

## **Introduction**

(Monika Baár and Paul van Trigt)

### **Whose welfare? <sup>1</sup>**

In 2015 Jeroen Dijsselbloem, at that time chair of the Eurogroup, framed the so-called refugee crisis as a threat for well-developed welfare states in Europe. In his view, external borders must be guarded because otherwise “loads of people will come to demand support and they blow up the system”.<sup>2</sup> Dijsselbloem’s statement raises the question how welfare has been used by policymakers to govern, coerce, mobilize and pacify their citizens and whether welfare has always been framed in such exclusive terms. Moreover, his unreserved approval of the welfare state may provoke reflection at a time of constant criticism when its bitter death is being forecasted by many. In light of these constantly changing, intense and often controversial engagements with the welfare state in both academic and public debates, it appears to be timely to pose the question ‘whose welfare’ is precisely at stake in those discussions and to seek answers from a historical perspective.

This volume contributes to filling the lacuna that exists between the omnipresent and often unqualified references to the welfare state, on the one hand, and our insufficient knowledge about the precise contours and dynamics of its history in Western Europe, on the other. The enhancement to the existing literature that this volume offers lies in the combination of three ambitions: its focus on marginalized groups, its engagement with the problem of inequality and its critical scrutiny of the dominant narrative of the post-war welfare state.

### **Marginal groups**

Despite omnipresent claims that examining the ways in which societies treat their most vulnerable members reveals the bedrock beliefs and values that guide the social order, academic research about the post-war welfare state has remained focused on mainstream arrangements. At the centre of this volume are people with disabilities, migrants and refugees, while certain aspects of the welfare of workers in precarious situations and the racialized aspects of the welfare state also receive attention. The common denominator between these groups is that their status does not align with the ideotype that is often implicitly assumed to represent the ‘mainstream’ societal group in Western societies: the white, heterosexual, abled-bodied, middle-class man whose life is typically considered normative for welfare arrangements. Analyses from a gender and critical-race perspective have demonstrated how exclusive these arrangements could be – even despite inclusive intentions.<sup>3</sup> This volume builds further on this scholarship: the majority of contributions undertake an empirical analysis of how policymakers and representatives of these marginalized groups have dealt with the welfare-state mechanisms of in- and exclusion, whereas some contributions employ a critical conceptual perspective.

Even in those instances when this subject features in the welfare-state literature, the focus typically lies on one specific group.<sup>4</sup> We have sought to push forward those debates by diversifying this standard singular range in the hope that this enables us to articulate the perspective of the margins more forcefully in the welfare-state historiography. At the same time, we also hope to contribute to the separate historiographies of these groups, particularly to the relatively well-researched subject of migrants and to the much less-studied subject of disabled people. With regard to the latter, as editors specializing in the history of disability, we seek to stimulate intersectional research. In particular we hope to meet the ambition to add the concept of disability to the toolbox of historians “both as a subject worth studying in its own right and as one that will provide scholars with a new analytic tool for exploring power

itself’ because disability is ‘crucial for understanding how Western cultures determine hierarchies and maintain social order as well as how they define progress” (Cathy Kudlick).<sup>5</sup>

Bringing these groups together in one volume helps us to reveal commonalities between their welfare trajectories, whereas it also reminds us that these ‘groups’ are far from homogeneous entities. Moreover, we gain a better impression of how welfare categories become instrumentalized by the state in order to regulate and/or restrict access to welfare services. Politicians and policymakers often find themselves confronted with a “distributive dilemma”: how to cater for the needs of those who have no access to the labour market without damaging the societal work ethic.<sup>6</sup> As they constantly navigate between the competing ideals of offering protection and reducing expenditure, the old binary between the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor may be reiterated: those who maintain employment have different citizenship entitlements from those who are unemployed. In times of labour shortages marginalized groups may be perceived as a potential resource, while in times of austerity and labour surplus they may be viewed as a burden on the welfare state or even a threat to national values – a phenomenon that can be observed during migration crises. The focus on marginalized groups exposes such dynamics.

