be thought as occupying various positions in the field of tension defined by these ideal types. Amelioration and emancipation can pertain to individual advancement and empowerment, to that of social groups, and it can also assume the meaning of political development as social progress. Likewise, it can be individuals that are the focus of attention of educational endeavours, it can be social groups that are the target of attempts at co-optation and control, and it can be the polity itself, social stability, the maintenance of (a certain) social order, or even an active pursuit of some macro-political destiny that social reformers have in mind when designing and redesigning public policies.

2. OBSERVING INSTITUTIONAL DETAILS TO IDENTIFY POLICY CONCEPTIONS

There are broad areas of overlap among the public policy conceptions. Discipline and support have often co-existed in the design of social policies. Yet, however close the connection between support and discipline or individualism and collectivism may be, *they are not the same*. They are rooted in very different ideas of politics and society, and this is consequential: it affects not only the way in which policy-makers talk about and justify their policy choices, but more importantly also the way in which social service schemes are designed. *Because* policy conceptions have institutional consequences, they are also competing, at least to a certain extent – they suggest *certain* institutional features for policies and not others. And because this is so, in turn, it becomes possible to identify differences of emphasis in the design of social policy arrangements, as informed by different policy conceptions. It becomes possible to use the map of policy conceptions (in Figure 3.1) to characterise, position and evaluate public policies and social service arrangements and trends in policy development. And it becomes possible to study strategies and policy programmes, instances of policy innovation and processes of institutional change and to locate these on the map of possibilities.

		CORE COMMITMENTS	
		<i>Amelioration and liberty (Emancipatory commitments)</i>	<i>Order and discipline (Utilitarian goals)</i>
MAIN TARGETS	<i>Individuals</i>	(I) Emancipation: providing support in individual advancement and empowerment	(II) Regulation of individual conduct: securing acceptable and productive behaviour
	<i>Social groups</i>	(III) Emancipation: mobilisation, empowerment and participation of social groups	(IV) Class politics as co-optation: utilisation of social groups and families as co-producers of welfare
	<i>State & society</i>	(V) Political development: growth in social justice and equality (the 'Whig-narrative' of the W.S.)	(VI) Social order and political stability: quiescence and behaviour of groups and individuals as resource

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Figure 3.1 *Policy conceptions: commitments and targets in social service design*

There is a range of features of institutional design that allow us to relate institutional development to the evaluative metric of policy conceptions and thus learn something about core commitments and targets of social policy design. In the case of social services, they all in one way or another regulate who can and who must use social services, i.e. different aspects of access and service quality. One can distinguish two perspectives from which to examine these aspects.

The Supply Perspective

Here access is a function of availability of social services, and availability, in turn, has a quantitative, a qualitative and a procedural side. It looks at social services from the perspective of the providers of social services, analyses their number, a range of qualitative aspects of their services, and the way they are regulated. Specifically, we can distinguish the following design features of social services:

1. *The quantitative dimension of availability of social services*
Overall coverage, i.e. the question regarding whether or not there is enough supply of social services (enough places in childcare facilities or enough care workers who could provide care services for older people, for instance) is one aspect of this dimension. The other one pertains to the spatial distribution of supply and the question of whether or not there is a social service infrastructure everywhere, such that access does not depend on where one lives.
2. *The qualitative aspects of social service infrastructures*
Qualitative aspects comprise the range of services offered, their quality and the professionalism of the staff providing the services. It also includes more strongly politicised questions of diversity. Is there a variety of different service providers, some of them, for instance, church affiliated, some others representing particular positions on the role and function of the service (such as pedagogical conceptions in the case of childcare or innovative housing arrangements for older people)?
3. *The procedural side of social service regulation*
Social service regulation can, more benignly, take the form of cooperation in order to coordinate and improve the supply of social services. Routines for monitoring quality are often part of such efforts. However, it can also take the form of very detailed substantive instructions and rules of conduct for providers, and this would then point to a more pronouncedly disciplinary outlook on social service design.

The Demand Perspective

Here access is considered from the perspective of users of social services, and it can be universalistic or selective. Selectivity, in this demand perspective, is a function of personal characteristics of users, who may be entitled or required to use certain social services, such that selectivity regulates take-up and use.

1. *Selectivity as targeting*

Beyond the obvious fact that only people in need can and will use social services, users are further selected by membership in a vulnerable group, or individual demonstrated need.

