Trinity Policy Journal

MARCH 2025
VOLUME I

The first edition of the Trinity Policy Journal is grateful for the support and backing of the following organisations, without whom this publication would not have been possible.

Oxfam Ireland

The School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin

Trinity College Dublin Association and Trust

The Affinity Credit Card, managed by the Trinity College Dublin Association and Trust, provides financial support to many college projects. More information can be found at https://www.tcd.ie/alumni/services/affinity-credit-card/.

Table of Contents

HAP-py Ending: Optimising Spending for Improved Social Housing in Ireland! *Katelin Bratt* *10*

Evaluating Irish Regulatory Policy: A Critical Assessment of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 *Lara Creighton* *28*

Governments are Failing the Unemployed: The False Promises of Activation policies, Welfare Conditionality and Neo-Liberalism *Almha Fitzpatrick* *37*

Addressing Mental Health Disparities Among Indigenous Youth in Canada *Emma Gravelle* *46*

A Study of Youth Unemployment and Market Insertion Inside of France *Alexandre Marie* *58*

A review of economic policy related to space exploration in the United States *Jack O'Neill* *75*

Does democracy still work in the West? A comparative analysis of policy implementation in the United States and the Republic of Ireland *Maya Powers* *91*

Challenging Ageism: 3 Strategies for Promoting Active Ageing in Society and the Workplace. A Review of the WHO Global Report on Ageism 2021 *Reece Slade* *103*

Pragmatic Altruism: The Strategic Foundations of Transformative Social Policy *Philip Theiss* *117*

Darker Parts of Past and Present: 21st Century Irish Plays and Social Policy in Ireland *Olivia Tranguch* *125*

Victims or Villains? A Holistic Approach Toward Reintegration Policies of Former Child Soldiers *Tara Walsh* *129*

Editor's Foreword

Dear reader,

Welcome to the first ever volume of the Trinity Policy Journal! The idea that these words will soon be in print is beyond exciting, both for me, and for everyone else involved in this project.

At a basic level, the Trinity Policy Journal aims to publish and promote diverse student policy research. As you will discover as you read, the themes of the articles vary enormously from unemployment, climate change, mental health, even to space exploration. The topics are broad and deliberately so, demonstrating the various shapes and forms policy takes within our society. Each and all of the papers featured offer insight into one small dimension of the term policy. They highlight salient issues, both on the policymaking agenda, such as housing, as well as issues of lesser attention such as ageism. As will be clear also, is the wide range of academic years who have contributed to this volume. We are extremely proud to showcase incredible academic talent from first year undergraduates, all the way up to postgraduate level students.

The idea of the Trinity Policy Journal was first floated in January of 2024, since then with the hard work of many, many people, volume one has finally come to fruition. There are so many people that have contributed to this project in one form or another. I want to first congratulate the authors of this issue: Emma Gravelle, Reece Slade, Olivia Tranguch, Maya Powers, Philip Theiss, Almha Fitzpatrick, Tara Walsh, Jack O'Neill, Katelin Bratt, Laura Creighton and Alexandre Marie for sharing their wonderful articles and working alongside our brilliant team of editors to create the best version possible. A massive thank you is owed to Jude Holland Phelan, Michaela Nudo, Prachi Tailor, Isabella Reyes, Alex Coyle, Katelin Bratt and Kate Gilbertson for the time and attention to detail they put into the selection and editing of these articles.

Thank you to the incredible publishing team Róisín Byrne, Matthew Kurt, Maisie Greener, as well as Evie Kramer, Nicole Dunne and Robyn Gannon for tirelessly promoting and spreading the news of the journal. Thank you to the School of Social Work and Social Policy, the Trinity Trust and Oxfam Ireland who took a chance on a new student journal with no money nor bank account to its name and sponsored its publication. Finally, thank you to the School of Social Work and Social Policy for the immense amount of support and enthusiasm they funneled into this project, in particular to Nicola Carr, Catherine Conlon, Julie Byrne, Jennifer O'Toole and Stephanie Holt.

First and foremost, the publication of the Trinity Policy Journal would not be possible without Róisín Byrne and Jude Holland Phelan who saw the merit in the idea of the journal and put in countless hours into making it a reality with me. It has been a joy for us to see the journal resonate with so many students and staff, receiving over 40 submissions in its first year from an array of years and disciplines. We hope to see TPJ continue to grow in future years and are extremely eager to see what direction the next board takes it.

It has been a privilege to work alongside such an amazing and hardworking team over the past year.

We hope you enjoy reading the articles as much as we did!

Eva Layte,

Editor-in-Chief.

Board of Volume I

HAP-py Ending: Optimising Spending for Improved Social Housing in Ireland!

Katelin Bratt, 4th year Political Science & Social Policy

Executive Summary:

This paper will examine the issue of homelessness in Ireland, focusing on its root causes, affected demographics, and the definition of homelessness. The analysis will begin with an overview of the current state of homelessness in Ireland, providing a detailed exploration of the structural and systemic factors contributing to the problem.

The discussion will then shift to an evaluation of the current provision of social housing through the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme, identifying key shortcomings in its design and implementation. By highlighting the untapped potential within the scheme, the paper will propose a new policy goal aimed at addressing these issues.

To develop this policy goal, the paper will first establish clear criteria that the goal seeks to fulfil, ensuring it aligns with principles of effectiveness, equity, and efficiency. Next, potential policy options will be identified and assessed in relation to these criteria, with a comparative analysis of their strengths and weaknesses alongside the existing HAP scheme.

The ultimate objective of this paper is to propose a policy framework that maximizes the use of public resources while more effectively reducing homelessness. This framework will be evaluated against current policies and other alternatives to demonstrate its viability and potential impact.

Policy Goal:

To reduce the homeless population of Ireland to .10% of the population, reducing the current homeless population by 12% by 2030.

Policy Options:

1. Decommodified Housing Cooperatives.
2. The Socialisation of commodified housing.
3. Land-Use Planning.

Policy Options Recommended:

1. Decommodified Housing Cooperatives.
2. Land-Use Planning.

Main recommendation:

This policy paper recommends both to be used in conjunction with each other. It shows how both are capable of achieving the goal above due to political, cost and time factors.

Section 1- Problem and Policy Options

Problem definition:

Homelessness remains a persistent issue in Ireland despite ongoing efforts to address it. According to the OECD (2021), Ireland's homeless population stands at 0.12%—notably higher than Croatia (0.01%), Estonia (0.06%), Portugal (0.07%), and Italy (0.08%). A September 2023 report counted 8,923 people in emergency accommodation and 83 rough sleepers during a single week in March. These figures underscore the reliance on emergency shelters over permanent housing. Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien acknowledged the "serious concern" of rising numbers in emergency accommodation (June 2022 report). Compared to other European countries, Ireland's increasing homelessness highlights critical shortcomings in its housing provision.

Definition of Homelessness in the Irish Context –

Homelessness is defined by the Irish government in the Housing Act 1988 as the following…

"A person shall be regarded by a housing authority as being homeless for the purposes of this Act if—

- (a) there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority, he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or

- (b) he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a), and he is, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from his own resources." (Book ISIB, 2023).

This definition ties into the European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion (ETHOS), which defines rooflessness, houselessness, lack of adequate accommodation and lack of secure accommodation as constituting homelessness (Busch-Geertsema, 2010). Therefore, homelessness is a far-reaching concept that spans from those on the streets to those who are being sheltered somewhere inadequate or abnormal to their current living situation. Housing constitutes a trifecta of purposes, being a legal, social, and physical domain (Busch-Geertsema, 2010). Therefore, without housing, one is deprived of a legal, social, and physical elements that are essential to conventional living.

Root causes of homelessness –

Homelessness can be caused by a plethora of reasons, however in order to coordinate a government response, homelessness as a social issue will be displayed.

Affordability:

In a study completed by the Focus Ireland Review, 36% of those surveyed cited the removal of their property from the market as the cause of their homelessness,

while another 22% responded that affordability of properties was what caused their homelessness (Long et al., 2019). The housing market in Ireland is unaffordable, with 15% of residents spending more than 30% of their income on accommodation, while 8% spend more than 40% of their income on housing (Disch et al., 2023).

Urban vs Rural areas:

Additionally, CSO data analysing housing costs from 2010 to 2018 display a distinct disparity between the housing in rural and in urban areas. Property prices in urban regions are three times more expensive than those in rural regions, compounded by urban demand increases of 300% (CSO, 2023). Urban renters face considerable renting pressures, spending 31% of one's disposable income on rent, while in rural renters spend 23.9% (Disch & Slaymaker, 2023).

Age differences:

Age is also a factor when analysing housing affordability. Household ownership for those forty and above stands at just under 80%, while this figure stands at 34% for those under forty (Disch & Slaymaker, 2023). This disparity is one of the largest in Europe, being second only to Greece (Disch & Slaymaker, 2023). Amid high homeownership rates among the older population, 26.5% of young adults aged 25 to 34 in Ireland live at home, a higher proportion than in other European countries (Disch & Slaymaker, 2023).

Housing Market Trends:

Bramley et al. (2018) further cites housing market trends and policies as a major structural cause of homelessness. Tying into the aforementioned affordability issue, market trends and policies influence market supplies and demands, directly impacting affordability (Lima et al., 2023). Market liberalisation has been a key cause of affordability-based issues, as the market supply and demand are left unregulated, serving to increase prices in the market due to the fact that housing is an essential good that every citizen needs. This paired with an insufficient

supply of housing further exacerbates prices, particularly on the rental market, as is previously discussed.

Summary of the problem of homelessness in Ireland:

As has been shown, homelessness is a pervasive issue in Ireland that affects a wide-ranging demographic of people. The most insecure demographic has been identified as the urban private renter and a main cause of homelessness has been identified as unaffordability on the private market. Having shown this, this problem definition section of the paper will conclude that social housing targeting those who rent in the private market will serve to alleviate the burden of homelessness.

Problem Tree:

Figure 1 – Problem tree.

Current policies in place aiming to tackle homelessness in Ireland:

There is currently a plethora of policies utilised to prevent homelessness and improve the quality, affordability, and amount of housing in Ireland.

Social Housing Strategy:

The goal of the social housing strategy is to "ensure that every household in Ireland will have access to secure, good quality housing suited to their needs at an affordable price and in a sustainable community." (Social Housing Strategy, 2014: 7).

This policy revolves around a three-fold approach:

1. Provide – 35,000 new social housing units.

2. Support – 75,000 households with household assistance/rental assistance schemes.

3. Reform – Social housing supports.

Governance of the policy:

Governance of policy concerns who would be in charge of enacting such policy. The Social Housing Strategy 2020 (2014) paper discusses the Social Housing Strategy Group, along with the Minister for Housing as being at the head of such provisions. Further down the line of command are the project board and Dublin social housing task force.

There are five aspects to the delivery of this plan.

1. Finance.

2. Approved Housing Body Delivery and Operations (Housing assistance program).

3. Local Authority Housing Delivery and Operations.

4. Social Housing Reform.

5. Private Rental.

AHB (Approved Housing Body), Local Authority Housing (LA) & the provision of rental assistance:

Demographics
According to Watson et al., (2019), 63% of rental assistance recipients rely on social welfare, and nearly 75% are single adults. In 2017, 86,000 households required social housing support. How is rental assistance in Ireland ensured for this group?

Local Authority Housing
Local Authority (LA) housing, built or acquired by local authorities, made up 56% of social housing in 2016 (Watson et al., 2019). These properties are leased to those in "housing need," typically for 10 to 20 years. The 2004 Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) expanded this by enabling LAs to lease private properties for subsidized housing (Watson & Corrigan, 2019).

In 2022, RAS surpassed its 800-unit target, delivering 1,041 units (Irish Council for Social Housing, 2022), highlighting growing private sector reliance in social housing.

Housing Assistance Payment:

The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme, introduced as a successor to the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), aimed to shift rental assistance programs further into the private sector. Under HAP, local authorities act as intermediaries between landlords and tenants, with tenants securing private rentals and receiving subsidies based on a means test conducted by the local authority (Watson & Corrigan, 2019). However, this reliance on the private rental market has exacerbated issues of affordability and instability, as the inherent insecurity of the private sector now permeates social housing (Lima et al., 2022).

HAP tenants face significant challenges, including difficulties sourcing private accommodation and discrimination by landlords (Lima et al., 2022). Furthermore, HAP has inadvertently created a rental floor for landlords, inflating rents by enabling them to demand higher subsidies from the government. Between 2014

and 2020, landlords received €460 million under HAP, including €179 million in 2020 alone (Lima et al., 2022). This system has shifted control of social housing from the government to the private market, effectively financializing social housing and turning it into a profit-driven venture. This has attracted financial investors, further inflating rental prices, exacerbating housing insecurity, and worsening homelessness (Lima et al., 2022).

Budgetary context:

The budget for social housing in Ireland has retrenched. In 2008, €1.7 billion euro was spent on social housing, and this was reduced to €572 million by 2014. According to the above plan, 35,000 units of social housing would cost €3.8bn (Social Housing Strategy, 2014). 2015 marks a change in this trend as funding increases by €210m to €800m, showing a commitment to return to pre-recession funding levels. Much of this funding was focused on the aforementioned HAP scheme, and other private housing assistance schemes, with €538 million being spent in 2022 in operating the HAP scheme (Irish Council for Social Housing, 2022). Previously a discussion on how this funding has caused investment in housing to benefit those who own housing rather than those who are renting said housing, therefore how can we alter this funding to better target the group who are experiencing the problem, this being homeless people or those at risk of homelessness?

Total HAP Expenditure*			
Year	No. of LAs operating HAP Scheme	Outturn €M	HAP Active Tenancies
2014*	7	0.39	485
2015	18	15.64	5,853
2016	28	57.69	10,640
2017	31	152.69	31,228
2018	31	276.6	43,443
2019	31	382.4	52,529
2020	31	464.65	59,821
2021	31	541.69	61,907
2022	31	538.96	59,258
* The HAP scheme started in 2014 and was operating in all LAs by 2017.			

Figure 2 – HAP funding up until 2022: (Overall Social and affordable housing provision, 2021)

Political context:

Social housing in Ireland is closely tied to economic conditions. During the Celtic Tiger years before 2008, it played a major role in housing provision (Byrne et al., 2018). After the 2009 global crisis, austerity measures cut public spending, with social housing funding dropping 88% between 2008 and 2014 (Byrne & Norris, 2018).

By 2023, under the Fianna Fáil–Fine Gael coalition, funding increased due to economic recovery. However, opposition parties like Sinn Féin and the Social Democrats demand further action, particularly criticizing the HAP scheme.

Policy Goal:

Introduction:

Having fully described the current situation in Ireland at the moment, it can be reasonably stated that the HAP scheme has major faults associated with it and although aiming to alleviate the burden of homelessness within the subsection of the rental sphere, the potential to achieve the goal of lessening homelessness has not been properly utilised.

Policy Option Tree:

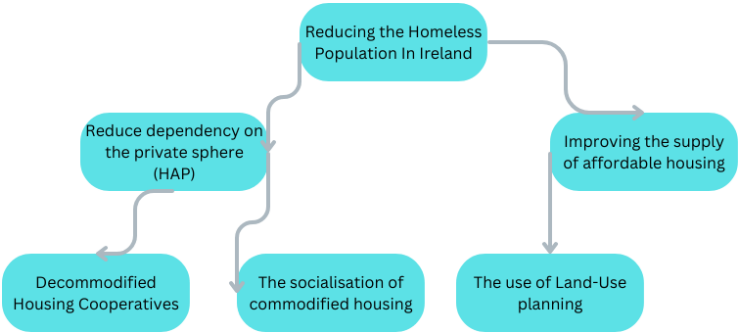

Figure 3 – Policy Option Tree.

The policy option tree above illustrates two pathways that the chosen policy options align with. The first pathway is associated with reducing the dependency of the private sphere, this in Ireland taking the form of the HAP scheme. There are two policy options connected to this pathway. The first being decommodified housing cooperatives, and the second being the socialisation of commodified housing. The second pathway involves improving the supply of affordable housing and connected to this pathway is the land-use planning policy alternative. Therefore, three policy alternatives are being considered –

- Decommodified Housing Cooperatives.
- The Socialisation of commodified housing.
- Land-use Planning.

Section 2 – Policy Evaluation:

Decommodified Housing Cooperatives:

Housing cooperatives are a key part of Switzerland's housing system, widely accepted across the political spectrum. They provide private, non-profit housing under a social-market economy model (Balmer et al., 2018). Each resident holds one share, collectively owning the building, while the cooperative applies a cost-rental model, ensuring no profit is made (Balmer & Gerber, 2018).

By reducing profit-driven real estate, cooperatives improve affordability and address rising rents. As of 2018, they comprised 12% of Swiss tenancies (Balmer & Gerber, 2018). However, access remains challenging for lower-income groups. Over time, as more units are built, affordability is expected to improve.

Cost: Low –

Promoting and supporting non-profit housing developers has a cost attributed to it, however, this cost can be a cost-effective one. If we look to Switzerland, where the housing cooperative program has taken place, it is shown that long-term ground leases are utilised, and this means that when the land increases in price,

the city benefits as they are the land leaser, becoming a source of income (Balmer & Gerber, 2018). The main cost associated with non-profit housing comes in the form of providing for loans with reduced/ no interest rates (Barenstein et al, 2022).

Effectiveness: Medium –

By 2030, housing cooperatives could influence Ireland's housing structure, though their full impact would take longer, potentially 30 years. While they do not directly target low-income individuals, they increase housing supply, gradually improving affordability (Barenstein & Koch, 2022). Even in the early stages, this benefits low-income and homeless individuals to some extent, making the program somewhat effective.

Political Feasibility: High –

The political feasibility of this program in Ireland is high, as it is managed by private non-profit housing developers rather than the government. While it decommodifies housing, it does not expand state control, making it more viable (Balmer & Gerber, 2018).

However, a key difference is Switzerland's political system. Funding and support for its cooperative model came through a citizen's initiative that pushed local government involvement in affordable housing (Balmer & Gerber, 2018).

Ability to meet deadline: Low –

The deadline of 2030 would be hard to reach. As stated previously, housing cooperatives need to affect the market to truly affect low-income individuals, meaning that for homelessness to be reduced, many housing cooperatives would have to be built. This uptake by non-profit organisations would not be that quick, taking Switzerland as an example, this program has been in effect from 1910, and in the beginning, uptake was slow by non-profits (Barenstein & Koch, 2022).

Policy Conclusion: Possible

Therefore, the 2030 deadline would be hard to reach and the percentage reduction in homelessness desired would likely not be reached. The paper concludes however, that this form of alternative paired with other housing alternatives could be beneficial. This is because the program is low cost and has a high level of political feasibility. It also holds the potential to make a small difference now, but a larger one in the future, therefore being of benefit to the goal both now and more so in the future.

The socialisation of commodified housing:

The second policy option examines the socialization of commodified housing, using South Korea as a successful example. Due to rapid development, 72.3% of South Korea's housing was built between 1989 and 2007 (Ronald & Lee, 2012). Around 40% of the population, in deciles 1–4, required public housing support.

In response, a national public housing policy was introduced in the 2000s to assist these groups, aiming to house 20% of all households. Between 2013 and 2017, 1.5 million units were built. Rent varies by income: deciles 1–2 pay 30% of market rent for 50 years, while deciles 3–4 pay 60–70% for 30 years, all government-funded (Ronald & Lee, 2012). Unlike the HAP scheme, where landlords receive subsidies, the government directly controls housing and rent prices.

Cost: High –

As discussed previously in the budgetary context area, 35,000 units of social housing would cost €3.8bn to construct in Ireland (Social Housing Strategy, 2014). South Korea has more public funding to spend on the construction of housing, enabling more housing to be built in a shorter time frame. In 2022, €538 million was spent on the HAP scheme, which currently aids 60,000 households, and to build 60,000 public social housing units would cost an estimated €6.5 billion based on the cost of 35,000 units (Social Housing Strategy, 2014). However, this initial investment would mean that further investments would be lower, as opposed to the HAP scheme where this figure is rising every year (see figure 2 above).

Effectiveness: High –

This policy alternative is highly effective, as it is fully government-managed, allowing for better control over funding. State-owned rentals generate revenue through subsidized rent and property value inflation, which can be reinvested into social housing. Ignoring costs, this program could reduce homelessness to 0.10% of the population, as outlined in the goal.

Political Feasibility: Low –

Broadening the sphere of the government is a historically unpopular move. During the debates on the provision of the HAP scheme, the government agreed that this scheme would be better due to the fact that it is a scheme aimed at the private market (Irish Council for Social Housing, 2022). For this reason, the decommodification of social housing would be largely unpopular, especially due to the current government being a centre-right wing coalition. This is why the government is unlikely to support a move to decommodification.

Ability to meet deadline: Unlikely –

The policy option would be unlikely to be achieved by 2030. Current funding is insufficient for this scheme, and even with unlikely increases, the time needed to construct housing, target the specific population, and effectively shift supply would extend beyond 2030.

Conclusion: Poor –

Due to time, budgetary and political constraints, this policy option would not have the desired effect if implemented in Ireland. This option would not reduce the homeless population to .10% of the overall population by 2030.

Land-Use Planning:

Land-use planning is widely praised for improving housing affordability in England (Whitehead, 2007). This regulatory practice controls land use, restricting "socially undesirable" purposes and encouraging housing development over

alternatives like hotels (Adabre & Chan, 2019; Whitehead, 2007: 26). By increasing housing supply, affordability improves.

The government manages development rights, negotiations, and societal contributions of land use. Whitehead (2007) contrasts two scenarios: one where housing is deprioritized, causing rising prices, and another where it is favored, lowering residential land prices and increasing supply. The ideal approach lies between these extremes but leans toward increased housing development, ensuring more equitable land distribution.

Cost: Low –

The cost of such a plan would be low as this is a regulatory measure rather than a tax/spending measure. The main cost would be incurred by those constructing the housing.

Effectiveness: Medium –

The main effect of this policy would be on supply and demand. This policy relies on increasing supply in order to drive down demand and therefore, reduce housing prices making them more affordable. This policy's effectiveness would be of medium level due to the following. This policy is not a direct policy, therefore the effects of it cannot be truly controlled leading to an element of irregularity. Yet, due to the relatively low costs associated with the plan, the cost-benefit analysis of this plan shows effectiveness.

Political feasibility: High –

The political feasibility of a land-use scheme is high. This is because the scheme does not involve much government spending, and it also does not involve the use of taxation. A downside to this particular plan is over-constraint, where efficiency drops off due to an excess level of constraint to “socially undesirable uses” for land (Whitehead, 2007: 26). However, overall, the use of regulatory measures instead of the use of public spending is politically favoured.

Ability to meet deadline: Medium –

Due to the regulatory nature of this policy, the policy would not be as difficult to implement. However, the issue with this policy lies in its reliance on demand and supply of housing.. However, an impact could be made by 2030 one that in combination with another policy would work successfully.

Conclusion: Possible –

In conclusion, this policy due to its feasibility politically and its cost-effective nature, would effectively meet the stated goal. However, due to the time constraint this policy would be best adopted in conjunction with another policy in order to commit to this goal.

Summary of results of evaluation –

	Cost-Effective	2030 Deadline	Recommended?
Decommodified housing cooperatives	Medium	Medium	**Yes**
Decommodification of socialised housing	Low	Low	**No**
Land-use planning	High	Medium	**Yes**

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this paper has evaluated three different policy measures, decommodified housing cooperatives, the decommodification of socialised housing and land-use planning. These have been evaluated based on their ability to fulfil the goal of reducing the homeless population of Ireland from .12% to .10% by 2030. They have also been evaluated based on political feasibility, cost, and effectiveness.

This evaluation suggests that the policies of decommodified housing cooperatives and land-use planning would be most effective relative to their costs. The decommodification of socialised housing proved, although effective, to be too expensive to account for this expense meaning the cost-benefit ratio was skewed towards excess cost rather than benefit.

Therefore, this paper concludes by recommending the policies of decommodified housing cooperatives and land-use planning to be used in conjunction with each other in order to reach the stated goal by 2030.

References

Adabre, M.A. and Chan, A.P., 2019. Critical success factors (CSFs) for sustainable affordable housing. *Building and Environment*, *156*, pp.203-214.

Balmer, I. and Gerber, J.D., 2018. Why are housing cooperatives successful? Insights from Swiss affordable housing policy. *Housing studies*, *33*(3), pp.361-385.

Barenstein, J.D. and Koch, P., 2022. How accessible and affordable are Swiss housing cooperatives? Insights and reflections on housing policies in Switzerland.

Book (eISB), electronic I.S. (2023). electronic Irish Statute Book (eISB). [online] www.irishstatutebook.ie. Available at: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1988/act/28/section/2/enacted/en/html#sec2.

Bramley, G. and Fitzpatrick, S., 2018. Homelessness in the UK: who is most at risk?. *Housing studies*, *33*(1), pp.96-116.

Busch-Geertsema, V., 2010. Defining and measuring homelessness. *Homelessness Research in Europe: Festschrift for Bill Edgar and Joe Doherty*, pp.19-39.

Byrne, M. and Norris, M., 2018. Procyclical social housing and the crisis of Irish housing policy: Marketization, social housing, and the property boom and bust. *Housing Policy Debate*, *28*(1), pp.50-63.

