



ECAY5004: Work, Welfare and Poverty

Theme 2: Ideological Approaches to Welfare and Poverty

Group Discussion – ‘Work’

You were asked to compare your own thoughts on this concept with a definition that you had researched.

Share your thoughts with the group.



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Group Discussion – ‘Welfare’

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Group Discussion – ‘Poverty’

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Welfare

N.B. In looking at ideological approaches to welfare we will necessarily also be looking at attitudes to poverty.

Why do you think this is?

What is Welfare?

N.B. We will look at this concept first for Assessment 2

According to Scott (2014), Welfare;

‘Refers to the well-being of individuals or groups and, by implication, those measures which can help to ensure levels of well-being through provision of education, health services, managed housing, and social security benefits. Thus where the state takes responsibility for such measures we can speak of a welfare state’.

Let's take a moment to paraphrase this quote.

What is Welfare?

Welfare in the UK: Mediaeval and Tudor period

- In the Mediaeval period the church (Roman Catholic) ran hospitals
- These were not hospitals as we know them but were communities where the elderly and infirm were cared for by monks
- Church parishes were also responsible for caring for their own poor
- This established a clear link between those in need and their community and was enshrined in the 1601 Poor Law
- This meant that beggars could be sent back to their parish of origin for that parish to care for

What is Welfare?

Welfare in the UK: The 17th & 18th Centuries

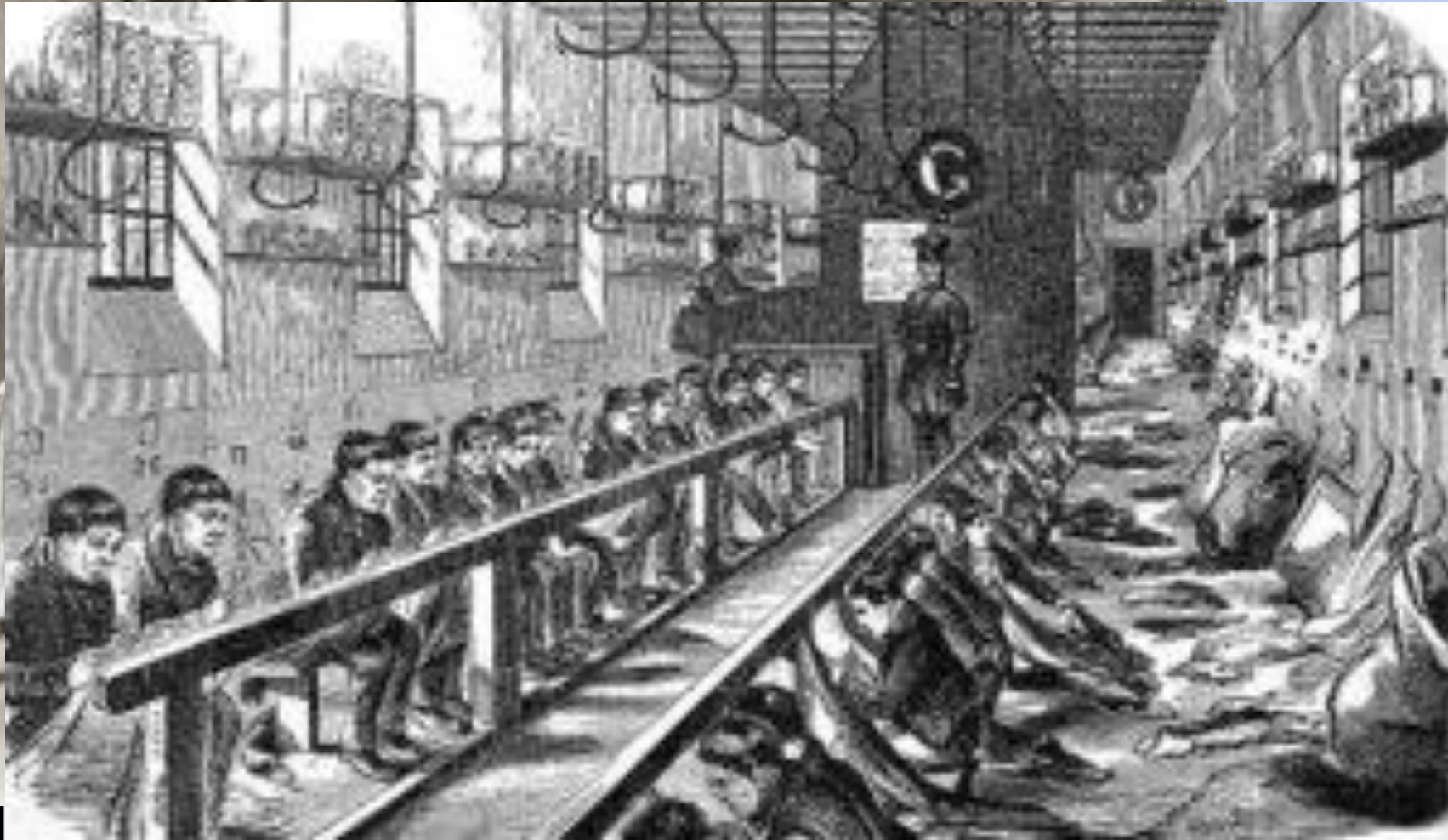
- Over the course of the 17th & 18th century this system was increasingly criticised (e.g. by the Utilitarians)
- The growth of industrialisation and the factory system meant that people were drawn to towns & cities
- Rural parishes became poorer but were still expected to care for poor people who were returned to them
- The Utilitarians argued that society should seek 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' (Bentham, cited in Scott, 2014)
- Eventually a new Poor Law was passed in 1834.