2. *Selectivity as conditionality*

People can only use social services if they fulfil special preconditions, such as membership in certain privileged groups or prior contributions.

3. *Mandatory use of certain social services*

The entire population can be required to participate in social services such as primary schools or certain public health interventions. Specific groups can be required to participate in services such as activation and workfare activities.

Looking at the principal outlook of social service design as depicted in Figure 3.1, we see that not every one of the design features just outlined speaks to all policy conceptions. Instead, the institutional features of social service design allow for clear conclusions about some of the core commitments, while remaining neutral with regard to others. Specifically, individual advancement (I, in Figure 3.1) will be especially fostered by quantitative availability of social services that are good quality, and it will benefit from procedures coordinating and monitoring that supply. It may also benefit from targeting, depending on the specific design of needs testing, but conditionality or coercion would definitely impair an agenda of individual advancement. Mandatory use and certain types of targeting definitely suggest commitment to a more disciplinary approach to care services (II, in Figure 3.1), which would also go along with detailed requirements that the providers of social services have to fulfil. Recognition and empowerment of social groups (III, in Figure 3.1) would first and foremost benefit from diversity in the supply of services. From the perspective of users, the criterion of providing social services only for the members of certain groups in society is ambiguous: it can be an act of

recognition, and as such empowering, but more often than not differential access to social benefits is part of a 'socially selectivist' approach to social policy that is geared toward co-optation, acquiescence and social order (IV, in Figure 3.1), much more than recognition and emancipation. By the same token, the criterion of mandatory use is not entirely clear in and of itself. It can be part of an agenda that is authoritarian in its essence (VI, in Figure 3.1), seeking to control the population by incorporating people in a tight set of state-controlled activities and organisations. In that case, it is combined with equally rigid and tightly monitored requirements for providers. But it can also merely indicate the intention to provide minimum standards for everyone on an obligatory basis in certain important substantive fields, such as education or public health. In that case, mandatory participation would be part of an agenda of social progressivism, without much of the coercive elements that characterise the disciplinary approach (V, in Figure 3.1). Mandatory use for the entire population presupposes that services are available for everybody, but it is of very little significance in the care service fields that focus on vulnerable groups and people in need. Here we find services targeted at particular groups (such as migrants or people who are long-term unemployed), and here mandatory use is strongly connected to the intention to exert some measure of control (II or IV, in Figure 3.1).

Policy conceptions as depicted in Figure 3.1 can offer interpretations of the features of institutional design that we find in social service institutions. They may point to conceptual inconsistencies within institutional arrangements or reform agendas, but they may also help us understand the general direction of social service development. At the same time, public policy conceptions are associated, as we have seen, with typical features of institutional design, which allows us to rely not entirely on the discourse and political rhetoric, but to some extent to draw on institutional realities and policies that are enacted and implemented when assessing the character and general direction of policy change.

3. PUTTING PUBLIC POLICY CONCEPTIONS TO THE TEST IN THREE ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

This section considers three instances of social service development in three countries and three substantively very different examples. The goal is to demonstrate how public policy conceptions are manifest and play themselves out in very diverse settings. We will first explore the character of institutional arrangements and institutional development in the three instances and then (in the concluding section) see what we can learn about

public policy conceptions and the relationship between policy orientations and institutional details.

Recent Developments in Care for Older People in Finland

The main benefit systems for the care for older people in Finland are support for informal care (the ICA – Informal care allowance), home help services (integrated health and social care) and residential care services. Recent policy debates have revolved around the agenda of ‘putting home first’, with the two trends this entails toward informalisation and marketisation. The national government, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the local authorities all strongly favour *ageing in place* (an EU policy objective) and thus care at home. ‘The home’ has become a benchmark and most important norm for good care in all circumstances (Häikiö et al., 2011).