CSO (2023) *Census Reports 1821-2006 - CSO - Central Statistics Office*. [online] Available at: https://www.cso.ie/en/census/censusreports1821-2006/. [Accessed 9 November 2023]
Disch, W. and Slaymaker, R., 2023. Housing affordability: Ireland in a cross-country context. *Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) Research Series*.

Irish Council for Social Housing (2022) *Budget 2023: Key Social & Affordable Housing Measures*, *Irish Council for Social Housing*. Available at: https://icsh.ie/resources/budget-2023-key-housing-measures/ (Accessed: 25 November 2023).

June 2022 monthly homeless report and Homeless Quarterly Progress Report quarter 2 2022 published (2022) *Search for services or information*. Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/1a5f5-june-2022-monthly-homeless-report-and-homeless-quarterly-progress-report-quarter-2-2022-published/ (Accessed: 26 November 2023).

Lima, V., Hearne, R. and Murphy, M.P., 2023. Housing financialisation and the creation of homelessness in Ireland. *Housing Studies*, *38*(9), pp.1695-1718.

Long, A.E., Sheridan, S., Gambi, L. and Hoey, D., 2019. Family homelessness in Dublin: causes, housing histories, and finding a home. *Focus Ireland*.

OECD (2021). *HC3.1. HOMELESS POPULATION Definitions and methodology*. [online] Available at: https://www.oecd.org/els/family/HC3-1-Homeless-population.pdf.

Ronald, R. and Lee, H., 2012. Housing policy socialization and de-commodification in South Korea. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, *27*, pp.111-131.

Social Housing Strategy 2020 (2014) *Search for services or information*. Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3279c-social-housing-strategy-2020/ (Accessed: 19 November 2023).

Watson, D. and Corrigan, E., 2019. Social housing in the Irish housing market. *The Economic and Social Review*, *50*(1, Spring), pp.213-248.

Whitehead, C.M., 2007. Planning policies and affordable housing: England as a successful case study?. *Housing Studies*, *22*(1), pp.25-44.

Evaluating Irish Regulatory Policy: A Critical Assessment of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007

Lara Creighton, 4th year Sociology and Social Policy

Introduction

In society we all partake in and benefit from human services, whether that be through receiving education from a teacher, interacting with a doctor or nurse in a healthcare setting or through a childcare provider. Human services facilitate people to function and contribute to their full potential in society (HusITa, 2017). A human service organisation provides a human service involving two parties; the service provider and the service users. Human services can be categorised into various categories such as education, health, and income transfer (Kahn, 1977). Regulation is a key part of many human services. This paper will examine and discuss the regulation of healthcare professionals in the specific context of Ireland. The Department of Health developed a regulation policy for healthcare professionals under the *Medical Practitioners Act, 2007*. This paper will critically assess this regulation policy through discussion of its objectives from the government's perspective, its impact on healthcare professionals as service providers, the policy's effectiveness and efficiency on the provision of the service and the impact of the policy on the implementation and achievement of social policy goals. Finally, it will propose some potential amendments to the aforementioned problems.

Regulatory Policy: An Overview

The *Medical Practitioners Act, 2007* is a regulatory public policy enforced by the government and seeks to ensure that healthcare users receive the ultimate standard of care through mandating that medical professionals have the right training, knowledge and skills. Health policy is an area of social policy concerned with providing the public with access to healthcare that protects and improves their welfare and wellbeing. These aims can be seen in many health policies in Ireland (Government of Ireland, 2023). This legislative regulation has a great impact on

health social policy and makes health policy goals more likely to be achieved. Healthcare provision and quality is dependent on regulatory policy, as serious harm could occur to service users with improper regulation. Without this policy the government would not be able to deliver on health policy goals as they could not guarantee that the healthcare the State provides and oversees is being carried out by properly qualified professionals. This regulatory policy implements social policy health goals as regulation policy strives to achieve the goal of protecting those accessing medical care.

The Medical Practitioners Act 2007

The authority for regulation is given to professional and state institutions by government legislation. From a government perspective, the goal of regulation of health professionals is to safeguard and guarantee the highest quality of care to service users (Leslie et al., 2021). In Ireland, the Department of Health developed regulation policy for the Medical Council under the *Medical Practitioners Act, 2007*. The intended purpose of this Act is to better protect and inform the public regarding their interactions with medical professionals and the medical system. Furthermore, it introduced measures like registration to ensure that medical practitioners are adequately qualified and competent.

The Act integrates elements of the Directive 2005/36/EC, such as the recognition of medical qualifications that were acquired in any European Union (EU) member state; these qualifications are recognised as equivalent to Irish qualifications. This gives medical professionals the opportunity to practice across the EU. The *Medical Practitioners Act, 2007* offers a comprehensive outline of training standards, registration, complaints mechanisms, disciplinary measures and emphasises that unregistered medical practitioners are not allowed to practice medicine in Ireland. The Medical Council is the statutory regulatory body of this policy, however the implementation of the policy is also overseen by the government. From the government's perspective, the fundamental intention of this regulatory policy is to protect service users and the general public. Through the accountability and transparency that regulatory policy introduces, the potential risk of harm or malpractice to service users from interactions within the healthcare system may be minimised (Leslie et al., 2021).

It is the responsibility of the government and the Department of Health to justify processes of regulation, their justification being that the policy aims to mitigate the risks to service users associated with unregulated health professionals. The onus is on the government to be eternally vigilant regarding the interests and wellbeing of the public (Leslie et al., 2021). It is the government's duty to provide the public with access to healthcare, therefore the implementation of safeguarding measures and the improvement of the quality of healthcare to the public is paramount (Leslie et al., 2021). This regulatory policy enables the government to achieve this goal.

Qualification Recognition & Shortages

The *Medical Practitioners Act, 2007* has an impact on each stakeholder, however it has a particular impact on service providers. The Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, is relevant to the EU and its member states. The *Medical Practitioners Act, 2007* has implemented core elements of the Directive 2005/36/EC including freedom of movement for qualified professionals between Member States (European Commission, 2023). However, problems with the regulation policy have arisen as many qualified immigrants from countries outside of the EU migrating to Ireland wanting to practice medicine, do not have their qualifications recognised under the *Medical Practitioners Act, 2007.* As a result, they are unable to register to practice medicine here.

As a result, there are large gaps in access to the health profession experienced by immigrants as many of their medical qualifications were earned in jurisdictions outside the EU and are often not recognised under the legislation. Ireland's healthcare system is already overstressed and understaffed (Jordan, 2019), and this regulatory policy exacerbates the existing problem by reducing the available workforce. The regulation poses a barrier to professional practice for some individuals (Sweetman et al., 2015), potentially contributing to staff shortages in the healthcare system which therefore has negative effects on the human service as a whole. This can be through reduced capacity, overcrowding in hospitals and longer waiting times for medical attention in A&E and for medical appointments (McAuley, 2022).

Co-Production & Service Effectiveness

Co-production is at the core of any human service, referring to groups working together by sharing power and having equal roles in co-producing services and achieving goals (SCIE, 2022). Co-production is reliant on a high level of communication and interaction between service user and service provider and mutual respect of goals (Bandola-Gill, 2023). In healthcare, an example of co-production could be a patient telling the doctor their symptoms during their consultation and this enables their doctor to make a diagnosis and treat them. Co-production can be key to the effectiveness of service provision, as it can increase the ability of healthcare providers to meet the needs of patients. However, regulatory policy such as the *Medical Practitioners Act 2007* can indirectly reduce co-production and thus healthcare effectiveness through contributing to staff shortages. This may adversely affect wait times and access to healthcare services.

On the other hand, this regulatory policy ensures that any medical professional that a service user interacts with is properly registered, adequately qualified and is up to date with current standards. This improves the quality-of-care service users receive and protects them from harm. This enables the service provider and service user to co-produce their desired outcome or goal, which improves the overall effectiveness of the service.

This regulation policy protects the integrity of the medical profession as it greatly reduces the number of individuals with improper or fictitious qualifications entering the medical profession. Individuals with unsuitable qualifications could undermine the medical profession's reputation and cause harm to service users through providing medical care that is not up to standard, or which is harmful to service users. This regulatory policy can lead to better quality of care provided by the medical professionals. International literature highlights that appropriate regulation does appear to improve both the quality of care provided by health professionals and service users satisfaction with the care they receive, such as in the United Kingdom context (Quick, 2012).

Healthcare in Ireland has made some significant achievements in the years following the implementation of this regulatory policy. Empirical evidence demonstrates some improvements in healthcare, such as service users reporting positive experiences of healthcare; with 82% of patients who spent at least one

night in hospital in May 2022 indicating that they had a positive overall experience in a recent survey (Government of Ireland, 2024). Furthermore, some reported receiving timely, high quality care, with 89% of hip fracture surgeries for people aged 65 years and older performed within two days of admission in 2022, which is 9% higher than in 2013 (Government of Ireland, 2024). These empirical examples indicate that there have been some incremental improvements in quality of care and service user satisfaction following the implementation of the *Medical Practitioners Act, 2007.*

The disciplinary mechanisms of this regulation policy impact staff as it allows anyone to make a complaint about them and that potentially subjects them to disciplinary action (Medical Practitioners Act, 2007). This can serve as both a positive and a negative. It is a positive for service users as they can make a complaint about experiences of misconduct or an incident of medical negligence. However conversely, it could potentially subject medical practitioners to baseless complaints or long disciplinary proceedings that are then disproven. This possibility influences medical professionals to be more conscious about their work, how they interact with patients, provide care and the decisions they are making (Quick, 2012).

These additional procedures and paperwork accompanied by regulatory policy could possibly bear an impact on staff motivation (Browne et al., 2021; Veenstra et al., 2022). Tedious and burdensome requirements can fatigue medical practitioners to a point which impacts on their motivation or ability to provide excellent care and meaningfully co-produce with service users. This is a potential concern that should be considered (Browne et al., 2021; Veenstra et al., 2022).

Service Provider Autonomy

Another implication of the *Medical Practitioners Act, 2007* is its impact on the work medical professionals do. The policy dictates how medical professionals carry out their work and the scope of what they are allowed to do, as they must always adhere to the policy, and this may limit their own discretion. In some instances however, medical professionals should be able to also use their own discretion and expertise in some cases of patient care. In addition, studies on the

effects of regulatory policy on health professionals highlight that there can be a sense of loss of autonomy and professional identity for the medical practitioners if they feel that the policy as a whole does not enhance their practice (Browne et al., 2021).

In relation to the *Medical Practitioners Act 2007*, the monitoring and oversight of the Medical Council on practitioners' conduct may have implications for health professionals' own discretion and autonomy, as they feel they are constantly being watched to see if they are acting in line with regulation and having their professional ability monitored (Browne et al., 2021). Accordingly, it can be considered that regulatory policy can encounter an element of resistance as medical practitioners do not want to lose their autonomy.

Possible Amendments to the Policy

As outlined, elements of the policy may make service providers feel a sense of loss of autonomy as they are obliged to act in accordance with regulation, which allows for more logical and carefully considered care to be provided. Checks and balances should enable greater co-production between the medical professional and the patient. This should result in better outcomes and quality of care for the patient, thus increasing effectiveness. However, this regulatory policy does have the potential for some negative effects to the effectiveness of the service such as contributing to staff shortages, despite this most of the consequences of the policy are positive and increase effectiveness.

To address current problems of this regulatory policy, adjustments must be made regarding the qualification requirements. Potential amendments could be made to the policy to improve the barriers it poses to those with medical qualifications from jurisdictions outside the EU. This could include further assessments of an individual's medical knowledge and skills to determine if they have the necessary skills to practice in Ireland. Otherwise, the government and relevant bodies could offer a low-cost course to equip those whose qualifications are not recognised with the necessary skills to acquire recognition to practice in Ireland.

The negative aspects of this regulatory policy are mostly felt by the service providers. Preventing potential harm to a patient can be considered a fundamental pillar of healthcare and is of paramount importance over giving the service provider personal autonomy. It can be considered that most service providers would be willing and happy to accept the potential negatives of less personal autonomy to achieve the goal of providing the best possible service to service users. However, further engagement with service provides to seek input on adjustments to current regulatory policy could ensure that medical practitioners feel the policy aligns with their practice values. In turn, this could minimise the potential feelings of loss of autonomy.

On balance, when considered holistically, regulatory policy does appear to fulfill its aims such as improving the effectiveness of the service and the provision of high-quality care, for the service provider and the service user.

Conclusion

Current regulatory policy such as Ireland's *Medical Practitioners Act 2007* works to deliver safe standards of care to service users, which supports the implementation of the health social policy and aids in the achievement of its goals. However, current problems could be improved and reformed by making amendments to the policy such as assessing those with qualifications earned in currently unrecognised jurisdictions to see if they have the necessary skills to practice, or offering a short low cost retraining course to allow them to practice here as part of the policy to lessen some of the negative impacts on service providers whilst still ensuring the implementation of health social policy and its goal. It is of utmost importance to reconcile the various elements to ensure the healthcare system in Ireland is one that provides a high quality of service which is effective for service users and service providers alike.

References

Bandola-Gill, J., Arthur, M. and Leng, R.I., 2023. What is co-production? Conceptualising and understanding co-production of knowledge and policy across different theoretical perspectives. *Evidence & Policy*, *19*(2), pp.275-298.

Browne, J., Bullock, A., Poletti, C. and Cserző, D., (2021). Recent research into healthcare professions regulation: a rapid evidence assessment. *BMC health services research*, *21*, pp.1-12.

European Commission. (2023). Professionals qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC. Available at Legislation on professional qualifications (europa.eu) (Accessed 30/11/2023)

Government of Ireland (2023). *Health*. Available at gov.ie - Health (www.gov.ie) (Accessed 03/12/2023)

Government of Ireland (2024). *Minister for Health published the National Healthcare Quality Reporting System Report 2023*. Available at gov.ie - Minister for Health publishes the National Healthcare Quality Reporting System Report 2023 (Accessed 17/02/2025)

HusITa (2017). *Defining Human Services*. Available at Defining human services (husita.org)

Jordan, J. (2019). *Understaffing has become the norm in the health service*. Available at Understaffing has become the norm in the health service (Accessed 17/02/2025)

Kahn, A.J., (1977). The emergence of the sixth social services system. A study of eight countries shows this new type of social service is growing in popularity even across political boundaries. *The Social and Rehabilitation Record*, *4*(2), pp.2-6.

Leslie, K., Moore, J., Robertson, C., Bilton, D., Hirschkorn, K., Langelier, M.H. and Bourgeault, I.L., (2021). Regulating health professional scopes of practice: comparing institutional arrangements and approaches in the US, Canada, Australia and the UK. *Human Resources for Health*, *19*(1), pp.1-12.

McAuley, E. (2022). *HIQA: 'Not Uncommon' for patients in EDs to wait 80 to 90 hours for an inpatient bed.* Available at HIQA: 'Not uncommon' for patients in EDs to wait 80 to 90 hours for an inpatient bed (Accessed 17/02/2025)

Medical Practitioners Act, 2007 (2007). Medical Practitioners Act, 2007. Available at Medical Practitioners Act 2007 (tcd.ie) (Accessed 30/11/2023)

Quick, O.L., (2012). *A scoping study on the effects of health professional regulation on those regulated*. Available at A scoping study on the effects of health professional regulation on those regulated. (professionalstandards.org.uk) (Accessed 01/12/2023)

SCIE (2022). *Co-production: what it is and how to do it*. Available at Co-production: what it is and how to do it - SCIE (Accessed 16/02/2025)

Sweetman, A., McDonald, J.T. and Hawthorne, L. (2015) Occupational Regulation and foreign Qualification Recognition: An Overview, *Canadian Public Policy*, 41 (Supplement 1), S1-S13. https://doi.org/10.3138/cpp.41.s1.s1

Veenstra, G.L., Dabekaussen, K.F., Molleman, E., Heineman, E. and Welker, G.A., (2022). Health care professionals' motivation, their behaviors, and the quality of hospital care: A mixed-methods systematic review. *Health care management review*, *47*(2), pp.155-167.

Governments are Failing the Unemployed: The False Promises of Activation policies, Welfare Conditionality and Neo-Liberalism

Almha Fitzpatrick, 2nd year Political Science and Social Policy

Introduction

This essay analyses labour market activation policies and challenges the claim that welfare conditionality is necessary to prevent welfare dependency. It investigates the transformation of welfare states in many OECD countries and argues that welfare conditionality and carrots and sticks policies are unnecessary for reducing unemployment. The representation of welfare dependency as something to be prevented is challenged by questioning the true value of paid work for individuals.

Activation Policies

Activation labour market policies (ALMPs) have gained prominence in recent decades in many OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries (Bonoli, 2010, p. 435). ALMPs emphasise participation in paid work, the conditioning of social rights, and increased individual obligation for job seeking, alongside the provision of additional employment services (Dingeldey, 2007, p. 823). ALMPs are presented in a variety of ways, for instance, many ALMPs are designed to increase human capital and others use threats and sanctions to activate the unemployed (Bonoli, 2010, p. 440). ALMPs are a very significant development in social welfare policy and thus have caused much political controversy, as they conflict with a post-World War II view of social benefits as a right (Bonoli, 2010, p. 436). This change in the welfare state is characterised by the transition away from welfare policies with decommodification as the objective, towards policies with recommodification as the objective (Dingeldey, 2007, p. 823), and it was also viewed as a shift from welfare to workfare (Dingeldey, 2007).

Welfare Conditionality

The transition from welfare payments with no obligations to ALMPs illustrates the transition towards the conditionality of social rights (Dingeldey, 2007). Welfare payments are now dependent on meeting individual behavioural requirements, intended to improve the likelihood of employment (Dingeldey, 2007). To illustrate this concept, the Australian adoption of ALMPs will be analysed.

'Work for the Dole'

The Australian government designed the 'Work for the Dole' program to provide work experience for the long term unemployed and improve their employability (Casey, 2020). Recipients of welfare must apply to up to 20 jobs per month, frequently attend training programs and get involved with community projects in order to receive their welfare payments (Casey, 2020, p. 7).

The concept of 'Work for the Dole' is positive, and its emphasis on improving social capital through training is important, however, it often falls short within its welfare conditionality framework. For example, the rule surrounding the 20 job applications per month forces participants to apply for jobs they have no interest in or that they are unqualified or overqualified for (Casey, 2020, p.13). Due to the number of applicants applying to jobs that were totally unsuited to them, employers were much less likely to use the state unemployment institutions to hire employees (Casey, 2020, p. 13). This wasted the time of the unemployed and was extremely ineffective in increasing employment. In addition, the large quantity of job applications that participants were forced to complete naturally led to many rejections. This was reportedly very tough on participant well-being, making the already negative experience of unemployment much worse (Casey, 2020).

These claims are supported by the literature on the subject that found little evidence to suggest that the 'Work for the Dole' program significantly improved employment chances (Casey, 2020, p. 4). This conflicts with the position of many OECD governments that activation policies and welfare conditionality are essential for increasing employment.

The Diffusion of Neo-Liberalism into Welfare: The Irish Case

Ireland was relatively late to the trend of the adoption of activation policies by OECD countries. The government did not begin reforming the nation's welfare institutions until after the 2008 financial crisis, as a condition of the bailout of the Irish government by the Troika (EU, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund) (Collins & Murphy, 2016, p. 69).

The creation of *Intreo* represented the first major reform to Irish welfare institutions (Collins & Murphy, 2016, p.70). The change in the culture of Irish welfare policies is illustrated in the referral of those availing of employment services, such as *Intreo* as 'customers'. This equates what used to be viewed as an essential service and right, to a business-like, transactional relationship. This new approach to welfare was altered from individualised and flexible to a fixed program focussed on short-term results. However, this business-like approach led to greater emphasis on efficiency and the capacity of the employment services doubled, increasing the availability of an important service (Collins & Murphy, 2016, p. 71). However, the quality of this service suffered.

There has also been a shift from the use of the term unemployment to 'job seeking' that is caused by the diffusion of neo-liberal ideals into welfare. This transition of terms has been accompanied by increased regulations regarding the receiving of welfare benefits (Boland & Griffin, 2015). The receiving of welfare benefits is now dependent upon attendance at training and education programs, as well as consistent job searching (Boland & Griffin, 2015).

Ultimately, Boland and Griffin (2015, p. 35) argue that the term 'job seeker' absolves the government of the obligation to care for citizens and of the responsibility of the economic factors influencing the labour market and instead places the blame on the individual.

Questioning the Necessity of Paid Work

Cole (2007) raises the question of the necessity of paid work by challenging the seminal study of the effects of unemployment in the town of Marienthal in Austria (Jahoda et al., 1971), which has been crucial in shaping our understanding of the impact of unemployment on individuals and communities. The researchers of the

Marienthal paper, led by Jahoda, believed that unemployment impacted the town so deeply because it meant the loss of important human needs that paid work provides (Cole, 2007). A key theme of the Marienthal paper is the position that paid work is essential to humans–especially adult men–and thus takes the position that unemployment, which results in the absence of this need, will always be problematic (Cole, 2007, p. 1135). However, the claim of the importance of paid work is not supported by any kind of investigation into the supposed benefits (Cole, 2007, p. 1135). This lack of investigation into the benefits of paid work could indicate that paid work is assumed by the researchers to be the norm for adult males, and thus the lack of paid work must therefore be bad.

In addition, Cole (2007) argues that the supposed negative consequences of unemployment outlined by the researchers, neglect to note that many of these consequences, such as a loss of purpose and increased reports of anxiety, could simply be caused by their new financial insecurity, as opposed to the unemployment itself, and that formal, paid work is not necessary to personal fulfilment. It is important to question whether causality between unemployment and these negative consequences has been sufficiently illustrated. It appears that due to the researchers believing that work is intrinsically important to society and that men should be engaged in paid work, that they projected this belief onto their observations and assumed causation between unemployment and these adverse effects. Cole (2007) claims that the Marienthal paper understated the importance of the impact of poverty on people and instead focussed on this idea of paid work as being essential to the human existence.

Boland and Griffin (2015, p. 31) also challenge the Marienthal paper, similarly focussing on what Jahoda et al. (1971) referred to as 'Deprivation Theory', the idea that individuals who are unemployed suffer a social deficit as well as a financial one through their loss of purpose and social status etc. Boland and Griffin (2015, p. 31) argue that Jahoda et al. (1971) neglected to analyse the ways in which government institutions dictate the experience of unemployment, and he overlooks that this negative experience reported may not be due to being unemployed but rather the circumstances that result from government unemployment policy.

The Politics of Unemployment

The neo-liberal activation policies that have been outlined in this essay are all designed with the intention of ending welfare dependency. However, painting a reliance on social welfare as "dependency" creates the illusion that these issues of unemployment are individual problems as opposed to broader social issues (Fraser & Gordon, 1994). Additionally, while 'active' employment policies are created with the perspective that unemployment is an individual and personal issue, the public employment services do not provide individual, personal help to returning people to employment (Boland & Griffin, 2015).

It is also important to question whether welfare dependency is even a negative issue to begin with. Most governments, especially those with ALMPs would argue that it certainly is, that paid work is an essential contribution to society that provides people with much fulfillment. However, there are limitations to this argument.

For instance, there is political negativity surrounding the unemployed including accusations of neglecting to carry out one's civil duty and not contributing to society. However, these allegations do not seem to apply to those who have the privilege to choose not to participate in paid work due to inherited or unearned wealth, or a wealthy partner. They are not the object of these attacks by the government and broader society (Patrick, 2012, p. 11).

Additionally, this idea that paid work is always beneficial to society is flawed, since in fact, there are many jobs that not only neglect to contribute to society but that in fact harm society and the environment. This movement of questioning the value of paid work is linked to increased advocacy for Basic Income (BI), motivated by concerns of rising automation, the effects of climate change, and economic instability. BI is an unconditional payment made to individuals as opposed to households to be spent on whatever the person requires (Van Parijs, 2004, p. 8). Movements such as this will only increase momentum as deficiencies of activation policies and welfare conditionality become more apparent.

Poverty within work

Politically, work is viewed as a way out of poverty, however, governments neglect that this only applies to certain types of work, and in many types of work,

employees still live in poverty (Patrick, 2012). In the U.K., over half of adults who are of working age that live in poverty are members of households where at least one person is working (Patrick, 2012, p. 7).

Many of these people are employed in various types of 'precarious' work. Standing (2011, p. 7) describes precarious work as insecure, low paid work, with no long-term contracts and little room for building a career or progressing through the ranks. Insecure and 'precarious' work can be extremely damaging to mental health and well-being, and contributes to economic inequality (Kalleberg, 2009). In addition, people's autonomy of decision-making is inhibited as the financial insecurity and the instability of their work forces them to put off decisions such as having a family and getting married (Kalleberg, 2009, p. 9).

Negative perceptions of the unemployed

ALMPs, welfare conditionality, and sanctions (often referred to as "carrots and sticks" policies) are typically popular amongst the public and the media, who hold negative perceptions of the unemployed and thus believe these harsh policies to be essential (Boland & Griffin, 2015). This plays an important role in the policymaking process. While aspects of policies may not actually be very effective, as illustrated in the 'Work for the Dole' example, as long as they are broadly popular with the general public, governments tend to favour them. Oftentimes, this is done despite politicians' knowledge of their true effectiveness, in an attempt to remain popular with the electorate.

