

## Social Policy & the Welfare state

### 1. Social Policy & the Welfare State

- What is social policy?
  - Political activity: (re-)distribution & allocation of resources
    - Involves party politics, social movements, interest groups
    - Aims & values: equality, anti-poverty, protection from social risks, protection of the vulnerable
    - Administration & delivery: rules, regulations, service workers
  - Academic discipline: uses theories & evidence
    - History of social policy development
    - Conceptual debate: what are social problems? Defining social needs or scope of social policies (e.g. Unemployment, poverty, ill-health, crime, now climate change?)
    - Policymaking process: actors (voters, NGOs, IOs, trade unions, policy experts), interests – power relations
    - Policy design/arrangements/configurations...
    - Outcome/impact evaluation: narrower, broader outcomes
  
- What is welfare state?
  - Welfare (Daly, 2011): utility/preference satisfaction/efficient allocation (economics) freedom, equality (political philosophy), protection from social problems (sociology & social policy)
  - Well-being and social inclusion (Europe) vs 'on the dole' (US/UK)
  - 'State': Set of policies & formal institutions: pensions, unemployment insurance, health & social care, education...
  - Culture & social norms? Broader social institutions beyond state? (Private actors, social partners, religious bodies, voluntary sector, community) – e.g., UK's (private) social care sectors
  - Aim of the state & extent of state intervention: intervening the process of (re)distribution & reallocate life chances between individuals/classes
  - Briggs (1961): a state in which organized power is deliberately used (through politics & administration) in an effort to modify the play of market forces, by (1) guaranteeing minimum income, (2) narrowing the extent of insecurities from social contingencies (old age, sickness, unemployment), and (3) ensuring that all citizens are offered the best standards available in relation to a certain range of social services.
  
- Further thoughts
  - Is redistribution the main aim of social policy? How about the middle-class state? (Titmuss, 1958); also think about universalism vs selection
  - How much inclusive should WS be? (i.e., immigrants?)

- Scope of citizenship: merchants/bourgeoisies → women/universal → children, minority groups → global citizens/immigrants (Lister, 2007: “Cultural citizenship”)

## 2. Theories of the Welfare State Development

- *Question*: why had the welfare state been developed over the 20c?
- Related to the expansion of citizenship to social rights (TH Marshall)
  - Civil rights (17-18c): contractual rights, property ownership, freedom of speech
  - Political rights (18-19c): enfranchisement – from upper-class male to universal right
  - Social rights (20c ~): right to modicum economic welfare, living a full life of a civilised being → Implies redistribution, intervening free-market principles, compress class division & social inequality
- Logic of industrialism/modernisation
  - “The rich countries develop a common social-insurance strategy.” (Wilensky 1975)
  - Whatever the economic system (reliance on direct controls versus reliance on indirect controls and market mechanisms)
  - Whatever the political system (pluralist, authoritarian, totalitarian)
  - Economic growth creates more resources for investment
  - New needs (urbanisation, inequality, landless working class, public health, unemployment) created by industrialisation
  - Political mobilisation: industrialisation leads to democratisation, creation of working class (esp. modernisation theory) → more demands for welfare: expansion of citizenship
  - Critique: functionalist, convergence theory: why not in other countries outside the Western world? or why do countries differ?
  - Who are political actors driving such development?
- (Neo)Marxist approach: highly critical to the notion of welfare states
  - Marxist view on capitalism: capitalism is inherently contradictory due to *overproduction* – margin of profit declines with capital accumulation → further exploitation of the working class → less demand, more conflict
  - Social policies are means of maintaining & legitimising the status quo, to maintain exploitative & unequal relations within capitalism
  - Social policies are to discipline and control underclass
- Power resource/social democratic: strength & agency of trade unions & left parties (“Politics matters”) → redistributive role of the state
  - Esping-Andersen & Korpi (1985): but Nordic-centric approach
  - How about the role of conservatives? See German CSU/CDU

- How about Britain? not so universalistic even when labour was in government, particularly in 1997 onwards (Third Way): social policy development shaped by social ideology on poverty (individual problem vs structural problem) & scientific investigation (Booth & Rowntree)
- Were employers always against the development of state welfare? Some were pro-social policy for preventing contestation & efficiency
- Institutional approach: not just politics, but institutions also matter
  - Institutions as the rule of game: institutional features of the government and the rule of electoral competitions matters
  - (Too many) veto points: why radical legislation and welfare state development was difficult in the US constitutional structure
  - Importance of centralized government & state autonomy from partisan politics
  - Corporatist bargaining institutions: centralized labour & capital (Huber & Stephens 1993)
- State building: social integration, protecting community, stabilisation (conservatism), loyalty from core workers
  - Often related to authoritarian government: German-speaking, Latin American, East Asian countries
  - the first social security legislation came out in Germany, out of religious motivations and conservatism against both liberalism and socialism

### 3. History of the British Welfare State

- 19c Classical Liberalism & the principle of 'less eligibility'
  - Position of the pauper should be inferior to the independent worker: concerns on work incentive, economic efficiency (Malthus, Ricardo)
  - New Poor Law (1834): strong means-test; miserable workhouse conditions; imposing stigma of pauperism
- Late 19c/early 20c social inquiries
  - Concerns on public health, hygiene and social contestation
  - Charles Booth & Seebohm Rowntree (late 19c-early 20c): early empirical social research on poverty and living conditions
  - Collected surveys investigating the conditions of poverty
- Early 20c (1906-40) welfare state developments
  - State substituted large parts of mutual aid (voluntary insurance) that provided retirement income & health care
  - Lloyd George Liberal government: early National Insurance Act (1911), Old-age pensions (1908)
  - Unemployment benefits (1934) in Liberal-Conservative coalition
  - State funding for voluntary services (remain as legacy)

- Post-war development of the British welfare state
  - Background: wartime solidarity, unity as a nation state, need to compensate for citizen's sacrifice, increased state capacity during wars
  - Beveridge report: blueprint for the British welfare state ("from cradle to grave") – aim to tackle life-course social risks
  - Five 'giants' of evils: want, idleness, squalor, disease, ignorance
  - Aim for full employment; free education & healthcare, family allowance for every second & subsequent child
  - Abolition of Poor Law (1944), but the tradition of means-tested assistance still strong
  
- Recalibration/retrenchment (1970s-90s)
  - Heath Government: major increase in means-testing (Family Income Supplement, Rent Allowance)
  - Thatcher: cost-containment – abolition & reduction of benefit schemes
  - Abolition of earnings-related component of unemployment & sickness benefits / various welfare schemes, privatisation of social housing
  
- New Labour: balancing social protection & economic efficiency
  - Welfare-to-work: working tax credits, child tax credits, benefit sanctions for non-compliance
  - Third way & social investment: expansion of family policy, education, active labour market policies, child poverty
  - Public/private partnerships: contracting out public services
  
- Recent issues: austerity, Brexit, devolved government, austerity, Covid19
  - Spending cuts, rising inequality, introduction of Universal Credit
  - Immigration, out of EU human rights regulation
  - Role of local government, variation of policies between regions
  - Social care/NHS reform/Covid JRS scheme: increasing role of state?