What is Welfare?

Welfare in the UK: The Victorian Period

- Proponents of the 1834 Poor Law argued that it would;
 - Reduce the cost of caring for the poor
 - Remove beggars from the streets of towns & cities
 - Encourage the poor to support themselves by work
- Under the new Poor Law, parishes were grouped together into Poor Law Unions
- These Unions built workhouses in which the poor could housed and put to work
- They were paid for by a local tax raised by the Union.

The Workhouse



What is Welfare?

Welfare in the UK: A brief history

- The workhouse regime was deliberately harsh so that only those who had no other option would use them
- Giving rise to the idea of the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' poor
- Families were split up and lived separately
- Work was monotonous and often unhealthy
- Workhouses were regularly criticised for violence (both physical and sexual) towards 'inmates', unhealthy and starving conditions and corrupt staff
- Legislation was regularly passed to try to reform workhouses
- However, it was not until 1929 that the Local Government Act abolished the Poor Law Authorities

What is Welfare?

Welfare in the UK: early 20th Century

- The first significant steps towards a modern welfare system were taken by Liberal Governments in the period before WW1
- Old Age Pensions Act (1908) gave a pension to people over 70 (life expectancy was 48 at the time).
- At 1-5 shillings a week it was criticised by campaigners such as Booth & Rowntree for keeping people below the poverty line
- National Insurance Act 1911 introduced unemployment payments but those who did not qualify still had to rely on the Poor Law



What is Welfare?

Welfare in the UK: Creation of the Welfare State

- Beveridge Enquiry established in 1941 as part of the war effort
- Rationing, bombing and other factors created a sense that the state need to support the populace
- William Beveridge identified what he called the five giants threatening the country
- These were Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness
- The report of his enquiry committee argued that it was the role of the state to address these issues
- In some cases the mechanisms already existed but the report called for radical change

What is Welfare?

Welfare in the UK: Creation of the Welfare State

- For Beveridge the solutions lay in the state (Government) planning and control of the following;
 - Want – improvements in the payment of benefits etc. so that the standard of living was above the national minimum
 - Disease – improvement to the organisation of health services to both prevent and cure illness
 - Ignorance – improved access to education for all (children and adults)
 - Squalor – improved town planning, better housing and the re-organisation of local government
 - Idleness – the creation of worthwhile jobs and the nationalisation of essential services

What is Welfare?

Welfare in the UK: Creation of the Welfare State

- These recommendations were taken up by the wartime Government and the Labour Government of 1945, giving rise to the concept of social security 'from the cradle to the grave' and the following legislation;
 - Education Act 1944 – free schooling for all up to the age of 15 (previously leaving age had been 14 and many left before this)
 - Family Allowance Act 1945 – for the first time allowances paid to a family were not paid directly to the father
 - National Insurance Act 1946 – established the compulsory payments towards sickness, unemployment and pension benefits 1948
 - National Health Act 1948 – Came into effect 1948 and for the first time provide health and prevention services 'free at the point of use'

What is Welfare?

Welfare in the UK: Late 20th & 21st Centuries

- The Beveridge Report lead to what has been called the ‘post war consensus’
- This meant that both Conservative and Labour Governments has a commitment to the principles set out in the report
- Since the 1960’s there have been too many changes to the welfare system to list here.
- However, since the late 1970’s when Margaret Thatcher introduced a new brand of Conservatism there has been a growing ideological debate regarding the funding and provision of welfare

Ideological Approaches to Welfare

‘Classical’ ideological Approaches

- The concept of the Welfare State did not feature largely in the work of the founders of sociology
- However, a Functionalist and a Marxist approach to welfare have been developed
- Broadly speaking the functionalist approach would be that welfare systems help to integrate individuals in the development of a successful industrial society
- A Marxist view might be summed up as seeing welfare as both necessary for the maintenance of a healthy work-force to be exploited by the capitalists as well as attempting to avoid the ‘alienation’ that would lead to revolution

Any questions or thoughts at this point?