An example of these negative perceptions is demonstrated in the ESRI report *Carrots without Sticks* by McGuinness et al. (2011), which found that benefits without sanctions would mean that the unemployed would not take every job or training opportunity they were offered (Boland & Griffin, 2015, p. 36). These findings were utilised to advocate in favour of sanctions. However, alternatively, it is illustrative of the fairness of a system without sanctions, as participants were granted autonomy of decision making in their pursuit of employment. They were not forced to take jobs they were overqualified for or uninterested in.

Boland and Griffin (2015) assert that these recommendations are indicative about problems of objectivity within this area of research, as the interpretation of these findings can be influenced by neoliberal values surrounding employment. In support of this, Boland and Griffin (2015) say that numerous reports of training being unhelpful were neglected, and the fact that taking any job, even one that the participant is overqualified for or that does not offer many opportunities for progression, is a short-term solution to the problem. It will not offer the individual a sense of fulfilment in their life and could possibly lead to them being unemployed once again, shortly after, and thus creating a cycle of unemployment (Boland & Griffin, 2015).

Conclusion

This essay has discussed activation policies and welfare conditionality and how rising neo-liberal ideals have led to a complete transformation of the welfare state across many OECD countries. Examples of activation, welfare conditionality and 'carrots and sticks' policies were analysed using Australia and Ireland as case studies. The value and necessity of paid work for individuals was questioned, as well as its benefit to society. Ultimately, this paper concludes that while the focus of activation policies on increasing social capital and institutional capacity are very important, there are deep flaws with current activation policies that rely on welfare conditionality, as they negatively affect the well-being of the unemployed and are ineffective in increasing employment. It is suggested that governments should treat the unemployed with empathy and understanding and work with individuals collaboratively to find suitable employment that ensures financial stability and personal fulfilment.

References

Boland, T. and Griffin, R. (2015) 'The Death of Unemployment and the Birth of Job-Seeking in Welfare Policy: Governing a Liminal Experience', *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 23(2), pp. 29–48. Available at: https://doi.org/10.7227/IJS.23.2.3.

Bonoli, G. (2010) 'The Political Economy of Active Labor-Market Policy', *Politics & Society*, 38(4), pp. 435–457. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329210381235.

Casey, S. (2020). *Mutual Obligation after COIVID-19: The work for the dole time bomb.* Per Capita Discussion Paper. Per Capita. Available at https://percapita.org.au/wp content/uploads/2020/06/Mutual-Obligation-after-COVID19_FINAL2-1.pdf (Accessed: 28 November 2024).

Cole, M. (2007) 'Re-Thinking Unemployment: A Challenge to the Legacy of Jahoda et al', *Sociology*, 41(6), pp. 1133–1149. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038507082319.

Collins, M.L. and Murphy, M.P. (2016) 'Activation: Solving Unemployment or Supporting a Low-Pay Economy?', in M.P. Murphy and F. Dukelow (eds) *The Irish Welfare State in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp. 67–92. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-57138-0_4.

Dingeldey, I. (2007) 'Between workfare and enablement – The different paths to transformation of the welfare state: A comparative analysis of activating labour market policies', *European Journal of Political Research*, 46(6), pp. 823–851. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2007.00712.x.

Fraser, N. and Gordon, L. (1994) '"Dependency" Demystified: Inscriptions of Power in a Keyword of the Welfare State', *Social Politics*, 1(1), pp. 4–31. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/1.1.4.

Jahoda, M., Lazarsfeld, P.F. and Zeisel, H. (1971) *Marienthal: The Sociography of an Unemployed Community*. New York: Routledge.

Kalleberg, A.L. (2009) 'Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition', *American Sociological Review*, 74(1), pp. 1–22. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240907400101.

McGuinness, S., O'Connell, P.J. and Kelly, E. (2011) *Carrots without sticks: The impacts of job search assistance in a regime with minimal monitoring and sanctions*. Working Paper 409. ESRI Working Paper. Available at: https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/100248 (Accessed: 27 November 2024).

Patrick, R. (2012) 'Work as the primary "duty" of the responsible citizen: a critique of this work-centric approach', *People, Place and Policy Online*, 6(1), pp. 5–15. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3351/ppp.0006.0001.0002.

Standing, G. (2011). *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Van Parijs, P. (2004) 'Basic Income: A Simple and Powerful Idea for the Twenty-First Century', *Politics & Society*, 32(1), pp. 7–39. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329203261095.

Addressing Mental Health Disparities Among Indigenous Youth in Canada

Emma Gravelle, Social Policy and Practice Post Graduate Diploma

Suicide is the leading cause of death among Indigenous youth in Canada—a heartbreaking reality rooted in the enduring scars of colonialism, systemic discrimination, and the erosion of cultural identity and language loss (Indigenous Services Canada, 2024b). Across the globe, Indigenous peoples face profound health disparities compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts, shaped by systemic barriers, intergenerational trauma, and limited access to culturally appropriate care (Mitchell, 2019). In Canada, Indigenous youth face a particularly acute mental health crisis, with suicide rates among First Nations youth six times higher than non-Indigenous youth and Inuit youth rates 30 times higher than the national average (Kumar & Tjepkema, 2019).

These disparities stem from "colonial trauma," a political determinant of health that perpetuates inequalities among Indigenous communities (Mitchell, 2019, p. 86). Initiatives like Jordan's Principle (Indigenous Services Canada, 2024) and the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2025) aim to address critical needs. However, gaps in funding, service delivery, and cultural alignment persist. Consequently, this paper evaluates the effectiveness of these policies, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and recommends culturally aligned, systemic reforms based on New Zealand's Whānau Ora approach (Whanau Ora, 2025).

Challenges Faced by Indigenous Youth

The challenges faced by Indigenous youth in Canada are a direct result of historical injustices and systemic inequities that continue to impact their mental, physical, and social wellbeing (Smye et al., 2023). Though not directly impacted by the trauma of residential schools, many Indigenous youth remain burdened by the intergenerational effects of these institutions. The psychological scars of forced assimilation, cultural erasure, and systemic discrimination continue to

reverberate through Indigenous communities, creating cycles of trauma that persist even today. Residential schools, which remained in operation until 1996, were not only sites of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, but mechanisms of cultural genocide, or better yet, institutions with the aim to 'rid the Indian of the child'. These institutions systematically stripped away Indigenous identities, leaving deep emotional wounds and rupturing the intergenerational transmission of culture, language and traditional knowledge, which lie at the heart of Indigenous cultural identity (Bombay et al., 2013). The legacy of such schools is not only psychological but structural, reinforcing cycles of poverty, marginalization, and disempowerment, affecting Indigenous youth today.

Socioeconomic disparities significantly compound the challenges faced by Indigenous youth. Nearly 40% of off-reserve Indigenous children live in poverty (Cattroll, 2010), and urban Indigenous populations are more than twice as likely to experience poverty compared to non-Indigenous Canadians. These economic hardships are closely linked to social determinants of health shaped by colonization, including systemic discrimination, land dispossession, and inequitable access to resources and services in unceded territories (Kolahdooz et al., 2015). Indigenous Canadians face a significantly lower life expectancy–on average 12 years less than non-Indigenous Canadians–and experience higher rates of preventable chronic illness (King, 2011; Wilkins et al., 2008). On reserves, many communities continue to face inadequate access to essential resources like clean water, nutritious food, and adequate health services, resulting in poor health outcomes such as disproportionately high rates of tuberculosis (Assembly of First Nations, n.d.; Public Service Alliance of Canada, 2008). Addressing these interconnected social and structural factors is critical to reducing the persistent inequities among Indigenous populations in Canada and breaking the cycles of disadvantage.

Moreover, the lack of culturally competent mental health care further exacerbates health disparities. The mistrust of mainstream services, rooted in historical trauma and past mistreatment, further hinders access to appropriate care for many Indigenous youth (Goetz et al., 2022). This experience is compounded by shortage and just overall lack of Indigenous healthcare professionals who can deliver care that respects cultural values and traditions.

For instance, while Indigenous people make up approximately 4.9% of the Canadian population, they represent only 3.0% of the registered nursing workforce, with only 9,695 Indigenous nurses in Canada (College of Nursing, 2016). This disparity illustrates the dire need of culturally appropriate care as a social determinant of health, ensuring that mental health interventions are both relevant and effective for everyone they aim to assist.

Altogether, these factors underscore the interconnectedness of the social determinants of health, demonstrating the need for culturally sensitive, targeted mental health services that address both the historical trauma and the contemporary socioeconomic and structural challenges faced by Indigenous youth. The complex web of disparities–ranging from poverty and inadequate access to fundamental resources to mistrust of healthcare systems–demands a holistic, integrated approach to health and well-being that considers the integrated nature of these challenges.

Policy Strategies

Jordan's Principle

To address the systemic inequities faced by Indigenous youth, the Canadian government introduced Jordan's Principle in December 2007, following the tragic death of five-year-old Jordan River Anderson. Born with complex medical needs, Jordan's care was delayed due to jurisdictional disputes between federal and provincial governments over funding responsibilities (Indigenous Services Canada, 2019). Since its inception, Jordan's Principle has received frequent updates in its policies and operating procedures, to ensure it is a relevant and evolving policy able to respond to the needs of Indigenous children (Indigenous Services Canada, 2025).

Jordan's Principle aims to eliminate such barriers by guaranteeing equitable access to healthcare, education, and social services for Indigenous children. Its implementation is driven by collaboration among key stakeholders, including the federal and provincial governments, First Nations communities, and service providers. The policy adopts a dual approach, combining funding mechanisms

with case-by-case interventions to address service gaps efficiently and effectively. By ensuring Indigenous children can access the necessary supports when and where they are needed, Jordan's Principle represents a critical step toward achieving equitable service delivery (Indigenous Services Canada, 2024).

National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy

The National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy (NISPS), created by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), tackles the public health crisis of disproportionately high suicide rates among Inuit youth. The strategy addresses root causes, and perpetuating factors, including trauma and social determinants of health, while promoting resilience, cultural continuity, and improved mental health outcomes (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2016).

Established in 1971, ITK is a national organization representing Inuit communities across Canada. It collaborates with the federal government to advance Inuit well-being through research, advocacy, and culturally informed public policy (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2025). ITK prioritizes Inuit-led initiatives, community-based programs, and culturally relevant practices tailored to the unique needs of Inuit youth.

Federal support for NISPS has been substantial, with $9 million allocated in 2016, followed by $50 million over 10 years starting in 2019, and an additional $11 million in 2022 to enhance its implementation (Indigenous Services Canada, 2022). Unlike other frameworks, such as Jordan's Principle, NISPS exemplifies a holistic, Inuit-led approach to addressing a public health crisis.

Critical Analysis

Strengths of Current Policies

Jordan's Principle and the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy (NISPS) illustrate meaningful progress in addressing systemic inequities in Indigenous mental health through increased funding, community involvement, and heightened awareness. Jordan's Principle has allocated over $8.8 billion as of

December 2024, facilitating access to over 8.2 million essential services, including mental health care, educational supports, and medical equipment, while removing jurisdictional barriers that previously delayed care (Indigenous Services Canada, 2024). Similarly, the NISPS prioritizes Inuit-led, community-driven approaches to address intergenerational trauma and social determinants of health. Federal investments of $70 million since 2016 have enabled programs fostering resilience and cultural continuity (Indigenous Services Canada, 2022; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2025). Together, these policies not only improve service access but also amplify public and political awareness, ensuring Indigenous perspectives remain central to advancing mental health equity.

Limitations of Current Policies

However, despite significant efforts, several gaps and limitations continue to undermine the effectiveness of current policies aimed at improving Indigenous mental health. While funding has increased, many programs remain under-resourced, particularly in remote and rural communities where just less than 50% of Indigenous populations reside, and access to essential services are often limited (Boksa et al., 2015). For example, remote communities may have to wait weeks or months for mental health services due to the lack of local professionals (Statistics Canada, 2024). Service delivery under Jordan's Principle is frequently hindered by bureaucratic delays, with some First Nations children waiting up to a year for approved services despite being obligated to process within 12 to 48 hours (SpearChief-Morris, 2024). Additionally, the insufficient presence of Indigenous mental health professionals—currently, 1.2% of health workers in Canada identify as Indigenous (College of Nursing, 2016)—results in a lack of cultural integration within services, limiting the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and practices into treatment approaches. Furthermore, the absence of robust empirical data on the outcomes of Indigenous-focused interventions—restricts the ability to critically assess their effectiveness and identify necessary improvements (Jongen et al., 2022).

New Zealand's Whānau Ora Approach

In contrast, New Zealand's Whānau Ora program offers valuable insights and potential learning opportunities for Canada. Whānau Ora, meaning 'family wellbeing,' is a holistic policy designed to strengthen the entire family unit, rather than focusing solely on individuals (Smith et al., 2019). This approach empowers families to improve their cultural, social, and economic well-being, promoting generational resilience. Crucially, Whānau Ora is Indigenous led, with Māori organizations designing and implementing the programs, ensuring alignment with Indigenous values and needs. Empirical evidence highlights Whānau Ora's success in improving health and social outcomes for Māori communities, particularly in areas of mental health, economic empowerment, and educational achievement. For example, a 2023 report revealed that 74% of whānau engaged across all program domains, highlighting the program's effectiveness in fostering broad participation and demonstrating its overall success. (Whānau Ora, 2023). The program's success is further reflected in its broad reach—more than 41,900 individuals received tailored support (UNESCO, 2016). Canada could benefit from a similar holistic, Indigenous-led approach that emphasizes the family unit and is based on robust empirical data to evaluate and refine its effectiveness. Whānau Ora not only provides valuable insights into supporting Indigenous youth in Canada, but Reweti (2023) also emphasizes its potential to enhance Westernized healthcare models by integrating whānau-centered approaches.

Recommendations

To meaningfully improve the mental health and well-being of Indigenous youth, the following actions are recommended:

1. Increase funding for Indigenous-led initiatives: Increase resources for community driven mental health programs, focusing on youth in remote areas.

2. Integrate holistic, family-centered care models: Focus on the well-being of entire families by integrating mental, physical, and social health care strategies that align with Indigenous cultural values.

3. Streamline government collaboration: Strengthen coordination between federal, provincial, and Indigenous governments to ensure timely access to services.

4. Expand the Indigenous mental health workforce: Train Indigenous professionals to provide culturally competent care.

5. Strengthen data collection and evaluation systems: Establish robust systems for assessing the impact of mental health initiatives and inform policy refinement.

6. Incorporate Whānau Ora principles: Integrate Indigenous leadership and cultural approaches into health policy to better align with community values and enhance long term well-being.

Conclusion

Mental health challenges among Indigenous youth in Canada represent a pervasive and urgent crisis requiring immediate action. While policies like Jordan's Principle and the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy have made strides, they fall short of addressing the full scope of the issue. For instance, while Jordan's Principle addresses jurisdictional disputes between federal and provincial governments, delays and inconsistencies in service delivery across provinces reveal the complex nature of policy execution within Canada's provincial system. Canada's vast size and diversity—both in Indigenous populations and geography—also complicate the application of a one-size-fits-all approach, especially when compared to New Zealand. Unlike Canada's decentralized system, where provincial and regional governments have significant control over service delivery, New Zealand's more centralized approach to Whānau Ora makes direct comparisons difficult.

While Whānau Ora principles have been successfully implemented in certain regions, their application across Canada is complex. A broader examination of provincial and regional differences is needed to understand the challenges and opportunities of adapting these principles to the Canadian context. This

recommendation focuses on federal policy, but future research should explore regional adaptations and the potential for a more unified approach.

By adopting the holistic, culturally sensitive approach of New Zealand's Whānau Ora model, Canada has an opportunity to support Indigenous youth with the culturally aligned, community-driven solutions that emphasize self-determination and empower Indigenous communities to take charge of their own health and well-being. Ultimately, the future of Canada's Indigenous youth depends on challenging the status quo, actively dismantling the barriers that have perpetuated their suffering, and building a system where Indigenous youth not only survive but thrive.

References

Addressing Mental Health Disparities Among Indigenous Youth in Canada 11 Public Service Alliance of Canada, (2008). *PSAC Statement on National Aboriginal Peoples Day Making Aboriginal poverty history*, www.psac.com/what/humantights/june21factsheet1- e.shtml

Assembly of First Nations (n.d.). *The reality for First Nations in Canada: Fact Sheet,* www.afn.ca/ article.asp?id=764

Boksa, P., Joober, R., & Kirmayer, L. J. (2015). Mental wellness in Canada's Aboriginal communities: striving toward reconciliation. *Journal of Psychiatry and Neuroscience, 40*(6), 363–365. https://doi.org/10.1503/jpn.150309

Bombay, A., Matheson, K., & Anisman, H. (2013). The intergenerational effects of Indian Residential Schools: Implications for the concept of historical trauma. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *51*(3), 320–338. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461513503380

Cattroll, F. (2010). Poverty as a social determinant of First Nations, Unit, and Métis Health. In *National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health*. Retrieved

January 12, 2025, from https://www.ccnsa-nccah.ca/docs/determinants/FS-PovertySDOH-EN.pdf

College of Nursing. (2016). Aboriginal nursing in Canada. In *University of Saskatchewan* (NOC 2016-301). https://nursing.usask.ca/documents/aboriginal/AboriginalRNWorkforceFactsheet.pdf

Goetz, C. J., Mushquash, C. J., & Maranzan, K. A. (2022). An Integrative Review of Barriers and Facilitators Associated With Mental Health Help Seeking Among Indigenous Populations. *Psychiatric Services* (Washington, D.C.). Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.202100503

Indigenous Services Canada. (2019). *Honouring Jordan River Anderson*. Government of Canada. https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1583703111205/1583703134432

Indigenous Services Canada. (2022). *New $11 million investment to strengthen National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy*. Government of Canada. Retrieved January 13, 2025, from Addressing Mental Health Disparities Among Indigenous Youth in Canada 10 https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2022/10/new-11-million investment-to-strengthen-national-inuit-suicide-prevention-strategy.html

Indigenous Services Canada. (2024). *Jordan's Principle*. Government of Canada. https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1568396042341/1568396159824

Indigenous Services Canada (2024b). *Suicide prevention in Indigenous communities*. https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1576089685593/1576089741803.

Indigenous Services Canada (2025). *Statement by Minister Hajdu*. https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2025/02/statement-

by-minister-hajdu-on-the-changes-to-operating-procedures-related-to-processing-requests-under-jordans-principle.html (Accessed: February 20, 2025).

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (2016). National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy. In *Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami*. https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ITK-National-Inuit-Suicide Prevention-Strategy-2016.pdf

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (2025). *National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy*. Website https://www.itk.ca/projects/national-inuit-suicide-prevention-strategy/

Jongen, C., Campbell, S., Saunders, V., Askew, D., Spurling, G., Gueorguiev, E., Langham, E., Bainbridge, R., & McCalman, J. (2022). Wellbeing and mental health interventions for Indigenous children and youth: A systematic scoping review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *145*, 106790. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2022.106790

King M. (2011). Chronic diseases and mortality in Canadian Aboriginal peoples: learning from the knowledge. *Preventing chronic disease*, *8*(1), A07.

Kolahdooz, F., Nader, F., Yi, K. J., & Sharma, S. (2015) 'Understanding the social determinants of health among Indigenous Canadians: priorities for health promotion policies and actions,' *Global Health Action*, 8(1), p. 27968. https://doi.org/10.3402/gha.v8.27968.

Kumar, M. B. & Tjepkema, M. (2019). *Suicide among First Nations people, Métis and Inuit (2011-2016).* Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-011-X2019001.

Mitchell, T. (2019). Colonial Trauma: Complex, continuous, collective, cumulative and compounding effects on the health of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and beyond. *International Journal of Indigenous Health*, *14*(2), 74–94. https://doi.org/10.32799/ijih.v14i2.32251

Reweti, A. (2023). Understanding how whānau-centred initiatives can improve Māori health in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Health Promotion International*, *38*(4). https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daad070

Smith, V., Moore, C., Cumming, J., & Boulton, A. (2019). Whānau Ora: An Indigenous policy success story. In Successful public policy: Lessons from Australia and New Zealand (pp. 525–546). Australian National University Press. DOI: 10.22459/SPP.2019. https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/25104/succesful.pdf?sequence% 3D1%23page%3D399#page=525

Smye, V., Browne, A. J., Josewski, V., Keith, B., & Mussell, W. (2023). Social suffering: Indigenous peoples' experiences of accessing mental health and substance use services. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *20*(4), 3288. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20043288

SpearChief-Morris, J. (2024). *Ottawa is supposed to process First Nations families' child services requests within days. Sometimes it makes them wait a year*. Indigenous Watchdog. https://www.indigenouswatchdog.org/update/ottawa-is-supposed-to-process first-nations-families-child-services-requests-within-days-sometimes-it-makes-them wait-a-year/

Statistics Canada. (2024). *Health care access and experiences among Indigenous people, 2024*. Government of Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/dailyquotidien/241104/dq241104a-eng.htm Addressing Mental Health Disparities Among Indigenous Youth in Canada 12

UNESCO. (2016). *Whanau ora: Policy Monitoring Platform*. Unesco. https://www.unesco.org/creativity/en/policy-monitoring-platform/whanau-ora

Whānau Ora. (2023). *Whānau Ora Annual Report 2022/23*. https://whanauora.nz/assets/resources/WOCA_Annual%20Report_2022-23.pdf

Whanau Ora Commissioning Agency. (2025). *Whānau Ora*. Whānau Ora. https://whanauora.nz/

Wilkins, R., Uppal, S., Finès, P., Senècal, S., Guimond, E., & Dion, R. (2008). Life expectancy in the Inuit-inhabited areas of Canada, 1989 to 2003. *Health reports*, *19*(1), 7–19.

A Study of Youth Unemployment and Market Insertion Inside of France

Alexandre Marie, 4th year History and Social Policy

Introduction

The analysis of the French labour market, especially when concerning how it manages the process of labour insertion for youths, is relevant when analysing European youth dynamics. It is also essential in the context of youth unemployment as it reflects the issues faced in the French economy, young people's reflections on whether opportunities are available or whether such opportunities are mainly at the disposal of specific groups of young individuals. In addition, this is relevant when accounting for France's pivotal role in the European economy and how it reflects the conditions experienced in other European states. The organisation of this study shall first present multiple theories and ideas that scholars have presented regarding the broader trends of youth labour insertion and unemployment and how these trends apply to France's labour transition dynamics and unemployment. These theories will be then thoroughly analysed and compared through a case study presentation, focusing on figures and works presented by Eurostat, the *Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques* (Insee), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which provide valuable insights. Using this data, should facilitate the presentation of a conclusion to the topic at hand concerning the case of France and assess the validity of the proposed theories.

Literature

Historical developments (1970s - Present)

The analysis of the literature concerning the French case study on youth labour insertion and unemployment grants a vital insight into the topic. It can be established that youth labour insertion and unemployment since the seventies have developed into a more prominent phenomenon in many developed

countries, coinciding with a broader spread of unemployment across numerous economies starting from the eighties (Bonoli, 2010, p. 446). This development has continued, especially in Europe, as unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, has worsened with time (Ilieva-Trichkova & Boyadjieva, 2019, pp. 1-2). The severity of this issue increased in the face of the 2008 recession, making the issue concerning youth unemployment and labour transition much more relevant as many of the established structures designed to combat unemployment faced complications, forcing governments to change their policies (Hadjivassiliou et al., 2016, p. 2). This has not been helped by the globalisation process which made markets tied to international competition (Blossfeld et al., 2012, pp. 366-368). On average, it has also been analysed that young people in the European Union are more prone to experiencing temporary unstable employment than their older peers (de Lange et al., 2014, pp. 194-195).

European Context

The impacts of this condition can be quite severe, and as a result, numerous plans were developed across the European zone to deal with this critical issue at hand (Cefalo et al., 2020, p. 1). In addition, the effects, especially regarding long-term unemployment, can vary widely across nations due to the different institutions and social dynamics (Breen, 2005, pp. 125-126). For instance, how, in some countries, institutions may be in place to allow young individuals to have connections to the labour market throughout their education, as well as the different work regulations impacting the difficulty of entering the labour market; as seen with the development of vocational education to facilitate market entry or the easing of regulations to increase employer willingness to hire (Wolbers, 2007, pp. 189-193). Interestingly, the impact of unemployment on youths has been proven in some studies to allow them to develop higher skill levels and escape from its grip successfully (Mroz & Savage, 2006, p. 290). Social context has often been highly significant when it came to the analysis of youth market transition, as it is noticeable that those who have attained higher education, on average, experience a relatively smooth labour transition (Caliendo & Schmidl, pp. 4-6). In addition, concerning the dynamics of youth unemployment, the impacts have been differentiated across different groups of countries, such as the

"Mediterranean" and "Nordic"; with the impact being much more severe in "Mediterranean" nations (Marelli et al., 2013, pp. 63-68).