### **The lens of inequality**

The second historiographical challenge that this volume takes up is related to a pivotal concept which has been brought into the limelight due to the contemporary awareness of increasing (global) inequality. The lens of (in)equality renders it easier to place the welfare state on a longer timeline of the ordering ‘the social’ in modern societies and to undertake comparisons with societies and thinkers who did not support the welfare state. It also helps to contemplate the ways in which welfare states create (in)equalities and how welfare states are restructured to prevent inequalities.<sup>7</sup>

Both in public and scholarly debates, the welfare state is, in its incarnation in the decades after the Second World War, frequently viewed as a model that has created a higher degree of (material) equality between citizens. In addition, the existing literature typically implies that the development of the post-war welfare state went along with attempts to foster a greater degree of equality between countries. Interrogating how the welfare state and the related ideals of equality have become fiercely contested since the 1970s, journalists and scholars often point to the end of the post-war consensus following the breakthrough of neoliberalism after the economic crisis in the 1970s.<sup>8</sup> In these debates the relationship of the welfare state to marginalized groups and the critique on welfare arrangements by policymakers and by representatives of those groups themselves has hitherto received insufficient attention.

This engagement with inequality enables us to establish connections between the historiography of the welfare state and other branches of history-writing, in particular conceptual and international history. As the existing literature increasingly suggests, the historical investigation of equality benefits from an approach in which the interconnection of national and international dimensions is taken into account. Scholars such as Sandrine Kott, Julia Moses, Klaus Petersen – to mention just a few – have made interventions that prove crucial for the specialized welfare-state literature, which is often characterized by methodological nationalism and fixed typologies.<sup>9</sup> Inspired by and building on this recent body of literature, the various chapters in the volume unravel the entanglement of domestic welfare policies with international social strategies and the considerable global transformations in those policies over time. Nevertheless, it is not only that the national context needs to be enriched with inter-and transnational aspects; the same holds true for the opposite direction. All too frequently, the ‘international’ is approached in an internalist way, which leads to a neglect of national developments. In his book about the European

Convention and Court of Human Rights Marco Duranti for instance, has demonstrated that only by taking into account the domestic context of the founders can the coming into being of the convention be properly understood.<sup>10</sup> This approach is not yet self-evident: in recent literature on global inequality sometimes regrets are expressed about the downfall of the welfare state, without paying attention to how the national context could serve as an explanation for why people became critics of the welfare state. The local case studies in our volume therefore bring the national dimension into international history.

### **New (dis)continuities**

In the third place this volume poses a historiographical challenge to the dominant narrative of the post-war welfare state. The qualitative historical analyses of the in- and exclusion of marginalized groups demonstrate that social policies addressing the most precarious societal groups have often deviated, sometimes significantly, from dominant welfare trajectories. The literature on these trajectories is dominated by quantitative approaches. Since the publication of Gøsta Esping-Andersen's extremely influential *Three Worlds of Welfare* (1990), typologies of welfare regimes have been refined and expanded. Today there exists consensus that welfare states are and were never 'pure' types, but always hybrids.<sup>11</sup> Yet quantitative typologies continue to dominate the field, and these rely heavily on static models, which make it difficult to capture the specific dynamics of social policies directed at citizens in marginal positions. National typologies often obscure the highly comparable issues with which marginalized groups were confronted in their specific context.

Moreover, these typologies tend to float above history and can hardly be integrated into a historical timeline. In our volume we pay extended attention to certain intensified periods, such as the 'post-war moment' and the period of economic crisis in the 1970s and 1980s, without suggesting that no welfare state existed before the Second World War and that

the welfare state disappeared as a consequence of the emerging neoliberal consensus since the 1970s. On the contrary, the contributions in this volume challenge the dominant narrative about the existence of a post-war Western welfare-state consensus that aimed at equal social citizenship, but became contested in the 1970s and since then made way for neoliberalism. Building on literature that has questioned this periodization, our volume shows the ambivalent nature of transitional moments such as the war and the economic crisis.<sup>12</sup> It reveals that from the vantage point of marginalized groups, both the welfare-state consensus and the subsequent neoliberal consensus fostered unexpected inequalities.

### **This volume**

The volume is arranged in two parts and contains ten chapters. They address diverse themes and historical periods, which take as their point of departure the fundamental experience of limited participation in society. There is no pretence here of a systematic or comprehensive analysis; rather, the contributions seek to highlight the potentials of this subject and invite further research.