In the home care sector the government’s ‘putting home first’ agenda means that older people should have the right to stay at home as long as possible. Against this backdrop, it is noteworthy that home care services have *declined* over the last 20 years. Coverage of publicly funded services supporting care at home has declined from over 30 per cent (of people aged 75 and over) to 20 per cent, despite the fact that home care is rhetorically so strongly emphasised. Only people needing a great amount of help are entitled to these services. The home help service was also reorganised: if in the 1980s municipal home helpers often stayed 3–4 hours with one client, today typically one home helper visits 12–17 households, often staying only 10–15 minutes with one client, although care needs are on average much more extensive. Due to the decline of (professional) home help services, the importance of informal help is on the rise. An estimated 300 000 people (at least) give regular help to adults, with only 30 000, 10 per cent, covered by the informal care allowance (ICA). The informal care allowance was expanded, and keeps growing, to promote the government’s home care agenda. ICA is granted to a person in need of care, but paid to informal caregivers accepted by the municipality (obligations are defined in care and service plans). Informalisation is thus a major consequence of the ageing in place policy. In part it explicitly stipulates that relatives and the elderly themselves assume greater responsibility; in part it is also an unintended process, where the lack of resources forces relatives and the elderly to take more responsibility than they would like to do. Older people receive most of the help they need from their close relatives, despite the fairly comprehensive public eldercare system in Finland. Still, when asked, older people in Finland prefer public services as a primary source of help (Van Aerscht, 2014).

In the residential sector 'putting home first' entails reducing the volume of traditional residential care, while expanding a new sector of intensive service housing (ISH). Residential care in these new institutions is supposed to resemble care given at home. Traditional institutional care is regarded to be too expensive, too hospital-like and even humiliating: 'so in intensive service housing it is in a way the person's home, so you decorate it with your own stuff; you have your peace and it is remarkably cosier than in a nursing home.' Living in ISH units is very much described by the word of 'home' (Anttonen and Karsio, 2016). The policy agenda is effective in that traditional institutional care in old age homes and long-term care wards (hospitals) is strongly declining and intensive service housing is accordingly growing, while the total volume (or coverage) of residential care has remained the same. The actual change is not as radical as one would expect, however. Often nursing homes are changed into ISH facilities, with the facilities remaining exactly the same. As one informant says (Anttonen and Karsio, 2016), the change is cosmetic; now older people have a room of their own, they do not need to share a room, and they are not moved from one room to another. Otherwise conditions are very much the same in that in most units residents' freedom of movement is strictly controlled, and residents do not, for instance, have keys to their own rooms. The medical model is dominating in spite of the ideology of 'home'. De-institutionalisation, therefore, is a contradictory aim: institutions are now different, but they are still institutions, and the transition from traditional nursing home care toward ISH care means re-institutionalisation, rather than de-institutionalisation (Anttonen and Karsio, 2016).

Another major policy development is marketisation. The idea behind marketisation is freedom of choice and it stipulates that citizens (residents) should have a right to choose the service provider (public, for-profit, non-profit and so on). This is thought to improve the quality of services and lower costs. In the field of care for older people marketisation is especially pronounced, with nearly half of ISH provided by for-profit providers. In particular the new ISH sector has turned out to be one of the major conduits of marketisation, as clients in these units are paying for all services separately: rent, meals, medication, cleaning, care and so on. Privacy and cosiness are accompanied by more extensive financial responsibilities, and it is also easier to create markets for all these functions when users have to pay for each of them separately. In a traditional old age home only one fee was paid, it was income-related, but it covered nearly all elements of living and caring.

Public sector dominance has been left behind in Finnish eldercare in favour of a welfare mix with a preference for welfare markets. The preference for putting the home first is informed by ideas about autonomy, inde-

pendence and self-determination. There is nowadays less talk about social rights and more talk about individualisation, choice and voice (Häikiö et al., 2011). The actual situation is different though. With people living longer, memory disorders increase along with frailty and chronic disease, and there are more older people who have no resources to use choice and voice, but need other people's help. Living in intensive service housing units may be like living at home, but most residents are not able to manage their financial or practical things due to frailty and illnesses. It is therefore not possible to make out a general direction of policy change. Availability of professional domestic care services has declined, if anything, while informal care with its potential quality deficits is on the rise. This has led to increased inequalities: there are great differences between people who have resources and those whose resources are very limited (Van Aerscht, 2014); some older people have better access to services than others. Thus, overall the system might empower some people and impose stricter boundaries on others.

Childcare Development in the UK

The UK appears to be a generous spender on childcare and early education. In 2011, government expenditure represented 1.1 per cent of GDP (including preschool), which was above the OECD average of 0.8 per cent (OECD, 2016). However, the UK's current approach of allocating provision is proving too expensive, too complex, inefficient and unsustainable and provides a low baseline of provision compared to other countries. This results in a shortage of supply, prohibitively high costs for parents and wide regional variation (London and the South East offer the most expensive under-5 childcare), which negatively affects women's employment (see Deusdad, Javornik et al., in this volume for more details).