French Context

French Context

When comparing these trends inside France, it is evident that numerous parallels can be noticed, with a significant increase in youth unemployment and general unemployment in France since the 1970s (Moreau & Visser, 1990). What has been deemed to be the inappropriate answer to the pact of the French government in the eighties allowed for the situation to be more difficult; as the focus was rather placed on the issue of inflation and on wage indexing for the sake of stability (Malinvaud, 1986, pp. 215-216). Furthermore, youth unemployment rates have taken a turn for the worse with the 2008 recession, which is referred to as a process of "scarification" in France (Chevalier, 2019, pp. 1-2). In the French context, the impact of unemployment has also been worse for those who inhabit what have been called "*ZUS*" or *Zones Urbaine Sensible*, where youths often experienced unemployment more severely than others following the end of their schooling (Kamionka & Vu Ngoc, 2016, pp. 464-482). This trend is also pronounced among youths of African heritage who were forced to rely more on unreliable forms of employment (Kamionka & Vu Ngoc, 2016, pp. 464-482). Moreover, the likelihood of unemployment in France is more likely to impact young people who did not proceed further in their education and thus ended their education at the secondary level (Crépon et al., 2012, p. 175). These analyses on the part of scholars reveal quite a complex dynamic and show that youth unemployment and labour transition in France has been complicated for many, especially those of underprivileged backgrounds.

Policy responses and effectiveness

Looking into the literature concerning how this issue has been managed allows for further understanding of the French government's responses concerning the issue of youth labour transition. In recent decades, many policies have been adopted in response to this issue by numerous governments worldwide, with the

most famous and popular policy variant being Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP), which seeks to provide inactive youths with the capacity to upskill (Bonoli, 2010, pp. 435-438). These ALMP schemes have evolved as they have adapted to new conditions, ranging from local institutions and market conditions since their inception (Bonoli, 2010, pp. 438-452). These ALMPs can come in generally four types, which are "employment assistance", "human capital investment", "occupation", and "incentive reinforcement". These four types can vary in popularity depending on the system present, with "conservative" countries, such as France, regarded as using more of an "occupation" ALMP approach than others; with belief this would allow for "social insertion" and thus, solve the lack of employment (Bonoli, 2010, pp. 440-441). All the ALMP variants can have quite significant successes, however, they may also experience what has been called the "Matthew effect", which concerns the possibility that these ALMPs disproportionately benefit individuals from upper social backgrounds (Bonoli & Liechti, 2018, pp. 895-899).

This discussion highlights the key structural differences between nations that may emerge, especially within Europe, between the different ways the labour market is ranging from "Universalistic", "Employment-centred", "Liberal", "Sub-Protective", and "Transitional" systems of the former Eastern Bloc (Hadjivassiliou et al., 2016, p. 3). Each of these systems would impact the application of the ALMPs policies. For instance, some policies allowing for more developed variants that may allow for better integration into the labour market in a broader scope of development as seen within the "Universalistic" system, while other structures may lack even developed forms of ALMP policies and thus make the process of training unemployed youths complicated as seen often with the "Sub-Protective" systems (Hadjivassiliou et al., 2016, pp. 6-10).

When applying this information to the French case study, it is evident that France can be viewed as a nation with an employment-centred support structure; that operates with complex and specific training systems and standardised certifications to signal employers the skills of young graduates and allows them to enter into a job to garner experience (Hadjivassiliou et al., 2016, p. 8). However, France has a complex history with ALMP policies due to strong trade unions fearful of government interventions (Bonoli, 2010, p. 445). This fact

caused the ALMP systems in France to take quite a while to develop correctly (Bonoli, 2010, pp. 445-450). In contrast to fellow "Employment-centred" nations like Germany, France's ELMP system has been dominated by the traditional school system (Brauns, 1999, pp. 57-87). As a result, French vocational education has been chaotic and unable to connect well with the labour market (Brauns, 1999, pp. 57-87).

The complex social dynamics of young graduates' "degrees" are often judged based on how far a student has gotten in the educational system (Brauns, 1999, pp. 57-87). French ALMP policies are also assumed to suffer from the "Matthew Effect", as the focus has traditionally been placed on those who are least in need such as young non-graduates and those who live within a ZUS or women with professional degrees (Arrighi, 2013, pp. 49-58). This also ties into the assumption that France's "selective exclusion" educational transitional system encourages young people to learn skills outside of the traditional French education system (Chevalier, 2019, p. 801). Additionally, it connects to a "work first" system as described by Tom Chevalier, that encourages young graduates to work first to learn workforce skills, whereas government policies, such as the creations of "*contrat jeunes en entreprises"* (youth in enterprise contracts) or government subventions for workspaces; which creates employment instead of educating, resulting in a higher risk of unemployment for many young people (Chevalier, 2019, p. 809).

In some respects, France exhibits characteristics of Mediterranean systems of labour transition, marked by what has been coined as a "high regulation and low signalling" system and describes a state of high regulations in the labour market and limited signalling, which sets it apart from Germany and other "Employment-centred" nations (Breen, 2005, p. 127). Thus, making temporary contracts the norm for young individuals transitioning into the labour market (Breen, 2005, p. 127).

For many in France, the training process is heavily intertwined with the state, and despite decentralising reforms, many ALMP programs are bound to direct French state-led schemes (Crépon et al., 2012, pp. 177-178). These training programs can offer benefits, albeit short-term training has often been associated with a return to

unemployment as theorised by Bruno Crépon, Marc Ferracci, and Denis Fougère as they fail to provide the sustainable knowledge to facilitate job access (Crépon, Ferracci and Fougère, 2012, pp. 190-196). Overall, the French structural dynamics make the process of the labour transition heavily complicated for large segments of the French population. French ALMP policies and employment dynamics suffer from multiple issues, including the "Matthew effect" and its inability to connect well to the labour market's needs and let young graduates attain the skills necessary combined with a highly regulated market. This stands in contrast to other systems that may allow for a much smoother transition into the labour force; due to better training, easier access to specialisations without having to rely on a selective system, or due to lower regulations that increase the willingness of employers to hire young people.

Case Study

Statistical analysis

Despite all this literature and scholarly analysis, it would also prove fruitful to analyse the statistics offered by Insee, Eurostat and OECD to formulate a concise case study of France. The information they offer could be key to proving various theories concerning the French labour transition and the underlying causes of its unemployment rate.

Data gathered by the French governmental agency Insee during the year 2021 presents compelling insights, especially concerning the unemployment rates for those who have achieved their secondary schooling, which is quite severe. Unemployment for people in this category bracket can range from 45.4% for those unemployed from one year to four to 33.3% for those unemployed from five years to ten, and finally, those unemployed for eleven years or more stand at 11.3% (Insee, 2021).

The Insee statistic also revealed that those who have achieved an upper diploma have a lower level of unemployment compared to these two groups, ranging from 9.8% for those unemployed for one to five years, 5.5% for those unemployed five to ten years, and the percentage rate being solely 4.1% for those unemployed for

more than eleven years (Insee, 2021). The Insee figures also reveal that the average unemployment rate in France in 2021 is 15.5%. The Insee offers comparisons with earlier years until 1980, revealing a trend of continuous high unemployment rates for those who do not have a higher diploma (Insee, 2021). In the case of 2009, in the aftermath of the 2008 recession, it shows a significant spike in short-term unemployment for those without diplomas, at 48.7% without high school diplomas, 22.7% for those with just secondary diplomas and 9.4% for young persons with third level qualifications (Insee, 2021).

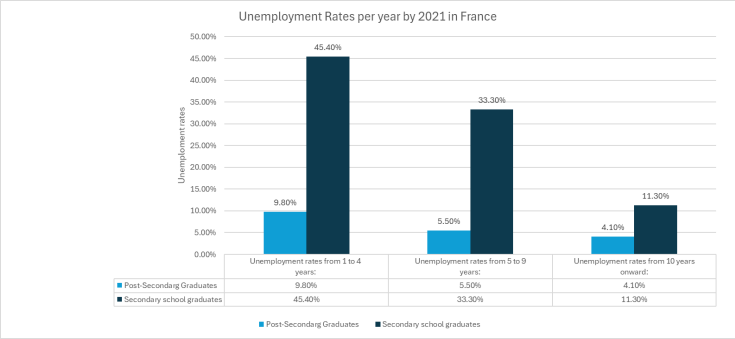

Figure 1: Bar chart of Unemployment rates in 2021 and comparison between post-secondary graduates and secondary graduates in France.

Source: Insee, 2021

Figure 2: Barchart of short-term unemployment rates in 2009 and comparisons of impact based on qualifications in France.

Source: Insee, 2021

So far, these statistics are mainly nationwide and do not reflect specific regional or local dynamics. Nevertheless, when analysing further Insee statistics focusing on the regions and departments, it reveals the variations between locations. One example that can be gathered is Seine-Saint-Denis and its comparison to the rest of Paris. One of the key statistics is the general unemployment inside the department of Seine-Saint-Denis in 2023 during its third trimester, which stood at 10.4% (Insee, 2024c). It is drastically higher than the unemployment average of 2023 in its bordering departments, such as in Paris, at 5.7% (Insee, 2024c). Connecting to the statistics relating to the percentage of those who have no higher diplomas, Seine-Saint-Denis's numbers can be found standing at 30.3% in 2021 (Insee, 2024a). It is also drastically lower than the figures for neighbouring Paris on the matter, which stands at 51% (Insee, 2024b).

The unemployment rate in Paris stood at 5.7% (Insee, 2024c). Concerning the number of young individuals in employment, the Insee in conjunction with La Direction de l'animation de la recherche, des études et des Statistiques (Dares) offered a publication entitled "Emploi, chômage, revenus du travail" that provided information concerning the type of contracts under which they are employed in 2021 (Insee & Dares, 2024). In 2021, the majority of all salaried

young individuals were placed in a contract that had a definite end or in training contracts, in contrast to just 40.6 of those between sixteen to twenty-five were under a permanent contract or CDD (Insee & Dares, 2024). In preceding years, such as 2018, Yves Jauneau et Joëlle Vidalenc have described in their report from 2019 entitled “Une photographie du marché du travail en 2018 Le taux d’emploi des jeunes et des seniors augmente de nouveau” the dynamics of youth contracts that in 2018. The percentage of those between the age bracket of fifteen to twenty-five employed in temporary work contracts is below the percentage of those employed in a permanent contract, at 29.2% compared to 45% for those with CDD (Jauneau & Vidalenc, 2019).

Figure 3 - Statut d'emploi et type de contrat en 2018

	Ensemble		Sexe (en %)		Âge (en %)		
	en milliers	en %	Femmes	Hommes	15-24 ans	25-49 ans	50 ans ou plus
Non-salariés	**3 168**	**11,7**	**8,4**	**14,8**	**2,4**	**10,5**	**16,5**
Salariés	**23 949**	**88,3**	**91,6**	**85,2**	**97,6**	**89,4**	**83,5**
Emploi à durée indéterminée	*20 290*	*84,7*	*84,2*	*85,2*	*45,0*	*87,0*	*92,5*
Contrat à durée déterminée	*2 520*	*10,5*	*12,6*	*8,4*	*29,2*	*9,9*	*5,9*
Intérim	*707*	*3,0*	*1,8*	*4,1*	*8,2*	*2,8*	*1,5*
Apprentissage	*432*	*1,8*	*1,3*	*2,3*	*17,6*	*0,3*	*0,0*
Ensemble	*23 949*	*100,0*	*100,0*	*100,0*	*100,0*	*100,0*	*100,0*
Ensemble des emplois	**27 122**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**

Champ : France hors Mayotte, population des ménages, personnes en emploi.
Source : Insee, enquête Emploi 2018.

Figure 3: Jauneau & Vidalenc, 2019.

Status of Employment and type of contracts in 2018							
	Total		Gender (in %)		Age (in %)		
	In thousands	In Percentage	Women	Men	15-24 years	25-49 years	50 and more years
Non-Salaried	3,168	11.7	8.4	14.8	2.4	10.5	16.5
Salaried	23,949	88.3	91.6	85.2	97.6	89.4	83.5
Employed without determinable length	20,290	84.7	84.2	85.2	45	87	92.5
Contract with determinable length	2,520	10.5	12.6	8.4	29.2	9.9	5.9
Interim contract	707	3	1.8	4.1	8.2	2.8	1.5
Apprenticeship	432	1.8	1.3	2.3	17.6	0.3	0

Total	23,949	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total of Employments	27,122	100	100	100	100	100	100

Figure 4: (Translation of Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Taux d'emploi des 15-64 ans par statut d'emploi en 2021 et évolution par rapport à 2020

	Niveau en 2021 (en %)	Évolution par rapport à 2020 (en points)
Indépendants	**8,1**	**0,1**
Salariés	**59,1**	**1,0**
Emploi à durée indéterminée	50,0	0,1
Contrat à durée déterminée (CDD)	5,2	0,2
Intérim	1,4	0,2
Alternance, stage	2,0	0,3
Sans contrat ou contrat inconnu	0,6	0,2
Ensemble	**67,3**	**1,2**

Lecture : en 2021, parmi les 15-64 ans, 5,2 % sont en emploi et en contrat à durée déterminée (CDD), soit 0,2 point de plus par rapport à 2020.

Champ : France hors Mayotte, personnes vivant en logement ordinaire, de 15 à 64 ans.

Source : Insee, enquêtes Emploi 2020 et 2021.

Figure 5: Émilie Pénicaud, 2022.

Amount of Employment of 15–64-year-olds by status of employment in 2021 and its evolution compared to 2020		
	Level in 2021 (in %)	Evolution compared to 2020 (in points)
Independents	8.1	0.1
Salaried	59.1	1
Employed without determinable length	50	0.1
Contract with determinable length	5.2	0.2
Interim contract	1.4	0.2
Alternance, Internships	2	0.3
Without Contract or Unknown	0.6	0.2
Total	67.3	1.2

Figure 6: Translation of Figure 5.

International Comparisons

Concerning international comparisons, utilising Eurostat as a source of data is particularly relevant. French unemployment rates are significantly higher when compared to Germany, which has also been categorised as a "conservative" social regime. In 2021, French youth unemployment rates inside Eurostat were registered as 14.6% compared to Germany's 6% (Eurostat, a). It must be acknowledged that the percentage does differ from those given by the Insee, possibly due to different definitions being used, with Eurostat also marking this fact upon France. When using the data from the earliest year available for youth unemployment in 2011 reveals a similar trend: German youth unemployment stands at 7.3% in contrast to France's 17,7% (Eurostat, a).

When focusing on the number of unemployed who did not get past a lower secondary-level degree, a contrast emerges. In 2021, France had an unemployment rate of 29.6% for those who stopped at a lower secondary diploma, in contrast to Germany's 10.9% (Eurostat, a). When using statistics from the OECD about temporary employment for those in the age bracket of fifteen to twenty-four in the year 2018, it indicates that France ranks higher than Germany and the European Union's average, albeit lower than Italy's rate (OECD, 2018). France reached 57.3%, in contrast to Germany's 51.7% and the European Union's 50.7%, which is still lower than Italy's 59.5% (OECD, 2018). Collectively, these data sources provide valuable insights for analysing the process of labour transition and youth employment, especially when compared to other nations such as Italy and Germany (OECD, 2018).

Conclusion

Combining the insights from the literature concerning the topic with the data gathered from the Insee, Eurostat, and the OECD in the case study, it is possible to form a clear understanding of the situation. It is firstly possible to see that the beliefs asserted concerning France's transition to a labour system being biased in favour of people with higher diplomas are correct. The data shows that, on

average, those without a third-level diploma experience a much higher unemployment rate. This could also support the notion that there is a particular "Matthew Effect" within France. This is noticeable with young graduates often benefiting the most from market insertion policies in contrast to individuals who failed to pass through the selective education system or who are from the ZUS or women without a bachelors. Especially when combined with data that compare a zone of France with a much lower third-level attainment rate, as Seine-Saint-Denis shows a more drastic amount of unemployment in contrast to Paris, which is a zone whose inhabitants have a much higher level of third-degree attainment, above the national average.

It is also possible to confirm the drastic difference between systems such as Germany. As such the system rather focuses on letting young people form specific skills to gain an ease of access into the market as well as having an education system that has a better ability to signal skills to the private sector. In contrast, the French system, whose institutions make such a process complicated, fails to achieve such efficiency. The INSEE data can also be instrumental in understanding how the French labour market is organised, which reveals a significant rate of individuals salaried in temporary employment, thus also showing a regulated labour market that complicates entrance into it. Additionally, it suggests that a generalist school system likely dominates the French labour market transition as many secondary graduates in France lack the skills to enter the labour market with ease in contrast to the case of Germany whose secondary-level graduates do not face such a challenge. Using both statistical data, scholarly analysis, and literature thus allows for a clearer picture of the dynamics at play. The issues that France faces may also present how some countries may suffer from similar problems when it comes to Youth unemployment. Many issues that France experiences can be associated with countries of the Mediterranean, such as seen with the limited skill signalling the French education system offers, or in the rate of unemployment among the youths in Italy.

The findings of this research offer critical insight into the flaws of some systems when it comes to labour insertion for the youth. Especially, the French case allows for an understanding of what may work, such as long-term training efforts. It also reveals what may mitigate the success of some policies or cause problems,

such as the failure of the French education system to allow young people to gain relevant skills to enter the labour market.

References

Arrighi, J.-J. (2013). L'apprentissage et le chômage des jeunes : en finir avec les illusions. *Revue Française de Pédagogie*, *183*

Bilan Formation-emploi 2021 Principaux Chiffres sur les sortants du Système éducatif, Leur insertion professionnelle et la formation tout au long de la vie. Insee. (2021). https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/5762569?sommaire=5762573

Blossfeld, H.-P., Buchholz, S., Hofäcker, D., & Bertolini, S. (2012). Selective Flexibilization and Deregulation of the Labor Market. The Answer of Continental and Southern Europe. *Stato e Mercato*, *96 (3)*

Bonoli, G. (2010). The Political Economy of Active Labor-Market Policy. Politics & Society, 38(4)

Bonoli G., Liechti F. (2018) Good intentions and Matthew effects: access biases in participation in active labour market policies*, Journal of European Public Policy,* 25:6

Brauns, H. (1998). Vocational Education in Germany and France. *International Journal of Sociology*, *28*(4)

Breen, R. (2005). Explaining Cross-National Variation in Youth Unemployment: Market and Institutional Factors. *European Sociological Review*, *21*(2)

Caliendo M., Schmidl R., (2016) Youth unemployment and active labor market policies in Europe. *IZA J Labor Policy* **5**, 1

Cefalo R., Scandurra R., Kazepov Y., (2020) Youth Labor Market Integration in European Regions. *Sustainability*. 2020; 12(9)

Chevalier, T. (2019). Pourquoi y a-t-il plus de Jeunes au Chômage en France qu'en Allemagne ?: Économie Politique d'une Citoyenneté Économique. *Revue Française de Science Politique*, *69*(5/6)

Crépon, B., Ferracci, M., & Fougère, D. (2012). Training the Unemployed in France: How Does it Affect Unemployment Duration and Recurrence? *Annals of Economics and Statistics*, *107/108*

de Lange M., Gesthuizen M. & Wolbers M.H.J. (2014) Youth Labour Market Integration Across Europe, *European Societies*, 16:2

Émilie P. (Insee), Une photographie du marché du travail en 2021 L'emploi augmente fortement, notamment celui des jeunes (2022)

Eurostat, Youth unemployment by sex, age and educational attainment level, https://doi.org/10.2908/YTH_EMPL_090, [accessed on February 2024]

Eurostat, Youth unemployment rate by sex, age and country of birth, https://doi.org/10.2908/YTH_EMPL_100, [accessed on February 2024]

Hadjivassiliou, K., Tassinari, A., Eichhorst, W., & Wozny, F. (2016). Assessing the Performance of School-to-Work Transition Regimes in the EU. *Institutions & Transition Economics: Microeconomic Issues eJournal*.

Ilieva-Trichkova, P., & Boyadjieva, P. (2020). Young people's agency over continuing education in situations of early job insecurity: from enabling to stumbling. *Studies in Continuing Education,* 42

Insee & Dares, Emploi, chômage, revenus du travail (2024)

Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, Diplômes - Formation en 2021 Département de la Seine-Saint-Denis (93) (2024a)

Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, Diplômes - Formation en 2021 Zone d'emploi 2020 de Paris (1109) (2024b)

Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, Taux de chômage localisés au 3e trimestre 2024 Comparaisons régionales et départementales (2024c)

Jauneau Y. and Vidalenc J. (Insee), Une photographie du marché du travail en 2018 Le taux d'emploi des jeunes et des seniors augmente de nouveau (2019)

Kamionka, T., & Vu Ngoc, X. (2016). Insertion des jeunes sur le marché du travail, diplôme et quartier d'origine : une modélisation dynamique. *Revue Économique*, *67*(3)

Malinvaud, E. (1986). The Rise of Unemployment in France. *Economica*, *53*(210)

Marelli, E., Choudhry, M. T., & Signorelli, M. (2013). Youth and Total Unemployment Rate: The Impact of Policies and Institutions*. Rivista Internazionale Di Scienze Sociali,* 121(1)

Moreau, A., & Visser, M. (1990). Durée du chômage des jeunes en France. *Annales d'Économie et de Statistique*, *20/21*

Mroz, T. A., & Savage, T. H. (2006). The Long-Term Effects of Youth Unemployment. *The Journal of Human Resources*, *41*(2)

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018),Temporary employment 15-24 year-olds,https://doi.org/10.1787/72d1033a-en, [accessed on February 2024]

Wolbers, M. H. J. (2007). Patterns of Labour Market Entry: A Comparative Perspective on School-to-Work Transitions in 11 European Countries. *Acta Sociologica*, *50*(3).

A review of economic policy related to space exploration in the United States

Jack O'Neill, 1st year BESS

Introduction

On September 12th, 1962, positioned behind a grand podium and flanked by an American flag, John F. Kennedy addressed the nation. He famously announced "only if the United States occupies a position of pre-eminence can we help decide whether this new ocean will be a sea of peace or a new terrifying theatre of war" followed by the prominent "We choose to go to the moon" declaration. With that, the US space program was propelled into the spotlight (Kennedy, 1962). In the following six decades the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA) program amassed exponential amounts of funding and importance. Since its inception, NASA has achieved a plethora of historically significant breakthroughs, ranging from the mapping of the universe to imperative inventions. However, a question lingers, could the money pumped into exploring everything outside our planet be better utilised if it was directed at our own planet?

The National Space Policy

The National Space Policy sets out the US's "commitment to leading in the responsible and constructive use of space, promoting a robust commercial space industry, returning Americans to the Moon and preparing for Mars, leading in exploration, and defending United States and allied interests in space," (Office of Space Commerce, 2020). Space policy in the US also strives to generate economic activity, create stable jobs, and increase the nation's GDP. The economic policy which supports NASA through budgetary allocations reflects the nation's broader goals of security, development, and overall economic growth. Funding for NASA usually comes from the nation's science policy, and infrequently, the Department of Defence (US Department of State, 2023).

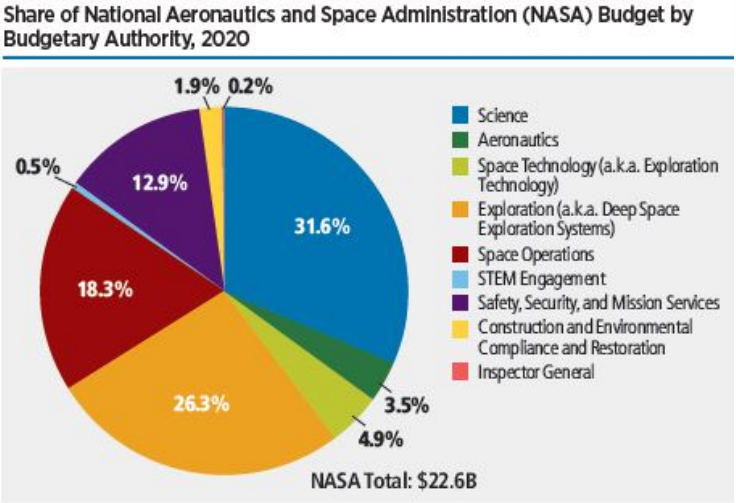

Figure 1: (Space Report, 2024).

Space Policy and the Budget

How does spending on space exploration fare in proportion to the entire US budget? Since its inception, spending on NASA usually constitutes 0.5% of the budget on an annual basis (Domitrovic, B. and Broadwater, J., 2019). The agency's final 2024 budget passed by Congress was $24.9 billion, compared with the total budgetary expenditure of $6.75 trillion. This represents 0.36% of total expenditure directed to space exploration (The Planetary Society, 2024). While fractional compared in proportion to the total budget, $24.9 billion offers a surprising amount of opportunity cost.

Historical expenditure on the US space programme must also be considered for evaluation, however. When examining the allocation of funds to NASA since its inception in 1958, the number would be closer to $650 billion (in nominal dollars). With adjustment for inflation, this number would be significantly

greater. This is illustrated by adjusting the 1966 government expenditure on NASA (the year of highest investment in the agency's history). While the 1966 expenditure was $5.6 billion, that figure would equate to $54 billion today (NASA, 1966). It must be argued that $650 billion on projects which quite literally leave our planet, seems principally illogical. Optically, it's easy to grasp the disgruntlement many American citizens share towards spending on NASA. When the average tuition for a US college student ranges from $108,584 to $234,512 over 4 years (Hassoun, 2024), and a night's stay in hospital can average $10,000, detractors can even submit arguments against NASA funding on a moral basis (Mamleeva, 2022).

