Theory and Practice of the Welfare State in Europe

Session 01 and 02
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Course web page
www.ips.uw.edu.pl/rszarf/welfare-state/
Polity, politics, policy

• Polity is a territorial and political organization of the residents-citizens (state is a synonymous polity)
• Politics is an activity which main aim is to win power over the polity or the state
• Policy is an activity which main instrument is power over the state, the government should use this power to .... What?
From politics to policy

Politics

- Rational actions to win state power

Power over the state

Policy

- Rational actions to use state power

Other goals than win power over the state e.g. resolving society’s problems
What is distinct in welfare states in comparison with other non-welfare states?

What is distinct in social policies in comparison with other non-social policies?

What are connections between welfare state and social policy?
Problems and solutions

Resolving society’s problems using state power

Economic problems
Social problems
Other problems

But can we discriminate neatly between economic and social problems?

PUBLIC POLICY
Welfare state definitions - examples

- A welfare state is a state in which organized power is deliberately used (through politics and administration) in an effort to modify the play of market forces in at least three directions
  - by guaranteeing individuals and families a minimum income irrespective of the market value of their work or their property;
  - by narrowing the extent of insecurity by enabling individuals and families to meet certain 'social contingencies' (for example, sickness, old age and unemployment) which lead otherwise to individual and family crises;
  - by ensuring that all citizens without distinction of status or class are offered the best standards available in relation to a certain agreed range of social services

Welfare State definitions - examples

- In a narrow sense, the welfare state may refer to state measures for the provision of key welfare services (often confined to health, education, housing, income maintenance and personal social services).

- Increasingly broadly, the welfare state is also taken to define
  - a particular form of state,
  - a distinctive form of polity or
  - a specific type of society.

- ...the welfare state under capitalism is generally understood in this third sense as defining a society in which the state intervenes within the processes of economic reproduction and distribution to reallocate life chances between individuals and/or classes.

Social policy definitions - examples

• 'Social policy' is not a technical term with an exact meaning. ...it is taken to refer to the policy of governments with regard to action having a direct impact on the welfare of the citizens, by providing them with services or income.

• The central core consists, therefore, of social insurance, public (or national) assistance, the health and welfare services, and housing policy. Education obviously belongs... So also is the treatment of crime...

Social policy definitions - examples

• Social policy is best conceived as a kind of blueprint for the management of society towards social ends: it can be defined as the underlying as well as the professed rationale by which social institutions and groups are used or brought into being to ensure social preservation or development.

• Social policy is, in other words, the institutionalized control of services, agencies and organizations to maintain or change social structure and values. Sometimes this control may be utterly conscious, and consciously expressed by Government spokesmen and others. Sometimes it may be unspoken and even unrecognized.

P. Townsend, Sociology and Social Policy, 1975, p. 6
Perspectives of thinking about social policy

• Two perspectives mentioned by Titmuss
  – Normative: „Are we concerned with principles and objectives about certain areas of social life and organisation?”
  – Instrumental: or „with methods and techniques of action, management, organisation and the application of games theory?”

• We can define social policy in terms of principles and objectives (e.g. social justice, social solidarity, freedom, eradication of poverty) and/or methods and techniques (e.g. economic policy, redistributive policy)
Normativity problem

• Is social policy inherently beneficial for the poor or socially excluded?

• Examples of non-beneficial social policies
  – Soviet Union social policy
  – Nazi Germany social policy
  – South Africa social policy in the time of apartheid system
  – Third world corrupted states social policies with distribution of resources from the poor to the rich
  – Social policies of colonial powers in the colonies
  – Patriarchal social policies

• Social policies vs antisocial policies

• What is 'welfare' for some groups may be 'illfare' for others
Two types of definitions (Titmuss)

• Social policy as an instrument to promote altruism vs egoism in society
• Social policy as instruments of ensuring for everyone minimum standards and opportunities
  – aim to be beneficent - policy is directed to provide welfare for citizens
  – they include economic as well as non-economic objectives; for example, minimum wages, minimum standards of income maintenance and so on.
  – they involve some measure of progressive redistribution in command-over-resources from rich to poor
Nine core and general concepts in social policy definitions

Three continents on social policy conceptual map

**Economic**
- Needs
- Welfare
- Social / economic security

**Sociological**
- Social structure
- Social integration
- Social problems

**Ethical**
- Justice
- Social rights
- Social progress / social development

Social Policy
A model of material production

Labour

Means of production

Natural resources

PODUCTION

Needs satisfiers

Capital goods

Luxury goods [or want satisfiers]

Consumption of needs satisfiers in household 1

Consumption of needs satisfiers in household 2

............

Consumption of needs satisfiers in household N

SATISFACTION OF BASIC INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

SOCIETAL PRECONDITIONS FOR NEED SATISFACTION

For optimisation
- negative freedom
- positive freedom (rights of access to specific satisfiers)
- political participation

Universal:
- production
- reproduction
- cultural transmission
- political authority