

Assignment 1 – SJS1 4012

Describe the development of policy and legislation for ONE of the following groups since 1945: age, race, religion or belief.

The aim of this essay is to take a close look at the development of policy and legislation for age since 1945. This will be achieved by examining a range of different sources such as books and the internet. The essay will begin to do this by looking at the historical content of the Beveridge report followed by the Welfare State in detail and finally onto The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The essay will then discuss what is meant by the term universalism and move on to providing a timeline of the Pension Acts changes since 1945 explaining how these changes have impacted people's lives. Once this is achieved, the essay will move onto looking at some of the effects of the Human Rights Act (1998) and include a case study of abuse in care homes. Finally, the essay will conclude by looking at discrimination involving age and how policies are developed.

The first aspect to note is that The Beveridge report was created on the 1st December 1942 by William Beveridge who specialised in unemployment. The Beveridge report quickly became the framework for the welfare state (The National Archives, n.d), as the paper proposed a system of social security which would be run by the welfare state and come into action at the wars end (BBC, 2014). The Beveridge report soon became a great success, as opinion polls indicated the majority of the British public wanted the findings of the report to be put into place as soon as possible. This also showed that the population had shifted drastically to the left during the second world war, as in the first post war elections held in June 1945, the labour party resulted in a major victory as they backed the Beveridge report (The National Archives, n.d).

The outcomes of the Beveridge report led to a system of social security and the national health service, also known as the welfare state (BBC, 2014). By the early 20th century the rise of the labour movement in Britain was beginning to challenge laissez-faire's beliefs of state involvement in social policy (The National Archives, n.d). The liberal government of Herbert Asquith (1906-14) created several Acts such as, The Old Age Pensions ACT (1908) and The National Insurance Act (1911) that increased welfare rights in Britain. Although neither act was universal, and both acts were aimed at the 'deserving' sick and unemployed, these were people who had previously been in regular employment (The National Archives, n.d). The belief of individual liberty was now being challenged by a stronger value on collective welfare rights. One example of this is The National Insurance Act (1946) which created a system of sickness, maternity, unemployment and pension benefits that would be funded by either employers or the government. Another example is The National Health Service (NHS) Act which came in to place in July 1948 creating, for the first time in Britain a universal state health service which provided free treatments and diagnosis of illnesses at home or in hospitals. It also included dental treatment (The National Archives, n.d).

Another Act to consider is the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015 (Welsh Government, 2018). This act is about improving the social, environmental, economic and

cultural well-being of Wales. The act will make public bodies listed in the act, such as local health boards and the higher education funding council for Wales, think more about how their decisions will impact people living in Wales in the future and make the public bodies listed work better with people and communities to tackle problems and take a more joined up approach (Welsh Government, 2018). The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015 has seven goals these are; a healthier Wales, a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a globally responsible Wales, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, a Wales of cohesive communities and a more equal Wales (Welsh Government, 2018). For these seven goals to be met the act has included a future generations commissioner for Wales whose job is to look at the interests of future generations living in Wales and to encourage the public bodies to maintain these well-being goals. (Welsh Government, 2018). The act also contains public services boards (PSB's) for every local authority in Wales. Each PSB must improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their area by achieving the seven goals. This act will help us to create a Wales people want to live in, not just now but also in the future. The reason the act was put in place was because Wales faces several challenges such as jobs, climate change and poverty now as well as in the future. The act believes that in order to solve these problems Wales must work together to give current and future generations a better quality of life and states we need to think how our actions impact the future. This law will also make public bodies do this (Welsh government, 2018).

Beveridge spoke about universal access to social services, believing that since everyone was at risk of unforeseen poverty the supply should be universal. Universalism is an idea which is used widely in social policy and the welfare state; universalism is often referred to a kind of resources given out in a society (Sipila, 2015). Many scientific analyses of universalism have been made, but not one broadly accepted concept of universalism has been defined. Therefore, people who use universalism understand the concept in different ways which complicates assessments concerning universalism. It is difficult to stress the importance or the consequences of universalism as there is no shared idea of what it means (Sipila, 2015). Universalism means different things in different places or times and connection to different benefits. Despite this, the idea of universalism remains essential in referring to something that is equal to everyone. Therefore, universalism has been a leading principle behind social policy. In welfare state research, during the post-war decades, the concept of institutional was used in a similar meaning to universalism. Another concept that can be used instead of universalism is generalism. It is believed that the post-war welfare state in Britain was based on the interests of male workers, therefore it is argued that the welfare state is not universal as it is mainly for the working male. Universalism is a theoretical and political struggle concept that is linked to a version of good society (Sipila, 2015).