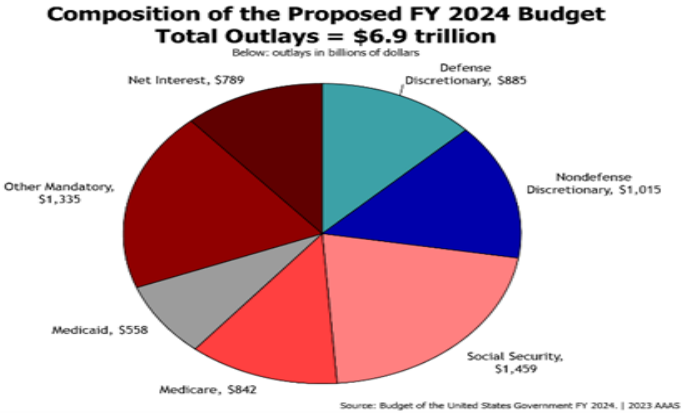

Figure 2: (Margin, 2024).

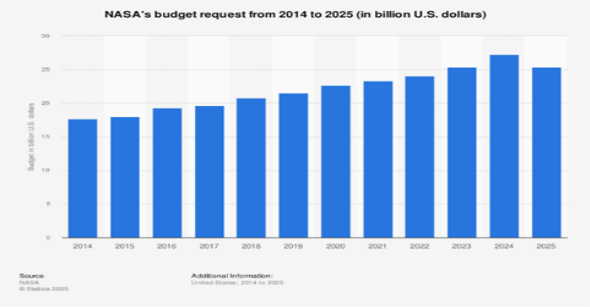

Figure 3: (Statista, 2023).

The two sides to the current state of the United States economy

The United States has boasted the world's largest economy since 1890 (in terms of GDP). A diverse economic portfolio of real estate, finance, technology, and industry-leading development have solidified their reputation as an economic fortress. In the last 10 years, the average growth rate of GDP has been 2.1%. Personal income increased 0.3% in the last quarter, Americans who own shares increased to 62% last year, the highest since 2008, with inflation also dropping to 2.89%, from 3.09% at the beginning of 2024 (The World Bank, 2024; Statista, 2024). At a glance, the economy looks robust, and Americans look financially healthy. Advocates for NASA would argue that in a wealthy nation like the US, there's a surplus of money which could be channelled into space exploration.

However, the flipside reveals a slightly grimmer reality for the state of the US economy. National debt grew by $2.36 trillion to $35.46 trillion dollars, approximately 98% of GDP, in 2024. Americans must now work 107 days just to make enough money to cover local, state, and federal taxes, exacerbated by liberal borrowing (US Treasury, 2024). The US has fallen to 183rd globally for income inequality (World Bank Open Data, 2023). Between 1979 and 2020 wages grew by an average rate of 17.5% while labour productivity outpaced this rate over three times (Lee, 2022). U.S. credit card defaults have soared to a 12-year high – almost $645 billion in debt was left outstanding in Q3 of 2024, with a delinquency rate climbing 1.57% in the last 3 years to 3.52% (Sherman, 2024).

While the US economy is performing strongly in terms of produce and income, factoring in inequality, debt levels, and productivity relative to wage growth, one must question whether common markers like GDP really reflect the welfare of citizens. This is where the viability of space policy is thrown into play. Can a nation with over 30 trillion dollars in debt really afford to fulfil the fantasies and desires of the average 8-year-old (and Elon Musk)?

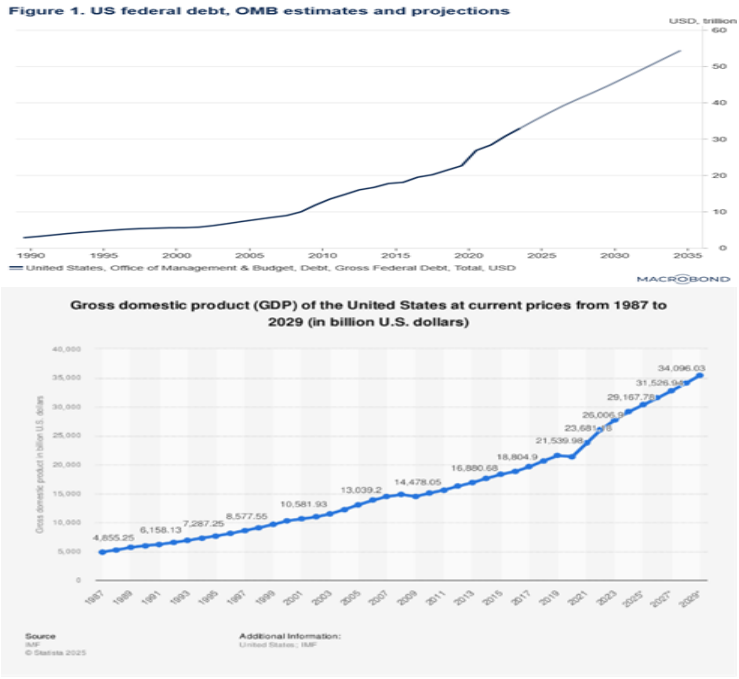

Figure 4 & 5: (Macrotrends, 2024) (Statista, 2025).

Can we justify the economics behind U.S. space policy?

Research reveals that NASA generated more than $75.6 billion in economic output across all 50 states in the fiscal year of 2023. The economic activity of NASA also supported an estimated 304,803 jobs, with more than $3.5 billion in annual wages, and generated $9.5 billion in combined taxes throughout the nation. (NASA, 2023) The 'Moon to Mars' mission, for example, generated more than $23.8 billion in economic output and 96,479 jobs. This chosen mission illustrates approximately 32% of NASA's economic impact (NASA, 2023). Information like this must be examined by the opposition to funding for such projects. While the 'Moon to Mars' mission provided no direct benefit to the welfare of humanity, the indirect economic consequences are fruitful.

Upon review of the aforementioned figures, we can see that NASA's economic output is around three times the agency's budget for the year - $25.4 billion (2023). The contributions of NASA don't just stop at the economic end, their technological innovations in 2023 generated 40 new patent applications and thousands of software usage agreements. This research and development have indirectly created countless household products and billions of dollars in economic output since the agency's inception. From water filters and smoke detectors to satellite TV, the technological contribution has been significant. Official NASA estimates reveal the R&D sector across the United States accounts for 19% of the agency's total economic output, benefitting more than any other sector (NASA, 2023).

NASA's investment in climate research also supported a further 32,900 jobs and contributed $7.9 billion in economic output. This has aided in understanding the unpredictable nature of climate change, preparing defence mechanisms, and informing the American citizens on how best to individually reduce their impacts (NASA, 2023). Considering the negative consequences of climate change are estimated to equate to the region of $2 trillion or 10% of the nation's GDP by 2100, research in combatants appears economically justifiable (Newburger, 2022). However, the space industry must also be accounted for when analysing contributors to climate change. Estimates reveal space exploration contributes around 3% of annual global CO2 emissions (Halvas, 2023). One must question whether NASA's contribution to climate change research is nothing is more than a smokescreen for their own environmentally hazardous engagements.

National security is another major proponent of the importance of space policy. 60% of Americans feel NASA plays a pivotal role in protecting the safety of the US. While defence concerns relating to warfare and intercontinental conflict are left to the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense, NASA has a role to detect, track, and, if necessary, help mitigate the threat of near-Earth objects. This includes asteroids, debris, and any objects outside our planet that could threaten the welfare of the nation (NASA, 2024; U.S. Department of Defense, 2024).

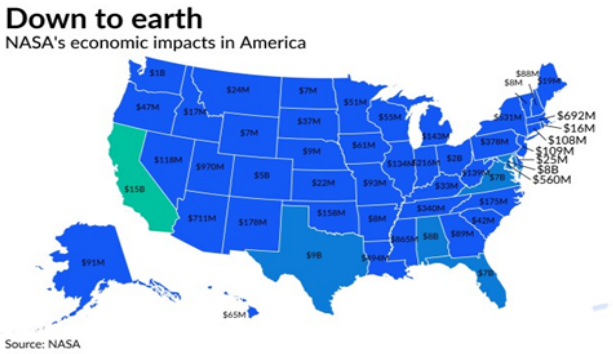

Figure 6: (NASA, 2023).

When assessing the justifications behind the funding for US space policy, economic output emerges as a leading force for the proposition; NASA contributes in terms of output, and to the nation's GDP. However, as previously stated, GDP is disputed by many (if not most) economists as a viable measurement of both genuine economic, and social welfare of a country's citizens (Bannister & Mourmouras, 2018; Kuznets, 1934).

A large portion of the economic output from NASA can be traced back to valuable contracts to private space companies like SpaceX and Blue Origin. While generally indisputable that economic output will have positive economic consequences, it must be questioned whether this economic output could be even greater if coming from a more impactful source. In 2022, NASA gave approximately $11 billion dollars (46% of their budget) to private companies, SpaceX receiving close to 18% of this revenue (Zandt, 2023). The purpose of this article is not to attack the foundations of capitalism or private markets in the US, but to simply question whether space exploration is a worthy economic endeavour.

Now of course the 13,000 plus employees in SpaceX are a beneficial addition to the US economy, and without the funding from NASA, would be void of their work. The efficiency of SpaceX and its achievements are also quite a marvel.

Rocket ships which can land intact, commercial space flight advancement, and re-usable vessels, all testify to ingenious engineering and US supremacy in research and development. But is that all it is? Bragging rights? A boost to the image of US exceptionalism?

The healthcare industry in the US is a good comparison to the space industry's output. In 2024, the healthcare industry received $1.9 trillion from the annual budget, with most funds directed at Medicare and Medicaid (Cubanski et al., 2025). This represents tax dollars being spent on lifesaving and changing drugs, treatment, and surgery to improve the health of society. In Q4 of 2024, 79,308,002 people were benefiting from these government-supported medical programmes (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2024). The economic output of the healthcare sector amounted to $4.8 trillion, a rise of 7.5% year-on-year, outpacing the projected annual gross domestic product growth rate of 6.1% (Aboulenien, 2024). This output is also over three times the received budget, a greater multiplier than NASA. Over 22 million are also employed in the industry, 80% women. Why is this an important comparison to the space industry? It reveals staggering economic output and mass employment are delivered even in industries which receive hefty government support and also have a primary aim of helping people.

The space policy in the US primarily aims to send people into space and map our universe. An exciting and entertaining idea, but it fails to directly benefit us. In a country like the US facing massive wealth inequality and rising poverty rates, every tax dollar should have to fight for its life. Should exploring space be a priority? With the recent majority of space explorers being billionaires, and their friends, is space just becoming a playground for the rich? It's been proved that industries aimed at improving the life of US citizens can also produce economic benefits. One could certainly argue that the budget behind NASA should be channeled into industries like healthcare, pharmaceuticals drug research, etc, which will still likely possess a positive economic multiplier effect.

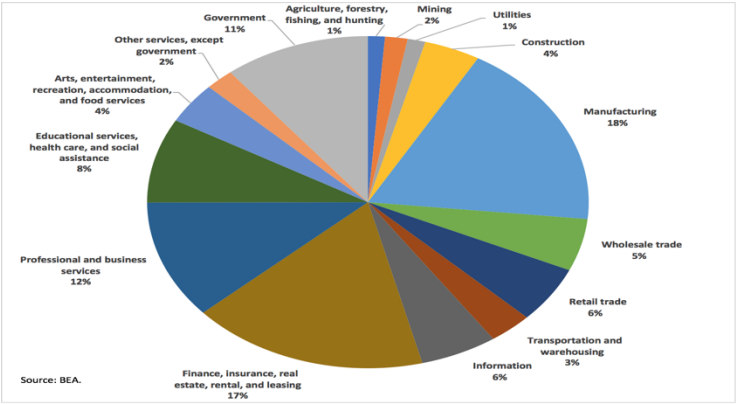

Figure 7: (Seeking Alpha, 2022.)

The Taxpayers' Burden

The annual budget for NASA equates to just over $0.05 of every federal tax dollar collected from US citizens (NASA, 2024). This might appear like a fractional and somewhat meaningless amount. However, 40% of Americans are opposed to funding for space policy, and a further astounding 88% were opposed to sending humans into space as a priority of the policy (Kennedy & Tyson, 2023). When factoring in the feelings of citizens as the taxpayers, the burden becomes far heavier. Long-term space missions such as The Artemis programme, for example, will cost US citizens a further $93 billion dollars with its aim to return humans to the moon. Now when we factor in how 88% of U.S citizens were against sending humans into space, and the further $93 billion which will have to be acquired through increased taxation, or more borrowing, over the coming years, NASA's aspirational mission becomes far more costly (Guardian, 2024).

Project Apollo is of course another incredibly well-known example. Across its lifespan, it racked up a bill of $318 billion, approximately $1,543 from each

taxpayer at the time. Of course, the significance behind the Apollo mission differs from today, with immense geopolitical stakes at hand, a quest for a broader understanding of human existence, among others. However, from a strictly economic sense, $318 billion dollars to achieve not much more than a middle-finger to America's rivals, seems like a waste (Pastrone, 2024). That money could have been invested into healthcare, education, food banks and infrastructure. Not to mention the large tax burden each individual would have sustained across the mission's lifespan and following years.

There are many more such instances, where missions go unaccounted for in national budgetary accounting, being approved by Congress, or other, at later dates. One such example is the extra funding NASA received, in accordance with FEMA, to clean up the 2003 Columbia shuttle explosion and implement new safety tests (*Archives.gov*, 2003). This puts a spotlight on the real tax burden absorbed by US citizens from the activities of NASA, primarily human-related space missions.

In the wider picture of the annual US budget, the expenditure directed to NASA is fractional. However, when including long-term missions, like 'Artemis', this expenditure becomes considerably higher. Regardless, combining the budgetary allocation, as well as extra funding, NASA spending has rarely surpassed 1% of the trillion-dollar budget. In proportion to other departments, particularly defence, this is 93% less than the sizable 15% of total budgetary expenditure given to the DoD. Many would argue the allocation to NASA is a justifiable outflow considering the return on capital, and non-economical achievements of the agency.

Conclusion

Across the span of this essay, we've explored a wide range of factors which could influence one's opinion on the significance of economic policy which supports space exploration. From economic output, employment, research and development, to debt, wasteful spending, and inequality, there's a plethora of issues which contribute to this multifaceted debate.

NASA itself contributes positively to the American economy. Generally, it produces economic output at 300% of its budget, providing 100,000s of direct and indirect employment, and contributing to multiple industries' research and development. That is, however, only if we eliminate any alternative possible investment of such funds. As we explored with the medical industry, returns on government-invested capital are closer to 360%, illustrating an example of a more productive (in terms of economic output) industry. Some could justify the argument that NASA's budget would be better utilized both socially and economically if invested in various other industries in the country's portfolio.

In some respects, the argument behind economic policy for space exploration is largely down to one's philosophical views and desires. Many would believe that exploring the world beyond our own is more valuable than any price tag and contributes to a richer understanding of human existence. On the flip side, many would argue it offers no utility to their life, and billions of dollars on spaceships and satellites is a fanatical waste of money.

The economics behind space policy make sense, the country benefits from NASA's existence, but could it benefit even more? Could that money be used for products and projects which actually provide an impactful positive on people's lives, while delivering the same, if not better, returns to capital (the healthcare industry seems to think so)? The answer lies in the hands of citizens' personal views and desires in life, and currently, the popular consensus is that NASA should stick around, at least for now. However, with rising income inequality, a deteriorating climate, and a wealth of opportunity cost, it could be argued that space exploration is something that should be ceased in the public domain. Private corporations should be free to pursue operations in space, however, I'd argue the burden should no longer be bestowed upon taxpayers when we live in an era where the funds could be far better used.

References

Aboulenein, A. (2024). U.S. healthcare spending rises to $4.8 trillion in 2023, outpacing GDP. [online] Reuters. Available at:

https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-healthcare-spending-rises-48-trillion-2023-outpacing-gdp-2024-06-12/.

Archives.gov. (2003). *Emergency Declaration on Shuttle Columbia*. [online] Available at: https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030206-18.html

Bannister, G. and Mourmouras, A. (2018). *Welfare Versus GDP: What Makes People Better Off*. [online] IMF. Available at: https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2018/03/07/welfare-versus-gdp what-makes-people-better-off.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (2024). August 2024 Medicaid & CHIP Enrollment Data Highlights. [online] Medicaid.gov. Available at: https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/program-information/medicaid-and-chip-enrollment-data/report-highlights/index.html.

Commerce.gov. (2020). National Space Policy | Office of Space Commerce. [online] Available at: https://www.space.commerce.gov/policy/national space-policy/.

Cubanski, J., Burns, A., and Cox, C. (2023). What does the federal government spend on health care? Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF). Available at: https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/what-does-the-federal-government-spend-on-health-care/ [Accessed 10 Oct. 2023].

Domitrovic, B. and Broadwater, J. (2019). Was Federal Spending on the Space Race Justified? [online] Bill of Rights Institute. Available at: https://billofrightsinstitute.org/activities/was-federal-spending-on-the-space-race-justified.

Garretson, P. (2024). *Is NASA a National Security Organization? — Global Security Review*. [online] Global Security Review. Available at: https://globalsecurityreview.com/is-nasa-a-national-security organization/.

Guardian staff reporter (2024). *Nasa announces further delays in Artemis moon missions*. [online] the Guardian. Available at:

https://www.theguardian.com/science/2024/dec/06/nasa-announces further-delays-in-artemis-moon-missions.

Halvas, J. (2023). Environmental Problems with Space Exploration. [online] Available at: https://dsc.duq.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1131&context=duquark.

Hassoun, N. (2024). The moral dimension to America's flawed health care system. [online] The Conversation. Available at: https://theconversation.com/the-moral-dimension-to-americas-flawed health-care-system-245971.

Horowitz, J., Igielnik, R. and Kochhar, R. (2020). *Trends in U.S. Income and Wealth Inequality*. [online] Pew Research Center. Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/01/09/trends-in-income and-wealth-inequality/.

Kennedy, B. and Tyson, A. (2023). *Americans' Views of Space: U.S. Role, NASA Priorities and Impact of Private Companies*. [online] Pew Research Center Science & Society. Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2023/07/20/americans-views-of space-u-s-role-nasa-priorities-and-impact-of-private-companies/.

Kennedy, J.F.K. 1962. "We choose to go to the Moon". September 12th, 1962, Rice University.

Kuznets, S. (1934). National Bureau of Economic Research. [online] pp.1929–1932. Available at: https://www.nber.org/system/files/chapters/c2258/c2258.pdf.

Lee, J. (2022). Why American Wages Haven't Grown Despite Increases in Productivity. [online] CNBC. Available at: https://www.cnbc.com/2022/07/19/heres-how-labor-dynamism-affects-wage-growth-in-america.html.

Mamleeva, V. (2022). The Cost of In-Home Care. [online] MDC Healthcare. Available at: https://www.mdchealthcare.org/understanding-the-cost-of-in home-care-and-the-cost-of-a-hospital-stay/.

NASA (1966). A chronological History Fiscal history 1966 budget submission. (Online) https://www.nasa.gov/wpcontent/uploads/2023/12/o45128943- 1966.pdf

NASA. (2023). *FY 2023 Economic Impact Report - NASA*. [online] Available at: https://www.nasa.gov/fy-2023-economic-impact-report/.

Newburger, E. (2022). Climate change could cost U.S. $2 trillion each year by the end of the century, White House says. [online] CNBC. Available at: https://www.cnbc.com/2022/04/04/climate-change-could-cost-us-2-trillion-each-year-by-2100-omb.html.

NPR 2022, 'The future cost of climate inaction? $2 trillion a year, says the government', NPR, 7 April, viewed 31 January 2025, https://www.npr.org/2022/04/07/1091258821/the-future-cost-of-climate inaction-2-trillion-a-year-says-the-government.

Pastrone, N. (2024). *Space Race and the Cost of Industrial Policy*. [online] Tax Foundation. Available at: https://taxfoundation.org/blog/apollo-moon space-race-industrial-policy-cost/.

Penny (2012). *A Penny for NASA Campaign*. [online] NSS. Available at: https://nss.org/a-penny-for-nasa-campaign/ [Accessed 31 Jan. 2025].

Rice University (1962). *John F. Kennedy Speech*. [online] Rice University. Available at: https://www.rice.edu/jfk-speech.

Sherman, E. (2024). U.S. Credit Card Defaults Hit Post-Great Recession High. *Forbes*. [online] 31 Dec. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/eriksherman/2024/12/31/us-credit-card defaults-hit-post-great-recession-high/.

Statista (2024). *United States - monthly inflation rate December 2019/20*. [online] Statista. Available at: https://www.statista.com/statistics/273418/unadjusted-monthly-inflation rate-in-the-us/.

Statista Infographics. (n.d.). *Infographic: The NASA Budget's Biggest Profiteers*. [online] Available at: https://www.statista.com/chart/29409/nasa-contractors-with-the-highest awards-volume-in-fy-2022/.

The Planetary Society. (2024). NASA's FY 2024 Budget. [online] Available at: https://www.planetary.org/space-policy/nasas-fy-2024-budget.

The Space Report (2024). Share of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Budget by Budgetary Authority, 2020. [online] The Space Report. Available at: https://www.thespacereport.org/resources/share-of-national-aeronautics-and-space-administration-nasa-budget-by-budgetary-authority-2020/ [Accessed 5 Mar. 2025].

The World Bank (2024). *GDP growth (annual %) - United States*. [online] Worldbank.org. Available at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=US.

U.S. Department of Defense. (2024). NASA, DOD Agree to Collaborate More Closely in Space. [online] Available at: https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2356511/nasa-dod-agree-to-collaborate-more-closely-in-space/.

US Department of State (2023). Science, Technology, and Innovation. [online] United States Department of State. Available at: https://www.state.gov/policy-issues/science-technology-and-innovation/.

US Treasury (2024). *What is the national debt?* [online] fiscaldata.treasury.gov. Available at: https://fiscaldata.treasury.gov/americas finance-guide/national-debt/.

Vanham, P. (2021). *Stakeholder Capitalism: A brief history of GDP and its use*. [online] World Economic Forum. Available at: https://www.weforum.org/stories/2021/12/stakeholder-capitalism-episode 1-a-brief-history-of-gdp/.

World Bank Open Data. (2023). World Bank Open Data. [online] Available at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?name_desc=false&year=2023.

Zandt, F. (2023). Infographic: The NASA Budget's Biggest Profiteers. [online] Available at: https://www.statista.com/chart/29409/nasa-contractors-with-the-highest-awards-volume-in-fy-2022/.

Does democracy still work in the West? A comparative analysis of policy implementation in the United States and the Republic of Ireland

Maya Powers, MSc in Applied Social Research

In the current political climate, arguments are made from all sides of the political spectrum that there is simply an insufficient level of democracy in various spheres of public life. The range of this democratic failure extends to society, the economy, and the political body of the nation. This argument is backed up by decades of data showcasing the failure of the neoliberal capitalist model of governance, indicating a downward slope of democratisation and progress in many Western nations. This simply *insufficient* level of democracy (TDEM, 2018) is incompatible with the ideals of progress, longevity and sustainability nations such as the USA, France, Germany, and Ireland promise to uphold. Contemporary challenges such as climate change, immigration mismanagement, wealth inequality and terrorism can trace part of their origins in the failure of the capitalist democracy the West has enjoyed in the past 4 decades. These processes of democracy are of course made possible by institutions, rather than simply individuals or smaller communities. Josiah Ober (2007, p. 3) notes that many now see the democratic process as little more than a modern oligarchy, as "little more, in principle or practice, than the monopoly over established governmental offices by, respectively, the many (poor) and the few (wealthy), is to accept fifth-century anti-democratic polemics as an accurate description of political reality." The question remains: if these institutions could be transformed to enjoy a more democratic status, could contemporary socio-economic challenges be resolved? And if it is possible, how could such a transformation be facilitated within the context of a neoliberal governing body?

Body 1: Neoliberalism

The key to answering such a riddle lies in understanding the boundaries within which it must operate - a neoliberal schema of leadership. Neoliberal capitalism is fundamentally at odds with the ideals of progress, egalitarianism, and sustainability that democratic nations strive to achieve in the public eye. With

Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan serving as two pinnacles of the consequences of unfettered capitalistic interference in the structure of global democracy, it is a logical step to analyse the United States and Ireland as two separate yet comparable regions with failing democratic institutions. Through comparative examination of the United States' versus Ireland's democratic institutions, it is concluded that their insufficient levels of democracy are the root of contemporary challenges. For example, the aims of world leaders such as Thatcher and Reagan were characterised not by sustainability or social equality, but rather by austerity policies such as deep cuts aimed at social programmes such as affordable housing, healthcare, and education (Bakan, 2003) – cuts which the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2012) labeled a danger for democracy and social rights, stressing that "strict austerity programmes [have] negative effects on the democratic processes…facing the consequences of unbridled economic liberalism…the welfare State should be strengthened…placing the human being at the centre of concerns" (Parliamentary Assembly, Resolution 1884, 1.1 & 5.1). The Council's connection of neoliberal policy to threatened democracy rests on the disproportionate suffering of working-class and impoverished Europeans, creating an undemocratic system in which social rights and wellbeing are valued less than market stability or growth. Democracy has its inherent limitations, as history has shown from the concept's very inception. The first system of democracy originated in Greece (Ober et al, 2004), where citizens could make their voice heard in forums and vote on policy impacting them directly. This is the most pro-people system of governing, as it hinges on the input of the population. However, the limitation in the original system is who is considered worthy of having a voice. Women were seen as property and on the same level as dogs, and enslaved people were not seen as citizens. Thus, those most disenfranchised by the system were barred from participating in it. This paradox is inherent in the democratic system, whether in its direct or representative forms: the system is built around barring the most oppressed groups from voicing their discontent and changing their social standing *within the system.* This demonstrates a fallacy in the democratic system, even the most direct form of government has its failures embedded into the system that executes it.