The first part of the book investigates how marginalized groups and the welfare state were addressed in welfare practices of international and in particular European institutions in the half century after the war. In his chapter on the Social Affairs Committee of the European Communities, Brian Shaev discusses how this international group of politicians conceptualized welfare in the transition from a coal and steel community to a general common market. He shows how the committee during the 1950s promoted pro-active supranational social policies and how the discussions gradually shifted from welfare policies targeted at coal and steel workers (traditional subjects of welfare-state policies in Europe) to the broader workforce and to migrants – which indicates an increasing awareness of the inequalities that arose during the development of post-war welfare states. In his chapter about

the making of the European Convention on the Social Security of Migrant Workers (1957), Karim Fertikh further underlines the importance of coordination and internationalization of welfare provision after the war, as it was given shape by a transnational network of social reformers through bilateral agreements on social security concerning migrants. Fertikh addresses the dichotomy between the principles of territorialization and individualization. He demonstrates how in the framing of social insurances the personalization of social rights replaced the territoriality principle. This entailed the idea that social rights had to be attached to individuals independently of the territory where they lived or worked.

People with disabilities constituted another important target group of international social policies. In his chapter about vocational rehabilitation policies of the International Labour Organization in the 1950s and 1960s, Gildas Brégain demonstrates that those policies could often be controversial and contradict the taken-for-granted post-war consensus about the welfare state. In the context of the Cold War, these debates were characterized by opposing stances between the government representatives of capitalist countries and those of socialist countries, while the views of employers' representatives clashed with the workers' representatives. A change in these debates took place when disabled people raised their voices, as becomes evident in Paul van Trigt's chapter about European disability policies in the 1980s and 1990s. In this period of austerity politics, the internationalization of welfare remained a significant desideratum, but besides welfare equality accorded by the state, people started to make claims for other forms of equality. For European disability self-advocates these demands entailed status equality.

The second part of our volume presents five case studies on national welfare-state practices concerning marginalized groups in an international context. The chapter by Rose Ernst offers a fundamental rethinking of the concept of the welfare state in the United States. Against the backdrop of its European counterparts, she interprets it as a phantom welfare

state, a collective sensation containing a fictional element. The analysis, drawing on sources from the Washington State archives, demonstrates that welfare as an ideological construct plays a pivotal role in maintaining systems of social control and racialization.

In the next chapter, Giacomo Canepa adopts an alternative approach by focusing on marginalized groups' position within the welfare state during the 'post-war moment': he compares Italy and France during the years 1944-1947. In his analysis, Canepa shows how marginalized war-torn groups challenged the existing welfare categories in these years. Poverty and displacement affected all social strata, and their needs could not be met by the existing welfare system that drew on contributions and previous work activities. The chapter explains how these post-war emergencies stimulated the expansion of the welfare state and how social welfare was used to pacify citizens.

The next three chapters deal with a period in which welfare states became subject to austerity policies. Monika Baár investigates the impact of the 'neoliberal turn' on disabled citizens in Britain which coincided with the coming to the power of Margaret Thatcher's Tory government. Taking as its lens the repercussions of the International Year of Disabled Persons in Britain (1981), she demonstrates that disabled people, who had been neglected in the post-war welfare settlement, experienced a further deterioration of their status in this period. The chapter illuminates how the disability movement's desire for independence –including the principle of independent living and the right to work – was co-opted by the neoliberal state as a pretext for reducing welfare services and the 'responsibilization' of citizens. In her chapter on the Belgian welfare state, Anaïs van Ertvelde shows how the neoliberal reshaping of the welfare landscape towards more autonomy, personal responsibility and individualized approaches took place with the active involvement of disabled people and their grassroots organizations. This involvement was two-pronged: disabled people protested the roll-back of the welfare state, while they developed complementary alternative frameworks based on a



human-rights perspective. This notion that disabled people may not only be entitled to welfare, but also to unalienable rights –including the right to work and health– was a novel development.

The neoliberal restructuring of welfare states became, in the case of migrants, often entangled with a revival of welfare nationalism. In her chapter about the Danish welfare state, Heidi Vad Jonsson explains how the Danes turned their immigration policy from one that could be characterized as liberal to one of the most restrictive ones, and she also situates this transformation within a broader international pattern. She shows how immigrants' access to social security became politicized as the question arose to what extent newly arrived migrants should gain access to welfare. As the population became more diverse, emphasis was increasingly placed on the duties of migrants, which included participation in integration programmes with the aim of reinforcing national norms and values.

In the last chapter Veronika Flegar takes as her starting point two mechanisms that continue to determine whether marginalized groups are eligible for welfare benefits: legal citizenship and migration status and 'responsibilization' policies with conditionality-based provisions. These mechanisms, which we often see at work in national welfare practices, appear to contradict international norms such as human rights. Utilizing the concepts of vulnerability and resilience, Flegar undertakes a normative-theoretical inquiry with the aim to instigate novel frameworks for reconciling universal human rights with everyday political and economic realities in a way that can be serviceable for persons commonly marginalized in the welfare-state debate.