Where is the problem? The UK combines part-time universal free places with demand-led funding through the tax and benefit systems for both preschool and school age children. Parents are reimbursed through the tax and benefit systems for childcare purchased in an open market, where fees are set by providers to maximise profitability (Javornik and Ingold, 2015). They can receive financial help; other subsidies go directly to childcare providers. Retrospective reimbursement through the tax and benefits system is inefficient and a deterrent for many families, and an array of actors operating across sectors and funding mechanisms add to high costs.

Childcare has been a growing concern for the British welfare state and an increasingly frequent object of its social policy since 1998, when the entitlement to the universal early-years provision was introduced by the Labour Government in the National Childcare Strategy (Lloyd, 2015). This marks

a historically significant shift in UK childcare policy, providing universal childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds (equating to 15 hours of care per week for 38 weeks a year). This was intended to be gradually extended to the most disadvantaged 2-year-olds from 2008, together with 'wrap-around' care for school-age children through Extended schools and tax relief on employer-provided childcare vouchers (Javornik and Ingold, 2015). By January 2010 almost all eligible 4-year-olds (98 per cent) and the vast majority of eligible 3-year-olds (92 per cent) in England were included in free early years provision, provided through a variety of settings.

Since then the UK has changed two governments and introduced a number of significant policy changes that mark a fundamental reorientation in its policy outlook. Most recent are the 2014 Children and Families Act and the 2016 Childcare Act, which both continue this evolution.

The Coalition Government (2010–15) committed to implementing Labour's proposed changes to ensure that higher rate taxpayers did not disproportionately benefit, and in 2013 announced its intention to double to 40 per cent the share of 2-year-olds qualifying for the Early years entitlement. Following the 2010 Comprehensive spending review, however, there were cutbacks. The maximum limit for childcare costs under Working tax credit was reduced from 80 per cent to 70 per cent, and from 2011 funding provided under the Extended schools programme was brought within overall schools funding, meaning no specific amount was earmarked for extended services, with schools deciding locally on what should be offered.

In 2013, the Coalition announced plans for a new tax-free replacement for the existing employer-provided voucher system. Families would receive 20 per cent of yearly childcare costs, up to 10 000 GBP per child; to be eligible both parents need to be in work, each earning less than 150 000 GBP per year and not receiving support for childcare costs from tax credits or Universal credit (HM Treasury, 2014). However, this scheme is now scheduled to be introduced in autumn 2017, rather than 2015, and will actually leave some parents worse off. Increased subsidies may raise already prohibitively costly childcare, with the cuts made to the Sure start centres (with more closures planned) significantly affecting the most disadvantaged children. Most families with children under 3 years old wishing to use childcare will still be reliant on either self-payment, employer-provided vouchers or the new tax-free childcare scheme. This is problematic, as childcare in the UK is among the most expensive in the world: the cost of a part-time nursery place for a child aged under 2 had increased by 33 per cent and, for the first time, childcare costs broke the 6000 GBP-a-year barrier, averaging 115.45 GBP a week across Britain; this represents a rise of 5.1 per cent in a single year.

From 2016, the childcare costs covered under Universal credit were planned to increase to cover 85 per cent of eligible childcare (HM Treasury, 2014), going some way to addressing the criticisms made. However, tax-free childcare is subject to the cap on social spending, and it is not clear how this will be financed over time. Moreover, eligibility linked to being in work suggests that the government sees childcare largely as a support strategy for employed parents. But for parents in education, training, seeking a job or starting a business, having quality childcare in place is essential before they can undertake these activities. If the government is assuming equal economic participation of parents and non-parents, of both men and women, then limiting access to childcare intensifies a segregation between employed and unemployed parents, and parents with uneven working patterns, such as those with shift work or zero-hours contracts. Framing the policy in this way also ignores children's needs, disrupts children's daily lives (as parents move in and out of work) and puts high pressure on parents.