In the United States, its representative democracy was founded in the late 18th century with the inception of the country. This system was intentionally put in place to differentiate it from its previous colonial master, the United Kingdom (then a parliamentary monarchy). A nation founded with the supposed interests of its citizens at heart, a democratic system was a natural choice of governance. At the time, it was characterised by the rest of the world as a "democratic experiment", as most other Western societies were monarchical. However, this democracy was not available to all living in the nation. Those who were not male, free, landowning, or White were denied the right to vote, and often their very humanity was called into question. This flaw in the foundation of Western democracy connects back to our lynchpin: the current system of democracy is founded upon capitalist ideology and thus cannot flourish and resolve contemporary challenges. The original American democracy purposefully excluded non-landowners and enslaved people. Land ownership and the institution of slavery are rooted in the pursuit of capital, tracing one of the first democratic representative societies back to its capitalist pitfall. The modern limitations of US democracy are most clearly demonstrated through protests and outspoken opposition to the political status quo. The nation prides itself on its revolutionary, anti-establishment origins, but its legal institutions work quickly to quell progressive movements aimed to expand democratic rights to oppressed groups. Women's suffrage movement was a nonviolent movement to grant women the right to vote by ratifying the 19th Amendment, therefore codifying it. However, the legal system suppressed this demonstration of democratic freedom through legally codified violence. These democratic pitfalls were foretold by Thomas Hobbes' analysis of the future of government, *Leviathan*. Hobbes' qualm with the proliferation of democracy was that it went against the self-serving nature of humanity and would not benefit the broader public. He favoured a social contract of *undivided* governing systems (Hobbes, 1651), going against a multi-party democratic leadership style the United States would adopt a century later.

In the Irish political context, the systems of administering modern democracy were set up centuries after the U.S. The 'American Experiment' of representative democracy as a viable system of governance caught the attention of disgruntled citizens living under outdated and oppressive monarchies. The origins of this

system are not forgotten in modern political analysis, as Rothschild (2016) demonstrates the democratic processes of cooperation, citing autonomy and solidarity amongst social actors as key to the success of democratic cooperation. European democracies take on a mainly representative form, meaning that individuals vote in elected officials that promise to represent their interests in the political arena. However, even this definition carries a deficiency, as the interests of the voters must then be in line with some elected official on the ballot, and possible to enact within the realm of the existing capitalist economic system under which policy-making is carried out. In this sense, the United States and European representative systems share more similarities than differences.

Body 2: Feasibility of advancement in the US and Europe

The issues of economic inequality, climate change, and immigration-related conflict span across nations and generations. The legacy of imperialist capitalism shapes present day social policy, as the building blocks of the national structure are the same weapons used to destabilise independence movements all around the world and exploit foreign resources in the name of profit. Social policy introduced to promote sustainability and economic opportunity focuses on working within a fundamentally flawed system. In Raworth's *Doughnut Economics*, a shortfall such as gender inequity, homelessness, or political voicelessness is introduced. Then, a broader "overshoot" (Raworth, 2016) is extrapolated as a negative effect of the shortfall. For instance, ocean acidification and climate change are the environmental consequences of broader social inequalities when *regenerative economic distribution* is not introduced into the policy sphere. This economic approach is valuable within the capitalist system under which it must operate. Its operationalization depends on the willingness of a capital-oriented government to implement forces of social good, rather than maintain an unequal society. This assumption is not absolute, as subsequent analysis of socioeconomic policy will demonstrate that more advanced democratisation is not feasible to implement under the current economic framework.

To explore the secondary question of feasibility of advancement, we compare and contrast the systems of the United States compared to Europe. These regions are

chosen due to their deep connections with neoliberal economic frameworks of the 1980s and complex relationship to democratic stability in the past century. The United States has a broad history with grassroots, community-led movements of social change, such as the Anti-War movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and Gay Liberation movements of the 20th century. These are characterised by their *opposition* to the decisions of their current democratic leadership, showcasing the disconnect between the people's will of social change and the representative government's policy-making. These movements all achieved portions of their ultimate goals, with grassroots movements having their values codified in a systemic capacity, bridging the divide between individuals and broader government oversight. For instance, the Civil Rights Movement was a decades-long political force for change that sought equality across racial lines. Previously, the government had introduced explicit policy segregating its citizens (beginning with the 1857 US Supreme Court case of Dred Scott v. Sandford, which determined that Black people could not be US citizens, and thus were not protected by the Constitution), and continuing with the landmark Supreme Court case of Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), which justified segregation with the notion of 'separate but equal' and thus allowed segregationist public policy to be enacted as such. However, in 1964, nearly 200 years after the 'democratic' US Constitution was ratified, the Civil Rights Act was signed into law (78 Stat. 241) – in no small part due to *grassroots* organising by US citizens concerned with ensuring a democratic and equitable nation – recognising that a segregated nation cannot be democratic. Thus, under this political framework, grassroots movements could be used to facilitate larger-scale systemic change. The key is once again the *existing* political framework's willingness to grant beneficial change. The capitalist system of governing in the US is responsible for the for-profit prison system's proliferation, a system protected and incentivised by federal law (ACLU, 2022). This is because the United States uses the penal labour system, in which prisoners work in low-pay, manual jobs producing everything from office furniture to clothing to technology (Bair, 2007). US prisoner labour produces over $2 billion in goods, with little to no pay provided for labourers (Bair, 2007). This creates a perverse incentive to grow the prison labour force and demonstrates how deeply profit incentives seep into social policy, the democratic system unable to detach itself from neoliberal capitalism.

In European social policy, much of it is rooted in post-WWII notions of democratic representation. In the Republic of Ireland, national referendums were set up to decide on policy, rather than going into the longer-standing federal court system. This is a clear difference between the US and European governments: the US Supreme Court is not democratic, rather it is composed of judges appointed by the President, elected by an Electoral College (Longley, 1974) rather than popular vote. The level of direct impact European democratic structures has compared to the United States' is already startling. In the Irish context, the democratic process can be seen in the 2015 referendum on same-sex marriage. Ireland is a parliamentary, representative democratic republic. It enshrines the political power of its people in the Constitution, stating in Article 6, Section 1 that "All powers of government…derive from the people, whose right it is to designate the rulers of the State…and to decide all questions of national policy" (Bunreacht na Eireann 1945, Article 6.1). This democratic right to decide national policy was exercised as the majority of the vote decided that same-sex marriage should be legal and given equal protection and treatment under the law (Tiernan, 2020). Additionally, Ireland stands out in the European democratic context – as it became the first nation to legalise same-sex marriage by popular vote, rather than court adjudication (Tiernan, 2020). This instance of social democracy being upheld by popular vote, and thus enshrined in policy, demonstrates the capacity of democratic institutions to work for the popular opinion in social matters, while simultaneously disadvantaging the working-class populace with austerity measures (as seen in paragraph 1 on neoliberalism's European impact).

This shifting relationship between the government and the public does not go unobserved by economic analysts and policy experts, with many influential texts such as Ostrom's *Polycentric Governance* and Piketty's *Capital and Ideology.* These two works attempt to extrapolate the relationship between citizens and their state through different methods: while both focus on the economic/capital relationship, Ostrom takes an optimistic approach to the *possibilities* this changing dynamic produces. Piketty's characterisation of the human condition as 'tending' towards inequality is not in alignment with Ostrom and Raworth's aspirations for the future of economic development. Piketty's approach of historicism to analyse the relationship between the political and economic sphere, stating that ultimately "human progress exists, but it is fragile, constantly

threatened by inegalitarian and identitarian tendencies" (Piketty, 2020, p.16). Equating human progress with political progress is a conscious choice, as it places the onus of progress onto the human condition and will, rather than older systems beyond individual control. The implications of this attitude are that policymakers and individuals may see progressive, egalitarian policy and social movement as a foregone conclusion that will inevitably be stopped by the bulwark of humanity's supposed tendency towards inequity. However, as we see from the aforementioned examples as well as the following section examining individual versus collective action, democratic institutions are upheld by a social desire for progress, not regression.

Body 3: Individual vs. Collective Action

Ostrom and Raworth's arguments of individual and collective action for economic betterment provide excellent instances of human will going beyond the reach of the state economy. The facilitation of democratisation is inherent in greater community involvement in politics and economic betterment. Democracy is defined as the collective capacity of a public to make good things happen in the public realm (Ober, 2008). If the population takes political action to better their situation in society, it is implementing a small form of advanced democratisation. However, the facilitated change with the longest-lasting impact is that which is codified in federal statutes.

The United States has a complex history with codifying democratic change in legal statutes. The Bill of Rights is the best-known record of major social change having a legal impact, as it is essentially a timeline of major social value shifts in American history. The 13th Amendment was signed in as the abolition of slavery, the 19th Amendment was signed in as women's rights to vote were codified, and the 24th Amendment maintained the rights of all citizens to exercise their democratic right to vote. The Bill of Rights can be connected to another perspective on collective organising: Peltonen et al's *Origins of Organising.* They argue that we cannot anchor the origins of organised action on a specific historical event, time period, or philosophical premise. Rather, seeking to trace the origins and effectiveness of organised movements "firmly within familiar (and safe) disciplinary traditions" (Peltonen et al, 2018, p. xii) goes against the

purpose of the movements we study: if they seek to go against established tradition and frameworks of government, why would researchers analyse a counter-cultural movement through the lens of the dominant culture? Using this perspective, we can analyse the examples above as an instance of collective countercultural (or anti-establishment) action enshrined in the establishments' legal framework.

Circular economic theory resolves this quandary, using recent *grassroots* achievements such as co-ops as indicators of future accomplishments. Ostrom herself states that "considering institutional roles alone provides an inadequate guide to the behaviour of any system" (Ostrom, 2009). This acknowledgement is crucial to a well-rounded understanding of the feasibility of advanced democratisation. The argument in this work is that under a capitalist system, the government and its institutions have no incentive to advance democracy. However, institutional roles alone do not construct the future of a society, it is social actors that cause ripple effects. The reason Ostrom's belief in small-scale change is critical to the argument against a capitalist system is that these social actors were not facilitating change in the name of profit, rather their motivations were for the betterment of the world around them. Thus, by showing the selfless actions of co-ops, grassroots movements, and individual campaigns for change the insidiousness of neoliberal capitalism's government reach is demonstrated. Advanced democratisation is feasible in a perfect system of governance, but if neoliberalism is the economic system guiding social policy, the profit motive is in opposition to the betterment of the society it feeds off of.

Conclusion: What can be done?

Despite disagreement on lenses of analysis, importance of institutional vs community-oriented change, and even if democracy is a worthwhile goal, all of the previously cited economists have great value. Democratic change can come at the individual, collective, and systemic levels of society. As Ostrom, Raworth, Piketty and Peltonen have proposed, no one delivery method of change can exist without the other. Individual action is influenced by broader societal ideology, as

social actors cannot exist independently of their environment (Coleman, 1990). Collective action exists in between broad systematic change, which will by nature influence every participant within the system of governance, and individualised action which goes unnoticed by broader society. Through individual, collective (grassroots) or institutional action, democratic transformation is indeed *possible* within these neoliberal institutions. However, the aforementioned collective action is characterised by selflessness, a desire to better the condition of those around you and by extension yourself. It is not for the benefit of a neoliberal capitalist force, nor for oneself alone.

This persistence of the human condition and care for others flies in the face of neoliberal austerity and selfishness, characterised by proponents such as Reagan and Thatcher, who made the maintenance of the capitalist status quo their clear priority, a familiar sight during the final days of the Cold War and a communist/capitalist dichotomy of economic policy. Neoliberal institutions are built to *allow* the democratic process to continue with significant limitations – collective organising and the triumph of the human spirit can only be achieved through opposition to the neoliberal system, a system which has demonstrated its priority is economic expansion and market stability, rather than the wellbeing of its populace. Conflictingly, however, this democratic organisation of the popular will (such as in the instances of US and Irelands' successful movements for progress) is only as impactful as the neoliberal framework of governance allows it to be. The Civil Rights Act, the 34th Amendment of the Irish Constitution, and amendments to the US Bill of Rights (democratic yet institutional acts) were enacted in response to the popular will – yet still enacted by neoliberal public institutions.

While the proposed solution is not an overthrow of the government, it should be questioned why most collective and even state-led action of democratisation has acted as a plaster on a gaping wound of profit-fueled policy. Food banks and co-ops helping the disadvantaged in our communities are instances of a society that desires freedom of individual will and democracy. But the question must then be asked, what is the ultimate cause of this inequity we attempt to repair? Why do we rely on the same system that codified disadvantage for centuries (Winling et al, 2021) to turn around and bolster advanced democracy that serves the many,

not the few? Following Peltonen et al's example, these questions can be examined outside the traditional formatting of disciplinary traditions, a double meaning of both academic analysis and the neoliberal structure in which they form. These institutions cannot be made 'more democratic' as long as the power structures that uphold them are maintained. There are policy proposals that fundamentally shift these power structures, however, and such proposals may be implemented to legitimise the democratic process. As the past 40 years have demonstrated, democracy cannot truly flourish, and contemporary global challenges will not be resolved, through the current system of neoliberal capitalism observed by the West.

References

American Civil Liberties Union, 2022. *Private Prisons.* https://www.aclu.org/issues/smart-justice/mass-incarceration/private-prisons.

Bair, A., 2007. *Prison Labor in the United States: An Economic Analysis*. Routledge. ISBN978-1-135-89840-3.

Bakan, J., 2004. *The corporation: the pathological pursuit of profit and power*. New York, Free Press.

Civil Rights Act of 1964; 7/2/1964; Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789 - 2011; General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Coleman, J. R., 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*, Belknap Press, Cambridge, MA.

Hobbes, T., 1651. *Leviathan.*

Ireland, 1945. Bunreacht Na hÉireann = Constitution of Ireland. Dublin. Oifig an tSoláthair.

Longley, L. D., 1974. The Electoral College. *Current History*, *67*(396), pp. 64–86. http://www.jstor.org/stable/45313111.

Ober, J., Raaflaub, K. & Wallace, R., 2004. *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece.* University of Chicago Press.

Ober, J., 2007. *The Original Meaning of 'Democracy': Capacity to Do Things, Not Majority Rule*. Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics Paper No. 090704, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=1024775.

Ostrom, E., 2010. Beyond Markets and States: Polycentric Governance of Complex Economic Systems, *The American Economic Review, 100*(3), pp. 641-672.

Parliamentary Assembly, 2012. *Assembly debate on 26 June 2012 (21st and 22nd Sittings) (see Doc. 12948, report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development*, rapporteur: Mr Hunko). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 June 2012 (22nd Sitting).

Peltonen, T., Gaggioti, H. & Case, P., 2018. *The Origins of Organising.* Edward Elgar Publishing.

Raworth, K., 2017. *Doughnut Economics.* Random House Business.

Rothschild, J., 2016. The Logic of a Co-Operative Economy and Democracy 2.0: Recovering the Possibilities for Autonomy, Creativity, Solidarity, and Common Purpose. *The Sociological Quarterly, 57*(1), pp. 7-35.

Tiernan, S., 2020.*The history of marriage equality in Ireland: A social revolution begins.* 1st Edition, Manchester University Press.

Treaty for Democratisation of Europe, 2018. http://tdem.eu/en/treaty/.

Winling, L. & Michney, T., 2021. The Roots of Redlining: Academic, Governmental, and Professional Networks in the Making of the New Deal

Lending Regime. *Journal of American History, 108*(1), pp. 42–69. doi:10.1093/jahist/jaab066.

Challenging Ageism: 3 Strategies for Promoting Active Ageing in Society and the Workplace. A Review of the WHO Global Report on Ageism 2021

Reece Slade, 3rd year Social Policy and Economics

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Report on Ageism (2021) highlights the consequences of ageism on older populations in society and the workplace. The WHO recommends a number of strategies to encourage age equality within society, including policy and law implementation, educational interventions and intergenerational contact. This paper will explain the theories and effects of ageism and explore how anti-ageism strategies outlined by the WHO have been implemented.

Ageism has been defined as the discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes that undermine the rights or dignity of individuals based on older age or ageing (Hopf et al., 2021). Ageist beliefs about older persons are often expressed without malice on an individual level but can contribute to a negative social construction of ageing. Ageism can manifest within the workplace through hiring biases, restricted training opportunities for older employees and pressures to retire (WHO, 2021). These views undermine older people's economic potential, and they strengthen the narrative of aging people as a burden (WHO, 2021).

Combating ageism is important to promote "active ageing" (Walker, 2008) and a more positive social construction of ageing. This is particularly important for countries with ageing populations and will allow for more inclusive policies.

Theoretical background

The life course approach to ageing (Young-Bruehl, 2013) understands ageing as a continuous process that spans an individual's life. It accounts not only for the

biological effects but also for the social, economic and environmental factors that shape health and well-being in older age (Young-Bruehl, 2013). This approach identifies how one's life experiences cumulate to influence one's views on ageing and outcomes later in life. The Acquisition, Internalisation and Reinforcement (AIR) model of ageism demonstrates how observations made since the very beginning of one's life course assimilate into their perception of ageing and older people (Carney et al., 2020, p. 28). For instance, a child may acquire stereotypical attitudes to ageing through internalising social norms or direct observation of expressions of ageism. As children grow up, they will express their acquisition of stereotypical ageist attitudes, perhaps through discrimination, jokes, or anecdotes. Regardless of whether these attitudes are expressed, these internalised stereotypes may remain from childhood up till adulthood (Carney et al., 2020, p. 28).

An example of these includes the idea that older adults go through physiological decline, such as dementia, as they age. Media has largely presented dementia as a normal result of growing older. This has become an internalised stereotype for older adults who then expect to experience dementia, leading to an anticipation of poor health, social isolation and stress (Levy, 2009). This negative view of aging, in turn, can affect their health in older age. Studies have shown that internalised ageism is associated with higher levels of cardiovascular stress and lowered self-efficacy (Levy et al., 2002). This is the embodiment of internalised ageism and represents the last stage of the AIR model through the reinforcement of negative views. Potentially, through observing older generations expressing internalised stereotypes of ageing, younger people may observe and acquire them, fulfilling a harmful, continuous cycle of ageism.

Combating harmful stereotypes perpetuated in the AIR model will influence a positive social construction of age and have effects on older populations. By creating a more positive view of aging, the well-being and longevity of older populations may increase. This is highlighted in "active ageing", as described in the Global Report on Ageism

Active Ageing and Disengagement Theory

Walker (2008) looks at the individual level of social gerontology through the theory of Active Ageing. This model challenges the stereotypes of physical and mental decline in older age by seeking to prioritise well-being and societal contribution. The approach aligns with the goals of the Global Report on Ageism through the encouragement for older people to remain or become involved in society.

The active ageing approach differs to other previously prominent theories, such as the Disengagement Theory coined by Cumming and Henry (1961) which suggests that growing older involves an inevitable and natural self-withdrawal from social relationships and societal participation. Cumming and Henry considered this process to be mutually beneficial for older individuals and society. It was thought it would enhance the psychological well-being of older people (de Medeiros, 2017). This was one of the first comprehensive sociological theories of ageing but has since been discredited, as the Global Report on Ageism (2021) identifies the harmful effects of older people's exclusion from society.

Ageism in Society

Ageism manifests in various ways across society and the workplace, significantly impacting opportunities and experiences for ageing people. This was evident in the healthcare sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. Council of Europe (2020) found that older adults were sometimes denied ventilators, treatments or surgeries as younger and supposedly 'healthier' individuals were prioritised for the allocation of these scarce resources. This response could be seen as an embodiment of Disengagement Theory, representing a misconception that older people are of lesser value to society than younger people, and therefore should disengage themselves from society to give younger people priority to scarce resources.

During the pandemic, some countries implemented quarantine measures based upon age, such as in Serbia and Colombia. This approach ignores the diversity of older populations, overlooking the different needs and capacities of older individuals, and could perpetuate harmful stereotypes that all older people are the same (WHO, 2021). Although policymakers intended to protect the generation

alleged to be most at risk during the pandemic, this measure can reinforce the idea that older adults are homogenous in their levels of fragility and vulnerability. These misconceptions have contributed to a socially constructed divide between generations, allowing for harmful and ageist language to emerge on social media such as the naming of the pandemic as a "boomer remover" on Twitter, and popular discourse about older persons' vulnerability on Weibo (Jimenez-Sotomayor et al., 2020; Xi et al., 2020). Ageism appears in other media also. One study of broadsheets in Spain showed that 71% of headlines in two Spanish national papers portrayed older people negatively (Bravo-Segal and Villar, 2020).

Ageism in the media, whilst already normalised through popular discourse and the framing of headlines, has potentially become exacerbated by social media trends. The #AgeChallenge in 2019 saw tens of thousands of people, including celebrities, using "old person" filters that predicted what they would look like with wrinkles and greying hair, and posting them on various social media sites. Although presented as a funny trend, negative discourse arose from the trend such as the suggested need to start anti-ageing skincare and that ageing was "not for the faint of heart" (Mirza et al., 2021, p. 158).

The WHO Global Report (2021) has also reported on ageism towards younger people manifesting in society, even though this aspect of ageism is poorly understood and lacks the same level of empirical research than that of ageism towards older populations. Negative views towards younger people have, however, presented themselves in legal systems and politics. De la Fuente-Núñez et al. (2021) show that younger perpetrators tend to be viewed more seriously and elicit more anger when it comes to trialling crimes in legal sectors. The legal system in the US has shown evidence of ageist treatment towards younger employees in comparison to older employees, as they are less likely to win a court case against their employer (Miller et al., 1990). There is also growing evidence that young people have their political views and advocacy sidelined or dismissed to a greater degree (de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021). The WHO Global Report (2021) presents ageism towards younger people as an alarming issue, to the extent that it is more prevalent than ageism towards older people in Europe, but there is a need for further empirical research globally.

Ageism in the Workplace

Older workers can face ageism in the workplace, as research shows that employers are less likely to hire an older person and not provide them with training as they are viewed as less adaptable (Chang et al., 2020).

In Spain, applicants aged 28 were 77% more likely to receive an interview callback than those aged 38 (WHO, 2021, p. 26). The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe showed that almost 50% of employed people over 50 lacked access to training opportunities in Greece, Hungary, Poland and Spain (Abuladze and Perek-Białas, 2018). This connects to an externalised Disengagement Theory of ageing, as society seems to push older workers out of the labour market.

Similarly in Ireland, 33% of persons over 50 years old reported experiencing ageism in the workplace in 2014, with a further 87% reporting that they had experienced ageism while looking for work (The Alliance of Age Sector NGOs, 2023). Surveys in Ireland have shown that ageism impacts career progression and performance evaluations, pressuring older workers to retire earlier. This, in turn, compromises their earning potential and can exacerbate financial insecurity in retirement (Age Action, 2023), negatively impacting older populations' views of self-efficacy and reinforcing ageist narratives. The observation of retirees facing these issues will impact the acquired view of aging for younger people. They may internalise the perception that older workers should retire earlier, and reinforce these stereotypes when meeting older coworkers or while becoming an older worker themselves, in line with the AIR model (Carney et al., 2020)

Intersectionality of Ageism for Older Populations

If policymakers considered the life-course perspective on aging, they would realise that the diversity of older populations is not only their biology but is an accumulation of all their life choices, as well as environmental influences. Ageism may affect all ageing persons, but it takes on different forms and can affect certain subgroups disproportionately. Thus, it is important to take into account the intersectionality of factors such as gender, sexuality and ethnicity. People of these identities may have different experiences of age and ageism.

For example, LGBTQI+ individuals are more likely to experience social isolation from lack of familial support, often depriving them of receiving care later in life (Carney et al., 2020). This inequality can become a barrier to active ageing for marginalised groups. As a result of increased social isolation, LGBTQI+ persons are at risk of suffering from health problems without sufficient support. They may also distance themselves from healthcare services out of fear of sexuality-based discrimination and abuse (World Health Organization, 2023).

Translating Recommendations into Practice

Strategy 1: Policy and Law

Policy and law calls for the prevention of age-based discrimination through legal instruments, and for monitoring bodies or enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance. This can be done by strengthening anti-discrimination laws to include ageism explicitly, such as the Equal Status Acts (2000) or the Employment Equality Act (1998) in Ireland which prohibits discrimination within social inclusion policies (Department of Health, 2013). However, these policies and laws could improve through adopting an active ageing approach. This would require anti-ageist mechanisms to be actively integrated into employment, health, education and social inclusion policies. Walker (2008) views active ageing policies as a key unifier of stakeholder's interests, those being; citizens, NGOs, businesses and policymakers. Yet, it has seemed that previous approaches to active ageing policies by the European Union have prioritised the business stakeholders, as policies, especially regarding employment, focus primarily on the productive potential of older people as workers (Walker, 2008). This overlooks other non-economic, yet equally important facets of ageing, such as well-being, participation in society and generational solidarity. These issues need to be added to the policy making agenda-setting and be considered in the formation of relevant policies so that laws surrounding the engagement of older people are not purely based upon their labour market potential. Policy for areas interconnected with ageing needs a unified vision of active ageing to push for unified progress against ageism (Walker, 2008).