While Flegar's approach represents one of the several ways to deal with the challenges of the welfare state, her chapter convincingly underlines this volume's assumption that bringing the 'national' and 'international' together is highly relevant for both historical investigations and the drawing of future policies. Last but not least, it invites us to

contemplate the desired nature and extent of those policies. Minimum levels of protection may ensure survival on the margins of the existing social order, but if the aims of the welfare state include the facilitation of social mobility, then its policies should also allow for leaving behind the marginalized status. This volume explores how in different contexts the welfare state was utilized to meet these challenges and how arrangements could both include groups in welfare provision and exclude them from it. ‘Whose Welfare?’ therefore deserves a multi-layered answer, and this is why not only Jeroen Dijsselbloem should be confronted with this question.

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<sup>2</sup> “Dijsselbloem: Refugee crisis could trigger 'mini-Schengen',” Reuters 27 November 2015, accessed 10 June 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-dijsselbloem-schengen/dijsselbloem-refugee-crisis-could-trigger-mini-schengen-idUSKBN0TG0VX20151127>. The Eurogroup is the collective of finance ministers of states that have adopted the Euro as their official currency.

<sup>3</sup> Ann Shola Orloff, “Gendering the comparative analysis of welfare states: An unfinished agenda,” *Sociological Theory* 27, no. 3 (2009): 317-343; Melinda Cooper, *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* (New York: Zone books 2017); Roberta Bivins, “Picturing Race in the British National Health Service, 1948-1988,” *Twentieth Century British History* 28, 1 (2017): 83–109; Stephen Castles and Carl-Ulrik Schierup, “Migration and Ethnic Minorities,” in Francis G. Castles, Stephan Leibfried, Jane

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Lewis, Herbert Obinger, and Christopher Pierson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State* (Oxford University Press: Oxford 2010), 278-291; Paul van Trigt, "Human rights and the welfare state. An exploratory history of social rights in the postwar Netherlands," *Zapruder World: An International Journal for the History of Social Conflict* 3 (2016); Jennifer L. Hook, "Incorporating 'class' into work–family arrangements: Insights from and for Three Worlds," *Journal of European Social Policy* 25, no. 1 (2015): 14-31; Robbie Shilliam, *Race and the undeserving poor: from abolition to Brexit* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> An exception: Beate Althammer, Lutz Raphael, Tamara Stazic-Wendt (eds.), *Rescuing the Vulnerable. Poverty, Welfare and Social Ties in Modern Europe* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Catherine J. Kudlick, "Disability history: why we need another 'other'," *The American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (2003): 763-793.

<sup>6</sup> Deborah Stone, *The Disabled State* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> Pierre Rosanvallon, *The society of equals* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013); Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship, inequality, and difference: historical perspectives* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018); Siep Stuurman, *The invention of humanity: equality and cultural difference in world history* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press).

<sup>8</sup> For recent overviews: Samuel Moyn, *Not enough: human rights in an unequal world* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018); Christian O. Christiansen and Steven L.B. Jensen (eds.), *Histories of Global Inequality. New Perspectives* (in press).

<sup>9</sup> Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel (eds.) *Nazism across borders: the social policies of the Third Reich and their global appeal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Julia Moses

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and Martin J. Daunton, "Editorial – border crossings: global dynamics of social policies and problems," *Journal of Global History* 9 (2014): 177-188; Pauli Kettunen and Klaus Petersen (eds.), *Beyond Welfare State Models: Transnational Historical Perspectives on Social Policy* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishers, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Marco Duranti, *The conservative human rights revolution: European identity, transnational politics, and the origins of the European convention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>11</sup> Gøsta Esping-Anderson, *The three worlds of welfare capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Wil Arts and John Gelissen, "Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism or More? A State-of-the-Art Report," *Journal of European Social Policy* 12, no. 2 (2002): 137-58.

<sup>12</sup> Frank Nullmeier and Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, "Post-War Welfare State Development," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State*; Anton Hemerijck, "Two or three waves of welfare state transformation?" in *Towards a social investment welfare state? Ideas, policies and challenges*, edited by Nathalie Morel, Bruno Palier, and Joakim Palme (Brison: Policy Press, 2015), 33-60; Johannes Kananen, *The Nordic Welfare State in Three Eras: From Emancipation to Discipline* (London: Routledge, 2016); Peter Abrahamson, "European welfare states beyond neoliberalism: toward the social investment state," *Development and Society* 39, no. 1 (2010): 61-95.