As part of its plan to get more people into work, the Conservative Government (2015 onwards) forged ahead with a pre-election pledge to double the current 15 hours per week of free childcare to 30 hours for working parents. We could look at the doubling of the free childcare entitlement as a step towards universal childcare, through the policy's emphasis on improving access. But the policy's aims seem paradoxical. The 2016 Childcare Act did not extend eligibility to all parents; in its current form, it introduced a 'duty to secure 30 hours free childcare available for working parents'. If the government's focus is indeed on child development and well-being, as argued, then not extending access to more free childcare to all children, but only those whose parents are 'working', suggests that quality childcare is not seen as an essential public service (Javornik, 2014). At the same time repositioning childcare as an educational programme 'for the poorest' could be a barrier to a progressive childcare system.

Accommodation for Asylum Seekers in Sweden

In the wake of the war in the Syrian Arabic Republic and conflicts in other parts of the world, the growing flow of migrants requires vast emergency response capacities in transit countries and challenges institutions and organisations in receiving countries. In Sweden, the Migration agency coordinates support to asylum seekers and considers the applications from people who seek asylum. In 2015, the number of applicants for asylum doubled from 81 000 in 2014 to 163 000 in 2015. For unaccompanied children, the number was five times as great as the previous

year, i.e. 35400 in 2015 compared to 7000 in 2014 (Migrationsverket, 2016).

When refugees apply for asylum in Sweden, the Migration agency will assess their application in accordance with the Aliens Act, which specifies the rules for granting asylum. While awaiting the decision, asylum seekers can work, apply for financial support and receive emergency health and dental care. Minors have the same rights as all other children in Sweden, which involves school and health/dental care. The Migration agency offers temporary accommodation to asylum seekers while their application is in process. In the first days, refugees are offered so-called arrival accommodation, which is run by the Migration agency or contracted private providers. After registration of the application, asylum seekers are moved to accommodation centres for asylum seekers, which can be anywhere in Sweden. Asylum seekers can also choose to arrange their own accommodation, e.g. with friends or relatives. When receiving a positive decision and a residence permit from the Migration agency, people with a refugee status can move to any place in Sweden. The Swedish public employment service together with the municipal authorities offers support in finding a job and accommodation as part of a so-called introduction plan. At this stage, the new residents receive one offer, or they can find accommodation on their own.

In terms of *availability*, accommodation is available for all asylum seekers. However, due to the high numbers of applicants for asylum, an extraordinary situation arose in 2015, where the Migration agency was not able to guarantee accommodation to all. To meet the increased needs temporary solutions for arrival accommodations are established in collaboration with other authorities, e.g. in schools, military facilities or tent camps. There is also a lack of places in accommodation centres for asylum seekers, and therefore the Migration agency sets up contracts with private providers through public procurements. Asylum seekers with income or their own means have to pay for accommodation and subsistence, but for those without means, the Migration agency pays for the accommodation and provides a daily allowance to cover costs for subsistence. Regarding the *quality* of the accommodation centres for asylum seekers, the Migration agency applies a set of requirements in the procurement of new private facilities concerning aspects such as the minimum area per resident, furniture, laundry and showers, fire protection and travel time to the reception unit of the Migration agency. These requirements are updated prior to a new procurement, and due to the exceptionally high needs for new facilities the required quality standards were gradually lowered. For arrival accommodations, where incoming asylum seekers stay for about one week, the quality standards are generally lower in particular in the newly established temporary facilities. Representatives from the Migration agency visit all

facilities regularly to monitor that the contracted accommodations meet the stated requirements. The Migration agency's ambition is to offer equal service to all asylum seekers. Nevertheless, there is *territorial variation*, since the majority of asylum seekers today arrive from Denmark to the Scania region. As a consequence, the arrival accommodation in this region is burdened with large numbers of new asylum seekers. For the accommodation centres for asylum seekers the Migration agency depends on available facilities and a proportionally high number of facilities are located outside the main cities where property prices are lower than in the Stockholm region.

The mission of the Migration agency is to offer accommodation to all asylum seekers, but vulnerable groups with special needs (such as LGBTQ persons, unaccompanied minors, elderly, pregnant women and single parents with small children) will be offered accommodation to meet special needs. For unaccompanied minors there are special regulations, which in accordance with the UN convention on the Rights of the child means that the Migrations agency assigns the minor to a municipality that arranges accommodation. Also families with small children are prioritised in situations where there is a lack of facilities. Hence, there is a certain level of targeting to provide appropriate accommodation to each person.