Active ageing can be promoted through policy by removing mandatory retirement ages (Age Action, 2023). This could prevent older workers from feeling pushed out of the workforce and potentially reduce the disengagement of older people from societal participation. Age Action has suggested that mechanisms should also be introduced to create, monitor and enforce anti-ageist laws in all settings, such as a "Commissioner for Ageing and Older Persons" and equality audits (Age Action, 2023, p. 8)

New Zealand has adopted similar policies since the 1990s. They gradually banned mandatory retirement while increasing the state pension age from 60 to 65 (Wood et al., 2010). This was accompanied by the Positive Ageing Strategy aimed at challenging ageism through advocacy and monitoring coordinated by the Ministry of Social Development and reported on by the Office for Senior Citizens. Since these policies were enacted, the number of people aged over 50 in the labour force had doubled by June 2005 and has proved a solution to the skills shortage within New Zealand's key industries at the time (Wood et al., 2010,). Employers also reported having a more positive outlook on employing older workers (Wood et al., 2010) indicating that these policies may also positively influence the social construction of ageing in the process.

Strategy 2: Educational interventions

Ageism must be accompanied by awareness campaigns to address the social construction of age. To frame ageing more positively in society, a key step is to tackle ageist stereotypes that later manifest as discrimination.

In Canada, most people work in intergenerational or "five-generation workplaces", representing global demographic changes (Mirza et al., 2021). Despite this, younger workers tend to believe that older workers hold back economic momentum. Many younger people are unaware of the impact of their ageist views, especially considering that they will grow older and be subjected to such discrimination too (Mirza et al., 2021). Educational interventions could be implemented here to highlight both the harmful effects of ageism and the value of older generations in society.

One such educational program took place at The University of Valparaíso in Chile, involving over 600 older persons and 180 students and explored ageing and ageism with a human rights-based approach. Both generations were involved in the design of activities, and they created an intergenerational platform for dialogue to challenge ageist stereotypes and highlight the experiences of older people (HelpAge International, 2022).

Discussions arose in this activity over the intersectionality of ageism with sexism and diversity within age. This encouraged participants to become critical of the limiting social norms associated with older people. Older participants reported feeling more valued, while the students demonstrated a greater understanding of the effects of ageism (HelpAge International, 2022). Introducing topics related to ageing within university curricula may influence a more positive outlook towards it, as well as a deeper understanding of ageism. This has the potential not only to prevent an individual's internal ageist beliefs, but also to influence the attitudes of young people before they join the labour market. This approach tackling the social construction of ageing at a younger age could reshape how age is viewed and how ageism manifests in the workplace, as well as in society more generally.

Successful educational interventions can happen outside educational institutions too. The City of Toronto ran a campaign advertising fake 'pro-ageing' cream through pop-up advertisements, in turn raising awareness about ageism. This was to highlight the message of anti-ageing creams and the negative connotations they associate with ageing. This campaign garnered a lot of media coverage, which speaks to its success in spreading awareness (Mirza et al., 2021). Some social media responses to the campaign were negative, such as dismissive reactions like "OK boomer" online, perhaps indicating the pervasive nature of age discrimination online and the importance of such awareness campaigns to identify and address ageism.

Strategy 3: Intergenerational contact

Mutual understanding and interactions between generations through intergenerational contact has an important role in reducing ageism. Perceptions of aging, for younger and older people, can be significantly influenced through

intergenerational friendships. Qualitative research from Ireland has shown how older adults feel that friendships with people of other generations increases their participation in social roles, and in broader society (Elliott O'Dare et al., 2019). This challenges age norms, encouraging successful ageing through increased societal engagement, particularly in settings that encourage older and younger individuals to connect as equals and without power imbalances, such as through workplace collaborations, community engagement projects or friendships. This creates meaningful intergenerational contact where everyone may feel more empowered and engage with society, evident by the qualitative data from Elliott O'Dare et al. (2019)

Furthermore, intergenerational contact can be effective in reducing ageism. Contact initiatives have the potential to reduce social isolation, such as Together Old and Young (TOY), who facilitate cultural engagement activities between children and grandparents in Poland, which builds relationships between generations while influencing a positive perception of older people (The TOY Project Consortium, 2014).

Contact initiatives have the potential to combat harmful stereotypes of fragility and over dependency, such as Virtual Get-Togethers during the COVID-19 pandemic in Northern Ireland. This connected primary school students virtually with older adults in care homes. All participants reported feeling more connected, demonstrating how initiatives adapted to facilitate intergenerational contact during the pandemic (Virtual Get Togethers, 2021).

Conclusion

The WHO Global Report on Ageism (2021) provides a comprehensive and compelling argument on the importance of policies and laws, educational interventions and intergenerational contact to combat ageism by dismantling age-based stereotypes and discrimination. By taking an active ageing approach, strategies will promote the inclusivity of older populations and encourage their participation in society. Existing examples of interventions have shown how community efforts and policymakers can reshape the perceptions of ageing. This

is particularly important to ensure that all individuals of all ages can be valued and have their rights respected.

References

AAbuladze, L. and Perek-Białas, J. (2018). Measures of Ageism in the Labour Market in International Social Studies. *International perspectives on aging*, pp.461–491. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73820-8_28.

Age Action (2023). *Spotlight on Income in Older Age*. [online] Available at: https://www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/published_age_action_spotlight_on_income_in_older_a ge.pdf [Accessed 4 Dec. 2024].

Bravo-Segal, S. and Villar, F. (2020). La representación de los mayores en los medios durante la pandemia COVID-19: ¿hacia un refuerzo del edadismo? [Older people representation on the media during COVID-19 pandemic: a reinforcement

of ageism?]. Revista Española de Geriatría y Gerontología, 55(5), pp.266–271. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.regg.2020.06.002.

Carney, G.M. and Nash, P. (2020). *Critical Questions for Ageing Societies*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Chang, E-Shien., Kannoth, S., Levy, S., Wang, S.-Y., Lee, J.E. and Levy, B.R. (2020). Global reach of ageism on older persons' health: A systematic review. *PLOS ONE*, [online] 15(1). doi:https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220857.

Council of Europe (2020). *Lessons to be drawn from the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic in long-term care facilities*. [online] Commissioner for Human Rights. Available at: https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/lessons-to-be-drawn-from-the-ravages-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-long-term-care-facilities [Accessed 17 Feb. 2025].

Cumming, E. and Henry, W.E. (1961). *Growing Old: The Process of Disengagement*. New York: Basic Books.

de la Fuente-Núñez, V., Cohn-Schwartz, E., Roy, S. and Ayalon, L. (2021). Scoping Review on Ageism against Younger Populations. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, [online] 18(8), p.3988. doi:https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18083988.

de Medeiros, K. (2017). *The short guide to ageing and gerontology*. *Bristol University Press eBooks*, Bristol University Press, pp.21–50. doi:https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1t89j93.7.

Department of Health (2013). *National Positive Ageing Strategy*. [online] Www.gov.ie. Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/737780-national-positive-ageing-strategy/?referrer=%2Fhealthy-ir eland%2Fnational-positive-ageing-strategy%2F [Accessed 1 Dec. 2024].

Elliott O'Dare, C., Timonen, V. and Conlon, C. (2019). Escaping 'the old fogey': Doing old age through intergenerational friendship. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 48, pp.67–75. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2019.01.004.

HelpAge International (2022). *Intergenerational case study: Chile. Bringing generations together for change: Learning from intergenerational approaches to address issues facing older and younger people*. [online] Helpage.org. Available at: https://www.helpage.org/resource/intergenerationalcasestudychile_pub/ [Accessed 17 Feb. 2025].

Hopf, S., Previtali, F. and Georgantzi, N. (2021). New Forms of Ageism as a Challenge for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 90(2), pp.242–262. doi:https://doi.org/10.3138/utq.90.2.12.

Irish Statute Book (1998). Employment Equality Act, 1998. [online] www.irishstatutebook.ie. Available at: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/21/enacted/en/html.

Irish Statute Book (2000). Equality Status Act 2000. [online] www.irishstatutebook.ie. Available at: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/8/enacted/en/html.

Jimenez-Sotomayor, M.R., Gomez-Moreno, C. and Soto-Perez-de-Celis, E. (2020). Coronavirus, Ageism, and Twitter: An Evaluation of Tweets about Older Adults and COVID -19. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 68(8). doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.16508.

Levy, B.R., Slade, M.D., Kunkel, S.R. and Kasl, S.V. (2002). Longevity increased by positive self-perceptions of aging. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, [online] 83(2), pp.261–270. doi:https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.83.2.261.

Levy, B. (2009). Stereotype Embodiment: A Psychosocial Approach to Aging. *Current directions in psychological science*, 18(6), pp.332–336. doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2009.01662.x.

Miller, C.S., Kaspin, J.A. and Schuster, M. (1990). The Impact of Perfomance Appraisal Methods on Age Discrimination in Employment Act Cases. *Personnel Psychology*, 43(3), pp.555–578. doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1990.tb02396.x.

Mirza, R.M., Mcdonald, L. and Tamblyn-Watts, L. (2021). It's Time to Retire Ageism against Older Workers. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 90(2), pp.155–168.
doi:https://doi.org/10.3138/utq.90.2.07.

The Alliance of Age Sector NGOs (2023). *Telling It Like It Is; Combatting Ageism*. [online] Available at: https://ageandopportunity.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/AASNGO_3.pdf [Accessed 17 Feb. 2025].

The TOY Project Consortium (2014). *Together Old & Young Toolkit. A Training Manual for Intergenerational Learning Initiatives, Leiden: The TOY Project*.

[online] Available at: http://www.toyproject.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Toy-in-action-english.pdf [Accessed 6 Jan. 2022].

Virtual Get Togethers (2021). *Belfast: Linking Generations Northern Ireland*. [online] Linkinggenerationsni.com. Available at: https://www.linkinggenerationsni.com/project/virtual-get-togethers-2021/ [Accessed 17 Feb. 2025].

Walker, A. (2008). Commentary: The Emergence and Application of Active Aging in Europe. *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, 21(1), pp.75–93. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/08959420802529986.

Wood, A., Robertson, M. and Wintersgill, D. (2010). *A comparative review of international approaches to mandatory retirement*. [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7b97a5ed915d414762160e/rrep674.pdf [Accessed 8 Nov. 2024].

World Health Organization (2002). Active ageing: a policy framework. *Who.int*. [online] doi:https://doi.org/WHO/NMH/NPH/02.8.

World Health Organization (2021). *Global report on ageism*. [online] Available at: https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/340208/9789240016866-eng.pdf?sequence=1 [Accessed 28 Nov. 2024].

World Health Organization (2023). *Connecting generations: planning and implementing interventions for intergenerational contact*. World Health Organization.

Xi, W., Xu, W., Zhang, X. and Ayalon, L. (2020). A Thematic Analysis of Weibo Topics (Chinese Twitter Hashtags) regarding Older Adults During the COVID-19 Outbreak. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*. doi:https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbaa148.

Young-Bruehl, E. (2013). *Childism : confronting prejudice against children*. New Haven, Co: Yale University Press.

Pragmatic Altruism: The Strategic Foundations of Transformative Social Policy

Philip Theiss, 1st year Economics & Social Policy

Abstract

This paper explores transformative policies in both climate change and welfare inequalities, specifically Bismarck's Sozialversicherung, Costa Rica's Payment of Ecosystem Services system, and Brazil's Bolsa Família program. These policies, born out of political and economic necessity, achieved far-reaching societal benefits, going beyond their original political objectives. New directions in social policy, like those seen in the past, will likely emerge from pragmatic concerns rather than purely altruistic motives, leading to policies that, while initially designed out of political or economic necessity, may produce broader and more enduring societal benefits.

Introduction

Policies often become the most influential and beneficial when their outcomes are unintended. Policies that arise from self-interest or pragmatic concerns, rather than purely altruistic motives, may have a broader societal impact than explicitly altruistic ones. This dynamic includes not only self-interested policymakers focused on economic growth or maintaining social order, but also well-meaning leaders constrained by political realities. These pressures or necessities can lead to policies that, despite their origins, ultimately transform societies for the better.

Materials

German Empire - Sozialversicherung (Inequalities)

In the late 1800's, like all major European countries, Germany was experiencing rapid industrialization. The subsequent socio-economic changes brought with them widespread concerns over poor working conditions, health risks, and civil unrest. To combat this, Germany's Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, introduced legislation that would establish the first modern welfare state. The system began with health insurance in 1883, aimed to support industrial workers, a group particularly vulnerable to workplace hazards and illnesses due to Germany's rapid industrialization (Offe, 1984). Accident insurance followed in 1884, covering workplace injuries and disabilities, and finally, old-age and disability pensions were introduced in 1889 (Kennedy, 2013). The Sozialversicherung (german for: social insurance) became a template for modern welfare systems worldwide.

Costa Rica - Payment for Ecosystem Services (Climate Change)

Costa Rica offers a compelling example of climate related social policy formulation and implementation, through their PES (payment for ecosystem services) scheme. Environmental degradation, especially deforestation, became an issue for the country in the 1970's as a lack of timber production began to negatively impact their economy. Measures began in 1979 with the introduction of income tax incentives to landowners practicing reforestation. The system gradually improved over the years, with new variations further broadening participation. In 1997, Costa Rican legislation for environmental regeneration reached its current state, in the form of the PSA (Pago por Servicios Ambientales). The PSA program enables private property owners to enter contracts with the government, incentivizing them to adopt land-use practices that contribute to forest conservation and ecosystem restoration (Steed, 2007).

Brazil - Bolsa Família (Inequalities)

Bolsa Família was a social welfare program launched in 2003 by Brazilian President Lula da Silva to address Brazil's growing problem of widespread poverty and inequality. It provided direct cash transfers to low-income families under the following conditions: 85 percent attendance rate for school age children to fifteen years of age, and 80 percent for those sixteen through eighteen (Social Security Administration, 2020). Additionally, it required regular visits to health

centers for children younger than seven and for pregnant and breastfeeding women (Soares et al., 2010). These requirements aimed to provide immediate financial relief while fostering long-term improvements in education, health, and social mobility, breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

Similarly to Costa Rica's PES system, Bolsa Família also was an intensification of existing systems. Bolsa Escola, a minimum-income grant related to primary education; Fome Zero and Boisa Alimentacao, two income grants related to food security, the former unconditional and the latter conditional on health checkups and immunization updates (Soares et al., 2010). By the end of 2006, Bolsa Família had been scaled up to include 11 million households (Soares et al., 2010).

Analysis

Bismarck's Sozialversicherung of the 1880's, Costa Rica's PES of the 1980's, or Brazil's Bolsa Família of the 2000's were all incredible advancements of social policy throughout the years. Whether addressing inequalities or climate change, these social policies have proven extremely effective, yet they seem to have emerged more from self-interest, rather than purely altruistic intentions.

Bismarck's welfare programs emerged during a period of significant civil unrest that he saw as a potential threat to his political authority. However, these measures not only stabilized his position, but established the world's first modern welfare state, laying the foundation for social safety nets all around the world (Spicker, 2014). While Bismarck's primary aim was to counter the influence of Germany's growing trade union movement and reinforce "traditional values" through state intervention (Dean, 2019), his policies had transformative social impacts. By introducing health insurance, accident insurance, and pensions, Bismarck addressed the grievances of Germany's working class, alleviating widespread discontent and suppressing the appeal of socialist movements. He, rather ironically, argued in favor of "social welfare as a buttress against the attractions of socialist ideas" (Alcock, 2016). His nearly two-decade-long tenure as Chancellor (1871–1890),

demonstrates how pragmatic governance with the priority of maintaining power resulted in some of the most impactful social policies in history (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Similarly, Costa Rica's most transformative environmental policies originally emerged as a response to economic instability yet went on to create one of the most sustainable economies in the world. Between 1940 and 1980, Costa Rica lost nearly 2.5 million hectares of forest, causing the collapse of the timber industry in Guanacaste, one of the nation's most economically vital regions (Jones et al., 2016). The widespread deforestation stripped the area of resources, forcing timber companies to abandon operations, which eliminated jobs and economic opportunities. The PES system not only solved this economic problem but went much further. 98% renewable energy usage and over 50% of its territory having been reforested (Zraick, 2024) has solidified its position as a climate policy leader. Costa Rica was awarded the 2019 United Nations Champions of the Earth award. Simultaneously, its forest restoration efforts, supported by the PES system, have bolstered biodiversity, enhanced ecosystem services, and spurred economic growth through ecotourism, which contributes billions annually to their GDP (Valverde Sanchez, 2018).

Brazil's Bolsa Família also emerged from a mix of pragmatic political strategy and an influential social policy response to pressing welfare inequalities. Bolsa Família was designed to combat poverty, and was effective in this, but its implementation also partially aimed to secure political support from Brazil's rural and disadvantaged populations, areas where the then President Lula da Silva's Workers' Party struggled to garner support (Zucco et al., 2013). This proved successful as Lula da Silva served 2 consecutive 4-year terms, (the maximum amount), from 2003 to 2011. President from 2019 to 2023, Jair Bolsonaro, rolled back many social welfare policies, including cuts to Bolsa Família. The dissatisfaction with Bolsonaro's policies contributed to Lula's return to power in 2023, as voters rejected the dismantling of social programs (Bonomo, 2024). Lula's re-election highlighted the enduring popularity and importance of Bolsa Família.

Discussion

Social policies of the future are likely to emerge not solely from idealistic visions but as pragmatic responses to pressing challenges. As climate change intensifies and inequalities grow, governments and institutions may prioritize policies that address these global issues in ways that align with their broader goals. This does not imply that all decision-makers act solely out of self-interest, but rather that the intersection of necessity and opportunity, rather than pure altruism, often drives the adoption of most transformative measures. This raises important theoretical questions about the nature of policy formation and whether the role of self-interest and political constraints is sufficiently acknowledged, despite their clear influence in shaping effective policy change.

Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework (2013), a heavily cited theory within social sciences, provides a valuable lens for analyzing policy change. According to Kingdon, policy change occurs when three independent streams: problems, policies, and politics, align to create a "policy window" for effective action.

While Kingdon's framework effectively captures the alignment of the streams, it can be further enriched by explicitly considering the dual forces of self-interest and political constraint within the political stream. In cases where an issue is pressing enough, such as a recession or a pandemic, political self-interest aligns with the need for effective policy action. Economic instability might prompt politicians to adopt redistributive policies, or a health crisis could push for rapid intervention. In these scenarios, the urgency of the problem overrides political opposition, and the forces of self-interest often align with the public good.

However, when the political environment is less dire or more polarized, well-meaning policies may be stalled due to the political realities at play. Social inequality or climate change policies often face resistance from vested interests, and the political risks associated with enacting bold reforms may outweigh their perceived benefits. In these cases, political constraints can halt the progress of policies that would be in the best interest of society. Ultimately, while self-interest and political constraints can impede policy progress, they can also sometimes push forward pragmatic policies when the stakes are high enough.

Conclusion

It is truly disheartening that, despite the well-intentioned efforts of many politicians to implement altruistic policies, these ideas are often disregarded or dismissed until the consequences become undeniable, and pragmatic action becomes necessary. While some politicians often have pure intentions and seek to enact positive change, the political system often makes it difficult for them to push these policies forward until a crisis is unavoidable.

The silver lining, however, is that despite the constant procrastination, these crises rarely boil over into complete disaster. While it often feels like society is teetering on the edge of irreversible damage, the pressure of these situations does sometimes lead to necessary action, though often too late or with a great deal of avoidable harm. This tension between urgency and inaction is frustrating, but it serves as a reminder that while humanity may not act out of pure altruism, there is a certain resilience in our ability to respond when the stakes become undeniable, even if it is always a little too close for comfort.

References

Alcock, P., Haux, T., May, M. and Wright, S. (2016). *The Student's Companion to Social Policy*. 5th ed. Chichester, Uk; Hoboken, Nj: Wiley Blackwell.

Bonomo, D. (2024). *Brazil Under Lula: The First Year*. [online] Global Policy Watch. Available at: https://www.globalpolicywatch.com/2024/01/brazil-under-lula-the-first-year/.

Claus Offe and Keane, J. (1984). *Contradictions of the welfare state*. Cambridge, Mass.: Mit Press.

Dean, H. (2019). *Social policy*. 3rd ed. Cambridge, Uk; Medford, Ma: Polity Press.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. John Wiley & Sons.

Jones, G. and Spadafora, A. (2016). Creating Ecotourism in Costa Rica, 1970–2000. *Enterprise & Society*, 18(1), pp.146–183. doi:https://doi.org/10.1017/eso.2016.50.

Kennedy, P. (2013). *Key themes in social policy*. London; New York: Routledge.

Kingdon, J.W. (2013). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Harlow, Essex: Pearson.

Soares, F.V., Ribas, R.P. and Osório, R.G. (2010). Evaluating the Impact of Brazil's Bolsa Família: Cash Transfer Programs in Comparative Perspective. *Latin American Research Review*, [online] 45(2), pp.173–190. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/27919200.

Spicker, P. (2014). *Social Policy: Theory and Practice*. 3rd ed. Bristol Policy Press, p.164.

ssa.gov. (2020). *Social Security Programs Throughout the World: The Americas, 2019*. [online] Available at: https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2018-2019/americas/index.html [Accessed 9 Mar. 2025].

Steed, B.C. (2007).Government Payments for Ecosystem Services—Lessons from Costa Rica. *Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law*, [online] 23(1), pp.177–202. doi:https://doi.org/10.2307/42842946.

Valverde Sanchez, R. (2018). Conservation Strategies, Protected Areas, and Ecotourism in Costa Rica. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 36(3), pp.115–128. doi:https://doi.org/10.18666/jpra-2018-v36-i3-8355.

Zraick, J. (2024). *Costa Rica: An Unexpected Leader in Sustainability*. [online] International Relations Review. Available at: https://www.irreview.org/articles/2024/2/14/costa-rica-an-unexpected-leader-in-sustainability.

Zucco, C. and Power, T.J. (2013). Bolsa Família and the Shift in Lula's Electoral Base: A Reply to Bohn. *Latin American Research Review*, [online] 48(2), pp.3–24. doi:https://doi.org/10.2307/43670073.

Darker Parts of Past and Present: 21st Century Irish Plays and Social Policy in Ireland

Olivia Tranguch, 1st year Sociology & Social Policy

The Republic of Ireland incarcerated a large portion of its population – in prisons, industrial schools, mother and baby homes, Magdalene laundries, and mental hospitals. These institutions oppressed and tortured children and women in vast numbers, with many of these institutions closing only recently in the mid-1990's. While there have been many liberation movements and drastic improvements since, there's still much work to be done and much to recover from. Nevertheless, Ireland's rich history and culture supersedes itself.

These darker events and occurrences have undoubtedly contributed to the vast output of art in the country. In the theatrical world, there exists energies of denial and suppression and silences within the language of plays. Language becomes used to distract and avoid. But it is also extremely playful and compelling. Twenty-first century Irish theatre can be incredibly powerful because the darkness of the history comes to form in completely shocking, horrific, absurd, and very comedic ways. This paper reviews four articles and explores three key themes. The paper first discusses the theme of site-specific performance. Then, it examines how theatre can act as a social commentary. Finally, it looks at how theatre helps to procure environments of empathy and understanding. Though 21st century Irish drama may not directly contribute to changes in social policy, many works have certainly contributed to social discourse on topics that are often underrepresented. Rather than staging plays in traditional theatre settings, many Irish theatre makers in the 21st century elevate theatre to a new level by staging plays in places with historical and cultural significance in Irish society. In an article by Miriam Haughton, the author interrogates a play that was staged in a former Magdalene laundry, stating it "*provoked conflicting memories and histories, urgent queries regarding the implementation of constitutional law, and renewed scrutiny of wider social value systems"* (Haughton, 2020: 57).

In Lisa Fitzpatrick's article, she looks at another site-specific performance by the theatre production company *Corcadorca*, meaning 'Dark Cork' in Irish. She contemplates a play engaging with the multiculturalism of the European Union and Ireland's increasingly multiethnic population as well as Ireland's changing attitudes to immigration and European integration. The play that transforms all of Cork city into the site of performance, "*offered an experience in which various races and nationalities gathered in the same space and engaged with a living performance as a unified community of spectators*" (Fitzpatrick, 2007:169). The play itself asks the audience to consider how welcoming they are and their tolerance in relation to immigration. This article notes a piece of data from the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism.

The data showed reports of incidents of racism were numbered before the performance was staged. It would have been interesting to see how many incidents of racism occurred after the production was staged to understand if there was any correlative data on the impact the play might've had on the community at large. Nevertheless, both articles highlight how site-specific performance deepens the impact of how the play is interpreted, and the political/ environmental messages.