The pensions act changes began in 1948 when National Insurance contributions became compulsory for all workers. This allowed pensions to cover basic needs and made poor law a thing of the past allowing people to live more comfortably (Neale, 2015). The Income Tax legislation followed in 1952 affecting pensions, as by 1956 4.3 million were members of occupational pension schemes, although still only 300,000 drew out of their pensions (Neale, 2015). The 1973 Social Security Act gave protection to pensions allowing the elderly or people paying into their pensions piece of mind. In 1975 the Social Security Pensions Act was put into

place. During this year employers lost the power to make pension schemes a condition of their employment. The 1990 Barber case declared that pensions were deferred pay and banned sex discrimination in pensions bringing out the thought of equalising the age of pensions (Neale, 2015). This led to the equalisation of the age at 65 in the pensions act (1995). This act allowed people to claim extra support, such as winter fuel payments, attendance allowance for people in care homes, invalidity care allowance for people who need to be cared for at home and housing benefit; although all this extra support is means tested (Moore, 2002). The retirement age was then adjusted to 66 in the Pensions Act 2011 (Thurley and Keen, 2018) creating equality between men and women. However, this did not help the elderly, as since 1973 the percentage of economically active males between the ages of 60 and 64 had zoomed down from 80% to 50%, leading to retirements needing to be earlier (Bernard and Phillips, 1998). Changes to the pension acts over time have been estimated to affect 4.5 million people in Great Britain, which have had the retirement age increased by less than a year and around 300,000 women born between 6 December 1953 and 5th October 1954 to increase by 18 months (Thurley and Keen, 2018). State pensions are available for all retired people if they have met the national insurance contributions rules. This has affected women who have had periods out of work to look after small children, as they have been unable to claim state pension (Moore, 2002).

Another Act that has impacted the elderly is The Care Act (2014); section one requires local authorities to encourage wellbeing and includes protection from abuse and neglect. The Human Rights Act (1998) believes people have the right to live a happy private home life with family without interference from local authorities (Age UK, 2017). The act also believes people should not be subject to torture or degrading treatment. The aims of the policies are to stop neglect and abuse, prevent harm and safeguard people in ways to support them and encourage them to make their own choices (Age UK). Age UK (2017) also believes that older people are the main receivers of abuse, as perpetrators of abuse or neglect are often people who are trusted or relied on by older people, such as family members or care staff. It is clear that The Care Act (2014) and Human Rights Act (1998) are not working, as a study carried out by researchers at University College London (UCL) and the Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust handed out surveys to 1,554 care homes identified 91 out of 92 care homes had abuse (Bulman, 2018), with the most common form of abuse being neglect as older people were left waiting for care for too long and not given enough time to eat their meals. The study linked the abuse to lack of funding and staff burnout (Bulman, 2018).

Another aspect to note is that Governments in the UK have created legislations against discrimination of gender, religion, race and disability but no attempts to make discrimination legislations involving age. There is currently a voluntarily code of practise against age discrimination in the work place, but this holds no penalties if discrimination is made against age as it is voluntary (Moore, 2002).

The term government policy is used to describe a course of action which sets out to solve certain situations. Policies are a starting point for the government to act and make real changes (Indirect, n.d). The government uses policies to solve a range of issues and how they are solved can make a difference to things such as, how much tax is paid, immigration laws

and pensions. Laws can be changed by the government and when policies are created it could be made to affect a specific group of people or everyone (Indirect, n.d.). Policies made by the United Kingdom can also affect Northern Island, for example the antiterrorism laws changed in the UK have changed across the whole country. When policies are created, section 75 which promoted equality of opportunity must be considered to provide it is equal for everyone. If many people complain about a certain issue, a policy can be changed. Policy making process of changing an idea into action can come from many places, such as society, the government or even public opinions (Indirect, n.d). Formation of policies consist of policymakers discussing and giving an opinion of other opinions to correct problems which have been raised as part of the agendas. The ultimate policy that is chosen to solve the specific issue depends on two factors, these are: the policy must be a good way of solving the issue and the most efficient and that the policy must be politically feasible; this is usually through majority building in a bargaining process (Lumen, n.d).

Laws are rules which everyone must follow, roughly 100 new laws are past a year. A proposed new law is called a bill. A bill must be agreed by both the house of parliament and receive royal assent from the queen before they can become Acts of Parliament (Barrow, 2013). A bill is introduced by a first reading which is simply a notice that a bill is going to be looked at and what it is about. The first reading also gives MP's time to prepare and discuss the bill. Shortly after the first reading a second reading takes place where the principles of the bill are considered on the floor of the house. The bill is then sent to be looked at by smaller groups of MP's who look at the bill in more detail. During the course of the third reading the bill is debated and a vote takes place if the government have majority of the vote, the bill is passed to the House of Lords. Once the bill is passed through both houses it is sent to the queen for royal assent and then becomes an act of parliament (Barrow, 2013).

The media can play an influential role in policies. When the media displays a favourable bias, it can enhance a policy proposals likelihood of adoption. However, if an unfavourable media bias may undermine a policy proposal (Lumen, n.).

In conclusion, this essay has taken a close look at the policy and legislations for age since 1945, by including historical content of the Beveridge Report (1942) and the welfare state. The essay has explained The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015 and discussed the term universalism. A timeline of how the pensions acts have developed since 1945 has been included and how this has affected the elderly and then moved on to look at the Human Rights Act (1998) and included a study of abuse in care homes. Finally, this essay discussed discrimination involving age and explained how policies are made. By looking at all these factors there are obviously many advantages of having the welfare state, such as having The National Health Service (NHS) Act (1948) which is available for everyone (The National Archives, n.d). However, the essay did show that there are some disadvantages, for example, there are no legislations against discrimination of age (Moore, 2002) and there is a lot of abuse in care homes (Bulman, 2018), which contradicts The Care Act (2014) and The Human Rights Act (1998) which is supposed to protect the elderly from abuse or neglect (Age UK, 2017). furthermore, this essay highlights that the media can play an influential role in policies (Luman, n.d).

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