Although the Migration agency has the overall responsibility for the provision of accommodation to asylum seekers, the agency depends on collaboration with other authorities and private service providers. In particular, Sweden's 290 municipalities are important partners, for example when establishing new facilities. For the accommodation and care of unaccompanied minors and the resettlement of persons that have received a residence permit, the Migration agency writes contracts with municipalities, which specify the number of refugees the municipality will receive. Municipalities are reimbursed for a part of the costs for the reception of refugees. Also regional health care authorities are compensated by the state.

4. CONCLUSION: STUDYING DEEDS, NOT WORDS

It comes as no surprise that policies included in this analysis address substantively different themes in the three cases: policy debates about care for older people in Finland revolve around 'ageing in place' and the implications of that strategy for the home care and residential care sectors. The task of securing self-determination and possibilities to make choices about their lives, when beneficiaries of care services often lack the cognitive resources to make such choices is one of the central challenges in those

policy debates. The central challenge in the UK childcare is financing an extremely expensive childcare system in such a way that service is accessible, affordable and of quality. The main policy challenge is inequality of access and conditionality of entitlement to free provision. The provision of accommodation for asylum seekers in Sweden faces the task of securing quality and installing special services targeted at particularly vulnerable groups of asylum seekers under conditions of exceptionally high case loads. The large numbers of refugees in 2015 posed formidable administrative challenges; a central concern under the circumstances was quality control, but it is noteworthy in the face of converse debates about the refugee crisis in Europe, that the approach to housing asylum seekers remained voluntarist, focused on practical tasks, rather than the aspect of policing migrants' behaviour, and no discourse about restricting access to the labour market or controlling asylum seekers' mobility while their application for political asylum is processed took centre stage.

Social services solved different problems in the three instances, and so the policy challenges differed, ranging from logistics tasks, as they were conceived, with regard to housing asylum seekers in Sweden, to financing and subsidisation modes in the case of UK childcare, to de-institutionalisation, marketisation and informalisation in the case of services for older people in Finland. These all seem far removed from the epic question of emancipation versus social discipline. It turns out, however, that all these fact-bound issues, *because* of some of their institutional details, speak to that large question. Even if the overt practical questions dominate discourse in the different policy fields, some of their institutional details also confront the overarching themes around the epic question: the capacity for self-determination and autonomy at old age is no precondition for access to care services, but a (citizenship-based) privilege. Access to affordable childcare should not be conditional, but obligatory. Housing services for asylum seekers are not holding facilities or 'hotspots' for groups awaiting deportation, but part of a set of services promoting integration. These are topics of great significance for the question of amelioration or order, that litmus test for social policy design. They become manifest in the wake of choices and developments concerning institutional details.

Political rhetoric often strays far from these institutional realities. Insistence on de-institutionalisation as a vehicle of greater autonomy and dignity at old age betrays the needs and capabilities of many care recipients, so that we have a discourse about autonomy and institutional developments toward constrained ranges of choice. Sometimes that disconnect is unintended, austerity driven, and without any conceptual thought given to the gap between rhetoric and reality. Sometimes, though, we get the

impression that there is little motivation among the participants of policy debates to correct these errors and to dispose of the myths.

This is why we have sought to examine institutional manifestations – decisions and trends – to learn something about the character of social service development and accept deeds, rather than words, as testimony. Politically, examining deeds, not words, reflects a certain wariness of political discourses that all too often belie institutional realities. Conceptually it ‘turns on its feet’ a lot of social constructivist theorising about the role of ideas as explanations of policy development: policy conceptions have been construed as mental frames, channelling attention toward certain problems and not others (Surel, 2000), as frames shaping agenda-setting (Béland, 2005), as cultural lineages shaping identities and by that token preferences (Kahl, 2005), as policy paradigms shaping notions of the feasible and the appropriate (Hall, 1993), or as focal points forging agreement. In all these conceptualisations, causal pathways (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993) run from ideas to policy. Examining institutional development to learn something about policy conceptions, as we did in this chapter, turns this around and studies deeds to learn about ideas, examines policy designs to learn about mind-sets and conceives of concepts as sediments of institutional choices. Our conclusions about policy conceptions and social service developments are tentative, but applying this approach did allow us to avoid the sense of unreality that sometimes troubles the study of discourse and political rhetoric.

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