The articles reviewed acknowledge that the pieces of theatre in concern start conversation and challenge traditional long held views and norms. The theatre pieces critique political and cultural norms, through interrogating class divisions, nationalism, identity, immigration, economic equality, gender roles, trauma, and tensions between tradition and modernity. Further, they inspect societal shifts, particularly in a post-Troubles and post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. In Patrick Lonergan's article "A Missile to the Future", he believes that revivals of plays are open to interpretation as they are adapted and can have different meanings and resonations across time. In the case study he dissects, he hints at how the play acts as a parable about climate change and "*that one function of theatre in an era of climate emergency might be to provide new ways of understanding how theatre shapes, and has shaped, audiences' conception of reality, time, agency, and ecological interconnection*" (Lonergan, 2022). Lonergan comments on theatre's capacity to shape people's attitudes towards the environment, the climate, other living beings, and fossil fuels. He makes note of certain 'choices' audience

members have to make after seeing a production like Corcadorca's 'Far Away' but could elaborate on what these 'choices' exactly are and whether they involve tangible action on the part of the audience or the theatre makers or both. Fitzpatrick writes that while the dramatic performance *"raised socially relevant questions, it is uncertain how far it made significant changes in spectators' prejudices"* (Fitzpatrick, 2007: 180). Fitzpatrick imparts a more nuanced view on theatre's ability to effectuate substantial and lasting positive transformations to society.

Theatre can be used as an entry point to talk about people's lives, to help us to understand the world around us and make sense of it, and enter into it, rather than just simply view it from the outside. Theatre also allows us to reflect on the impact of our silence as audience members, our passivity, and brief engagement, which in part has to do with the transitory nature of theatre. In Domino Torres' article he writes, "*Irish theatre as a cultural institution continues to provide a venue for social dialogue, critical debate and the artistic exchange of ideas. In the end, there is still faith in the theatre and a belief that despite letdowns by other major ruling institutions, the arts have not let Ireland down"* (Torres, 2013: 239). Torres brings in multiple historical sources and perspectives and looks at how 20th century playwrights paved the way for 21st century playwrights to employ different artistic strategies and to provoke audiences. He alludes that the emerging voices in 21st century Irish theatre have spoken for the voiceless and nurtures topics and discussions that are not usually touched upon. In a country that has tried to suppress, deny, and marginalize these issues in public spaces, and cover up the past, Haughton's study finds that in contemporary Ireland, the arts directly and significantly "*contribute to the creation of cultural, phenomenological, and psychological spaces which encounter narratives not yet officially welcomed in the public sphere"* (Haughton, 2020: 61). However, the focus of Haughton's essay is more on what happened in the play rather than the play's impact on those who engaged with it. Despite the influence theatre can have on individuals and communities, there are few studies measuring its impact on societies. Even so, key scholars in this field have noted that 21st century Irish theatre cultivates acknowledgement of past histories in ways that are not only entertaining, but meaningful and connective.

The institution of theatre has the power to move people intellectually and emotionally. Twenty-first century Irish theatre has brought light to often disregarded, darker parts of past and present. However, we cannot expect art to always incite action in others and change policies or prejudice. But there is much possibility and potential in allowing audience members to think and question and discuss what is presented to them. At their cores, these plays address social issues whilst addressing the predicaments of being human as well as our capacity for love and compassion. There's a universality to them. Perhaps it is not art or an artist's job to change society and social policies. Perhaps that should be left to the politicians and governments. But this same art examines the human condition in these social and historical contexts, offering a gentler way of confronting these darker parts of the past and present.

References

Fitzpatrick, L. 2007. "Staging *The Merchant of Venice* in Cork: The Concretization of a Shakespearean Play for a New Society" Modern Drama 50:2, 168-183. https://utppublishing.com/doi/10.3138/md.50.2.168

Haughton, M. 2020. "Irish theatre in the 21st century: traumatic histories, feminist interventions" *Cadernos De Letras Da Uff,* vol. 31, issue 60, pp. 45-64. https://www-webofscience-com.elib.tcd.ie/wos/woscc/full-record/WOS:000551786700 004

Lonergan, P. 2022. ""A Missile to the Future": The Theatre Ecologies of Caryl Churchill's *Far Away* on Spike Island" *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 133-147. https://doi.org/10.1515/jcde-2022-0009

Torres, Domino. 2013. *Theatre, culture and performance: Contemporary Irish drama and the Celtic Tiger* (Order No. 3564048). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I. (1400495131). https://elib.tcd.ie/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/theatre-cultu re-performance-contemporary-irish/docview/1400495131/se-2

Victims or Villains? A Holistic Approach Toward Reintegration Policies of Former Child Soldiers

Tara Walsh, 4th year Political Science & Social Policy

Introduction

According to the Council on Foreign Relations, there are an estimated 300,000 child combatants in about thirty different international conflicts (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024). That is 300,000 too many. November 1989 was the first time that the international community explicitly outlined the rights of the child, and specifically with respect to the concerns of this essay, child soldiers. This essay will further explore articles 38 and 39 of the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child, asserting that a shift in policy is necessary for the successful integration of child soldiers into society. It will establish that nations and the international community should utilize a holistic approach, addressing psychosocial, restorative justice, and structural implications for the successful reintegration of child soldiers.

The typical narrative regarding child soldiers is either victimization or villainization, but rarely places the child at the center of the dialogue, allowing them to be to some extent "active in the construction of their own lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live," (James & Prout, 1991, p. 8). Finally, this essay will emphasize the importance of long-term solutions rather than short-term solutions that mask a fundamental issue. The three solutions that should be cross integrated are: restorative justice models, psychosocial rehabilitation programmes, and finally implementing structural policy solutions.

Relevant Policy and Litigation

To understand how to establish strong systems to successfully reintroduce child soldiers into society, and how to abolish child soldiering entirely, one must first understand what a child soldier is, and what current litigation exists internationally to attempt to regulate this issue. A child soldier can be defined as any person under the age of 18 who is associated with an armed group or force. The first significant piece of legislation is the UN charter on the Rights of the Child, specifically articles 38 and 39.

Article 38 (1990) states as follows:

"1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child. 2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities. 3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of fifteen years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, States Parties shall endeavor to give priority to those who are oldest. 4. In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict."

Article 39 (1990) states that:

"States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child." (UN, p. 11, 1990)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child set the foundation for condemning the use of child soldiers internationally. The Rome Statute condemned the enlistment of child soldiers –children under 15–as a war crime (1998). The African Charter

on Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2000) raised the age of enlistment to 18. Finally, the International Labour Organization established Convention No.182, which determines that forced recruitment of children into conflict is one of the worst forms of child labour and requires member states to place sanctions on violators (1999).

However, despite their intent, these international mandates are rarely successfully enforced. This can be seen in the case of Yemen with the Houthis. In 2022, the Houthis signed an action plan with the UN to end the recruitment and use of children in conflict (UN, 2022). According to Human Rights Watch, experts and activists assert that of the "70,000 new fighters over the past few months a majority are 13-25" (HRW, 2024). This is just one example of many illustrating the disregard for international law as it pertains to child soldiers. There are hundreds of thousands of child soldiers, and governments must learn how to re-integrate them into society.

Restorative Justice Model

First, governments and the international community must implement a restorative justice model if they have any hope of finding peace. Restorative justice gives a pathway for accountability, destigmatizing, and promoting a dialogue between the community and child soldiers. The exact definition of restorative justice is still being formulated; however for the purposes of this essay it shall be defined as "an approach to justice that seeks to repair harm by providing an opportunity for those harmed and those take responsibility for the harm to communicate about and address their needs in the aftermath of a crime" (CICS, 2018). While child soldiers are children, they still have committed crimes against communities, and there still needs to be some form of accountability in order for any successful reintegration into their community. Efforts to attempt to prosecute child soldiers utilizing retributive justice methods have resulted in child rights abuses (Bameka, 2023). There is also a significant issue of former child soldiers returning to armed conflict because they have been snubbed and abandoned by their community (Mohammed et al., 2022). Restorative justice programs offer a positive option. According to one study of restorative justice in North Kivu Province, the Democratic Republic of

Congo, 97.2% of children who planned to rejoin or join paramilitary factions no longer intended to do so (Kiyala, 2016). The authors also found that after apologizing to the communities, former child soldiers were forgiven and the support for their prosecution diminished significantly (2016). Additionally, it has been asserted that restorative justice can help significantly destigmatize child soldiers, facilitating a more successful reintegration (Hasona & Khatib, 2022). By utilizing a restorative justice approach, governments can mitigate social exclusion which is one of many factors that may influence children to voluntarily join or rejoin military groups (Kiyala, 2016). Given the multitude of benefits that restorative justice can have on both children and communities, its widespread implementation should be advocated.

Furthermore, restorative justice approaches can also include incorporating traditional cultural practices to aid with community healing and successful reintegration. In both Burundi and Liberia where the use of child soldiers was widespread and conflict was violent, indigenous cultural practices were utilized to help reintegrate former child combatants into the community and address psychosocial needs (Betancourt et al., 2010). In Sierra Leone, community leaders discussed with the community whether to begin the reconciliation process and then began ceremonies to cool the hearts of former child soldiers and acknowledge their transgressions, after which the community began cleansing rituals to bring the ex-combatants and community members together (Shaw et al., 2002). These rituals were found to significantly increase social cohesion (Shaw et al., 2005). Furthermore, by incorporating traditional community cultural practices into a restorative justice framework, they can impact a greater number of individuals far quicker and more effectively than projects imposed by international organizations (DeCarlo et al., 2010).

Psychosocial Rehabilitation

In addition to a restorative justice framework, a successful integration approach also involves utilizing a psychosocial rehabilitation approach (Kaul, 2020). A psychosocial rehabilitation approach must be differentiated from a psychological approach to rehabilitation. While a psychological approach to rehabilitation and reintegration focuses on the child as a byproduct and a victim, a psychosocial

approach focuses upon a more child-centered approach incorporating the child's agency at the center of the practice. Psychosocial approaches focus on the child's identity as a complex one, more than just victim or soldier; considering that this identity is a barrier to successful integration into society (Kaul, 2020). The psychosocial approach has been widespread throughout the UN (UN, 2018). However, despite its pervasiveness, Authors critique this approach for lacking cultural sensitivity, paternalistic design, and minimal resource allocation for mental health providers (Adhikari et al., 2014; Thoradeniya, 2017). In one interview conducted with a former child soldier, he explained that the counseling he received was not about how he felt about his experience but rather how he should live his life (Andersson, 2007). This interview highlights the often-paternalistic discourse that is utilized in the context of child soldiers. Child soldiers who have experienced traumatic events should have a counseling method that focuses more on healing them and giving them agency to understand their psychological and emotional responses.

These efforts have not been without criticism. However, this paper asserts that the psychosocial approach is still a necessary pillar of reintegration and rehabilitation and should be utilized in combination with a structural approach. These criticisms should be taken into account so that policy and the allocation of funding can be restructured. Child soldiers have experienced severe traumatic events that no child should ever experience. Former combatants often suffer from extreme PTSD, depression, and somatic symptoms (Denov, 2020). Utilizing an approach that solely relies upon one dimension of reintegration, such as only a structural approach, neglects the evident need for these children to heal emotionally. In another study of former child soldiers in Nepal, it was found that by utilizing a 'post-conflict identity' which acknowledged the complexities of child soldiers' identities rather than just victim or perpetrator, former child soldiers were able to navigate and transition better into their post-conflict life (MacFarlane, 2023).

Mental health support is crucial for any society, especially one that has experienced extreme violence. Evidence suggests that psychosocial approaches can ease the transition back into society, as children will struggle with re-integrating into society if they have not experienced self-actualization (Hudcovská, 2024). Furthermore, psychosocial approaches utilize resilience-building strategies, which

emphasizes the child not as a victim of horrors but rather focuses on the child's strength, resilience, and capacity to overcome what they have experienced (Betancourt, 2010). Focusing on resilience and children's ability to recover from horrific situations is an approach that should be more fully implemented in the psychosocial field, rather than simply focusing on children as victims. Despite this need, many authors critique the psychosocial approach for not addressing the core issue of why children become child soldiers–primarily structural factors (Kaul, 2020; Ramírez-Guarín et al., 2022).

However, as Radhika Coomaraswamy famously wrote, "terrible things have happened to children, but children are also resilient. They need encouragement, guidance and support; and with the proper care they can become outstanding members of society" (2007). A part of this support is psychosocial.

Structural Approaches

While a psychosocial and restorative justice approach is important to the reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers, they are short-term solutions. Governments must focus on long-term solutions, namely those addressing structural problems. A structural approach to former child combatant reintegration targets the initial factors that may have pushed them to join armed groups in the first place. These factors can include poverty, social exclusion, inadequate educational facilities, and political instability.

One study conducted in Bunia Ituri Province, DRC, examined the perceived attitudes of the community towards the reintegration of child soldiers and psychological support for former child soldiers. The study found that community support for the reintegration of child soldiers is crucial for successful reintegration (Nakude, 2023). To build comprehensive community support for reintegration, the community must have the capacity to begin the healing process. This study suggests that governments and international organizations must remedy the structural problems that precede and follow conflict, including necessities such as food, water, shelter, healthcare and security (Nakude, 2023). If communities do not have access to necessities, how will they be equipped to reconcile the reintegration of child soldiers? By developing an understanding of sociopolitical contexts and

addressing the issues that may have pushed communities towards conflict in the first place, governments and international organizations will be able to better address potential reintegration difficulties.

Reintegration difficulties due to structural pitfalls are evident in the case of El Salvador. From 1980 to 1992 El Salvador was in a state of civil war, over 75,000 civilians died (CJA, 2024). About 80% of the troops were under 18 years of age (Child Soldiers International, 2001). Many of these children were forcibly recruited from low-income neighborhoods or rural regions (Child Soldiers International, 2001). Various researchers have found that armed groups target children from low-income backgrounds because they are already in a vulnerable position. Low-income children are more likely to be marginalized in society and have insecure family relationships, economic insecurity, and previous traumatic experiences (Blackwell et al., 2023). Evidently, poverty is a factor affecting child combatants; A structural approach would combat child poverty, which would omit one of the key determinants of child soldier recruitment.

Furthermore, a study of 295 ex-child combatants in El Salvador found that post-war, they encountered significant difficulties sustaining a living or pursuing an education (Santacruz and Arana, 2002). The 295 interviewees had received a poor education pre-war and 25% had received no education (Santacruz et al., 2002). The variable of education is a significant structural factor both pre- and post-conflict. This example demonstrates that governments and international organizations ought to increase educational opportunities and infrastructure for marginalized and low-income children in order to prevent prospective reintegration into armed forces. Various studies have been conducted which conclude that increasing educational opportunities for child soldiers is a key factor for the integration process. Education and skills training can provide former child combatants with skills and knowledge to create a new identity for themselves (MacFarlane, 2023). Education also promotes personal autonomy, can aid in battling poverty, foster dignity, and facilitate social inclusion (Kaul, 2020).

Research indicates that implementing a holistic structural approach can significantly aid in the reintegration of former child soldiers into society. Furthermore, a structural approach is not only an ex post facto method but also an

ex-ante one. By providing basic necessities to communities, governments and international organizations can address the sociopolitical factors which may have led to conflict in the first place and work from a more long-term angle. In addition to saving thousands of lives, implementing ex-ante policy has been found to be more economical in the long-term (Nicolaï, 2013; Kolstad et al., 2018).

Conclusion

While there have been significant efforts made in the international community to implement a policy that criminalizes the act of using children as soldiers, the actual implementation of this policy is somewhat ambiguous. To genuinely promote the successful reintegration of child soldiers into societies, governments and international organizations must utilize a holistic approach. First, a restorative justice framework must be applied to begin this holistic approach to re-integration and ensure accountability is fostered, social exclusion is redressed, ex-child soldiers are destigmatized, and discourse is facilitated between communities and former child soldiers. Furthermore, a restorative justice framework can provide a more effective and efficient system of reconciliation if it takes into account the traditional cultural practices of the cultures where the conflict took place.

A psychosocial approach is necessary for successful reintegration as former child combatants have experienced extreme trauma and are likely to have a multitude of psychological concerns that need to be treated. Finally, a structural approach is vital to accelerating reintegration. Structural approaches can address factors that affect communities and former child soldiers such as educational outcomes, poverty, food security, and access to healthcare. Structural approaches focus especially on the interconnectedness of factors at play in the process of reintegration. World leaders need to shift their policy surrounding the reintegration of child soldiers and begin to act on their condemnation of the use of children in war. They should begin this process by enacting funding opportunities and establishing stronger policy towards the protection and re-integration of child soldiers.

As Nelson Mandela put it, “Safety and security don’t just happen, they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the

most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear." (UN, 2016).

Recommendations

This paper has addressed and examined three different approaches to the reintegration of former child soldiers. First, it should be noted that in the psychosocial arena, significant change needs to occur. As previously mentioned, psychosocial approaches run the risk of stripping the agency from children and being paternalistic. Furthermore, there is an international shortage of mental health professionals, making implication challenging. However, psychological support is crucial to support the reintegration of child soldiers and should not be overlooked. Policy should be implemented to ensure this support is focused on things like self-esteem, addressing PTSD and trauma, and engaging in CBT, rather than being solely instructional.

For nations to attempt to successfully reintegrate these children they must take a holistic approach of restorative justice, psychosocial approaches, and structural mandates. Whilst the task may seem daunting, and require significant increases in funding, resources, and coordination between organizations and governments, this is the only way to organize an effective integration process as outlined in this essay. An ex-ante approach is part of looking toward long-term policy-making. This involves proactively mitigating the factors that lead to conflict by increasing educational opportunities, job opportunities, food security, access to healthcare, housing, political security, addressing historical grievances, and inequality. Governments have been attempting to tackle these issues since their formulation; it would be remiss not to acknowledge the immensely difficult task of addressing every single factor that leads to conflict. Governments and international organizations should begin to combat these determinants of conflict in general, and this will omit the issue of child soldiers altogether, as well as potentially easing the process if utilized in an ex post facto manner.

References

Adhikari, [Initials]., et al. (n.d.). *Protective and risk factors of psychosocial* [PDF file]. MHR Nepal. Retrieved March 5, 2025, from https://mhrnepal.org/app/webroot/upload/files/Adhikari%20et%20al%2C%20Protective_and_risk_factors_of_psychosocial.pdf

Andersson, C. (2007). Reintegration of former child soldiers The reintegration process in Gulu, Uganda, from an ecological perspective A Minor Field Study sponsored by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. https://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOId=1324289&fileOId=1324290

Betancourt, Theresa, S. (2010). A Longitudinal Study of Psychosocial Adjustment and Community Reintegration among Former Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone. 7(3):60-62. doi: 10.1192/S1749367600005853

Betancourt, T. S., Borisova I, W. T., Brennan, R, Whit¢eld, T. H, De la Soudiere M., Williamson, J. and Gilman, S. E. (2010c). Sierra Leone's former child soldiers: A follow-up study of psychosocial adjustment and community reintegration. Child Development, 81(4),1077^1095.

Blackwell AH, Agengo Y, Ozoukou D, Wendt JU, Nigane A, Goana P, et al. (2023) Drivers of 'voluntary' recruitment and challenges for families with adolescents engaged with armed groups: Qualitative insights from Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo. PLOS Glob Public Health 3(5): e0001265. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0001265

Charles, D., Kolstad., Thomas, S., Ulen., Gary, V., Johnson. (2018). Ex Post Liability for Harm vs. Ex Ante Safety Regulation: Substitutes or Complements? The American Economic Review, doi: 10.4324/9781315197296-16

Christelle, Molima, Bameka. (2023). Narrowing the Gap in the Access to Justice for Child Victims in Postconflict Societies: An Analysis Stemming from the Construction of Child Soldiers in International Law and Policy. International Journal of Transitional Justice, 17(1):141-156. doi: 10.1093/ijtj/ijad006

CICS. (2018) Principles and Guidelines for Restorative Justice Practice in Criminal Matters (2018) – CICS. (2018, May 2). https://scics.ca/en/product-produit/principles-and-guidelines-for-restorative-justice-practice-in-criminal-matters-2018/

Child Soldiers International, Child Soldiers Global Report 2001 - El Salvador, (2001), https://www.refworld.org/reference/annualreport/cscoal/2001/en/65509 [accessed 02 May 2024]

Council on Foreign Relations. (2005). *Child soldiers around the world*. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/child-soldiers-around-world

DeCarlo, A. & Ali, S.A. (2010). 'Developing a Reconciliation indicator'. Policy Innovations the Carnegie Council's online Magazine for a fairer Globalization.

Volker, Kaul. (2020). Communalism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Reintegration of Child Soldiers. 169-194. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-52375-6_14

Denov, Myriam. (2020). Editorial: When Child Soldiers Grow Up: A Longitudinal Analysis of Postwar Adult Mental Health and Social Functioning. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, doi: 10.1016/J.JAAC.2020.03.006

El Salvador – CJA. (n.d.). https://cja.org/where-we-work/el-salvador/#:~:text=Over%2075%2C000%20civilians%20died%20at

Hasona, Y. I., & Khatib, I. (2022). Prosecuting child soldiers in the arab world: between the state, society, and retributive and restorative justice. *Contemporary Justice Review*, *25*(1), 100–121. https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2022.2028142

Human Rights Watch. (2024) Yemen: Houthis Recruit More Child Soldiers Since October 7. (2024, February 13). Yemen: Houthis Recruit More Child Soldiers Since October 7. https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/02/13/yemen-houthis-recruit-more-child-soldiers-octo ber-7

James, A., & Prout, A. (1991). A New Paradigm for the Sociology of Childhood? Provenance, Promise and Problems. In A. James & A. Prout (Eds.), Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Children (pp. 7–34). Falmer Press

J., Hudcovská., K., Schwanhaeuser. (2020). Institutional and Family-based Models of Attention for Colombian Child Soldiers from a Psychosocial Perspective. International journal of psychology and psychological therapy, 20(2):189-200.

Jean-Philippe, Nicolaï. (2013). Ex-Ante vs. Ex-Post Pollution Permit Regulation under Imperfect Competition. doi: 10.3929/ETHZ-A-010018884

Kiyala, J. C. K. (2016). *The effectiveness of restorative justice in preventing children's participation in armed conflict in North Kivu Province, the Democratic Republic of Congo: A participatory action research* [Doctoral dissertation, Durban University of Technology]. https://doi.org/10.51415/10321/3064

Kumari, Thoradeniya. (2017). War-affected children and psycho-social rehabilitation. doi: 10.4038/SLJSS.V40I1.7498

MacFarlane, Kate. (2023). Child soldiers in Nepal: re-conceptualizing reintegration and identity. International Affairs, doi: 10.1093/ia/iiad106

Ndongo, Théodore Onguene., Derivois, Daniel. (2021). Understanding voluntary enrollment of child soldiers: A key to reintegration. 180(2), 145–148. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amp.2021.12.001

New Action Plan to Strengthen the Protection of Children Affected by Armed Conflict in Yemen Signed with the Houthis. (2022, April 18). New Action Plan to Strengthen the Protection of Children Affected by Armed Conflict in Yemen Signed with the Houthis. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2022/04/new-action-plan-to-strengthen-the-pro tection-of-children-affected-by-armed-conflict-in-yemen-signed-with-the-houthis/

Office of the Special Representative of the Secratary General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2018). REINTEGRATION of former child soldiers. (n.d.).

https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Reintergration-br ochure-layout.pdf

Ramesh, P., Adhikari., Brandon, A., Kohrt., Nagendra, P., Luitel., Nawaraj, Upadhaya., Dristy, Gurung., Mark, J., D., Jordans. (2014). Protective and risk factors of psychosocial wellbeing related to the reintegration of former child soldiers in Nepal. Intervention, doi: 10.1097/WTF.0000000000000056

Ramírez-Guarín, V., Codina, N., & Pestana, J. V. (2022). A systematic review of psychosocial interventions for child soldiers: Types, length and main findings. *Journal of Social Work Practice, 37*(3), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2022.2031934

Rezhna, Mohammed., Frank, Neuner. (2022). Putative juvenile terrorists: the relationship between multiple traumatization,

Shaw, G and Wierenga, A Restorative Practices: Community Conferencing Pilot, unpublished manuscript held at the Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne (2002)

Santacruz and Arana,. (2002). *El Salvador: Experiences and psychosocial impact of the civil war on child*. Child Rights International Network. Retrieved March 5, 2025, from https://archive.crin.org/en/library/publications/el-salvador-experiences-and-psychosocial-impact-el-salvador-civil-war-child.html

Nakude, S. (2023, November). *Perceived attitudes and family re-integration among former child soldiers in Bunia Ituri Province, DRC* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Kampala International University.

Thoradeniya, K. (2017, June). War-affected children and psycho-social rehabilitation. *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences, 40*(1), 17. https://doi.org/10.4038/sljss.v40i1.7498

United Nations. (2016). *Day of the African Child: Protecting all children's rights and investing in children is paramount in Africa*. Retrieved May 2, 2024, from

https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/news/day-african-child-protecting-all-childrens-rights-and-investing-children-paramount-africa

United Nations. (2018). *Statement by UN Child Rights Experts on Universal Children's Day*. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2018/11/statement-by-un-child-rights-experts-on-universal-childrens-day/

United Nations. (2007). *Coomaraswamy concludes her statement at the Paris International Conference "Free Children from War"* [Video]. United Nations Audiovisual Library. https://media.un.org/avlibrary/en/asset/u070/u070206a