Ideological Approaches to Welfare

T.H. Marshall – a UK perspective

- British Sociologist (1893-1981)
- Developed a theory that 'social insurance' would develop alongside and compliment the process of industrialisation
- Part of a process of the development of rights;
- 17th century Civil Rights (freedom of speech, thought and religion)
- 19th century Political Rights (right to vote and hold office)
- 20th century Social Rights (economic and social security)
- Criticised for having a naive 'teleological' view, ignoring the often violent struggle to obtain these rights and the fact that they didn't apply to all

Ideological Approaches to Welfare

G. Esping-Andersen – a neo-marxist view

- Danish Sociologist (b. 1947)
- Developed theories based on the criticisms of Marshall
- Different societies followed different paths to citizenship and rights
- Therefore one needs to compare different systems to construct a descriptive typology of welfare systems
- Chose to do this by evaluating the level of ‘decommodification’ present in a welfare system
- **Decommodification** basically means the amount to which the provision of welfare is free from market economics

Ideological Approaches to Welfare

G. Esping-Andersen – a neo-marxist view

- In a highly decommodified system welfare is funded publicly
- The right to welfare is not linked in any way to income or economic resources (e.g. property, wealth etc.)
- In a highly commodified system welfare is treated like any other commodity (food, clothes, technology etc.) which can be subjected to market forces
- Using this continuum Esping-Andersen identified three types of welfare system
- He outlined these systems in his work *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Esping-Andersen, 1990), as follows;

Ideological Approaches to Welfare

The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism (Esping-Andersen 1990)

Social Democratic systems (e.g. Norway, Sweden)

- Highly decommodified
- Heavily subsidized by the state
- Available to all citizens (universal benefits)
- Primary aim is removal of inequalities

Conservative-corporatist systems (e.g. France, Germany)

- Highly decommodified
- Access to welfare depends on position in society
- Therefore, not Universal
- Primary aim is maintaining social stability, strong families and state loyalty



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Ideological Approaches to Welfare

The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism (Esping-Andersen 1990)

Liberal systems (e.g. U.S.A.)

- Highly commodified
- Welfare is 'sold' via the market (i.e. you get the care you can afford)
- Citizens need to take out private insurance to pay for welfare
- Means-tested benefits are available for those in desperate need but these are stigmatised

What do we mean by the term 'means tested'?

Can you think of examples?

The debate regarding Welfare provision

- As we have already seen different systems can take a universal or a means-tested approach to benefits
- Governments which support universal benefits are known as *'institutionalists'*
- Those which prefer means-testing are known as *'residualists'*
- This is because the former argue that benefits should be available as a right for everyone (i.e. they should be *institutionalised*)
- The latter argue that benefit should only be available for those who truly cannot fend for themselves (i.e. the *residue*)
- This is also known as the 'safety net' approach

The debate regarding Welfare provision

The Institutional approach

- The market system can create extreme poverty, which is not the fault of the individual
- It is the duty of a civilised society to protect its citizens
- Higher tax is worth paying to improve people's lives

The Residualist approach

- Only those most in need should receive state benefits
- Need has to be proven (i.e. means testing)
- Welfare is expensive and needs higher taxation to pay for it
- Large welfare systems are inefficient and bureaucratic

Ideological Approaches to Welfare

Group Discussion

Given Esping-Anderson's three definitions of welfare, what are your thoughts on the UK system of welfare as you understand it?



The UK debate regarding Welfare provision

- We have already discussed the ‘post-war’ consensus that led to the welfare state and a broadly **institutionalist** approach by both Conservative & Labour governments
- This equates to a more **social democratic** system of welfare in Esping-Andersen’s model
- Since the government of Margaret Thatcher we can detect a move to a more **Residualist** approach
- Which equates more closely to the **liberal** system of welfare in Esping-Andersen’s model
- The policy of different governments has made welfare a very complex issue and given rise to a number of policies and debates

The UK debate regarding Welfare provision

- Many have criticised the welfare state for creating a culture of 'welfare dependency'.

What do you understand this term to mean?

Please type your responses in the Chat facility in Teams.

- Welfare was seen as providing a 'hand out' instead of a 'hand up'.

Does that phrase sound familiar?



- This debate has led to policies such as 'welfare to work' which was introduced by the New Labour government after 1997
- This phrase also appeared in the Conservative manifesto in 2019.

The UK debate regarding Welfare provision

What is a 'manifesto'?

Manifesto

- A document in which a political party sets out the programme it proposes to follow if returned to office.
- The document may reflect compromises between different party groupings, rather than an agreed programme of action.
- The manifesto can be seen as establishing the mandate for a governing party, although governments are often reluctant to be constrained by manifesto commitments.

The Welfare Debate: Present Context



Guided Study Activity: Party Manifestos

1. Between now and the next session, read the Conservative and Labour manifestos that were published for the 2019.

These are available on Moodle or can be downloaded from;

Conservative: <https://www.conservatives.com/our-plan>

Labour: <https://labour.org.uk/manifesto-2019/>

As you read through them make a note of what they say about welfare or benefits

2. Now decide whether you can find examples of either institutionist or residualist thinking in these manifestos.

3. In the next session, share your thoughts with the group. *N.B. You should be prepared to support your thoughts with specific reference to the manifestos.*

References

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