

# Policy in theory and practice

Science



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What is the social administrative tradition?

Social administration developed when the welfare state was undergoing a period of growth, when there was a high level of optimism about its potential achievements and a high degree of consensus about the fundamentals such as Education, the National Health Services, and public housing. Social administration was concerned with social needs and problems, and with the response to the problems; social policy. It became regarded as the natural provider of welfare, apparently at the expense of others. Social administration is linked to the growth and development of welfare services, which have existed since the turn of the century, but were expanded and consolidated in the 1940s. It adopts a rational approach to solving social problems, which are often thought of as having an objective existence. Social services provided by the state were viewed as the proper method for causing progressive change.

Fabianism was a movement designed to promote democratic socialism. The impact of Fabianism, as a coherent set of ideas, held that socialism in Britain was well-matched with the institutions of state and should, therefore, be implemented through a parliamentary system. Supporters of Fabianism wanted to utilise academic knowledge on social problems to create pressure on the state to research and conduct in-depth analysis in order to influence welfare reforms.

The ideological and empirical alliances with Fabianism were associated with a concern regarding policy action; specifically what is done by policy action and how it is done, rather than why this is done. Two hugely prominent

members of the Fabian Society were Sydney and Beatrice Webb. This couple believed that collective provision for welfare through the state was essential in order to develop a British capitalist society. Social policy in Britain became more concerned with the practical issues of education for experimental research on recognized problems – social administration tradition. During the decades of the 1960's and 1970's the view of Social administration as social policy became discredited, and since then a more holistic approach to social policy developed.

What is meant by liberal welfarism?

Liberalism welfarism is about protection of the individual in terms of freedom, markets and kind limits the state. Welfare in liberal philosophy is not something that is provided but something that is achieved and developed through the free and independent actions of a free will. The welfare of each individual promotes the well-being of the entire society by increasing the sum total of freedom in which its members live. Liberalism promotes equality of opportunities that is rooted in an inequality of outcomes. Freedom is intrinsically linked to responsibility, so as the state takes over in the role of providing welfare for the population a diminished freedom also means diminished individual responsibility. This is damaging to society, and in order to minimise the damage the state must take a less central role. It was thought that the state should refrain from interfering in economic processes such as income policies, laws regarding minimum wage and employment protection legislation, which in turn would decrease the role of trade unions in economic and political life. This forms the foundation for a legal background which enables individual freedom along with economic

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prosperity, and has been of great influence in economic, political and social welfare. The economic policy of laissez-faire was an attitude in which the government refused to interfere. This eventually began to give way to a new collective ideal called new-liberalism, which imagined the state playing a positive role in the enhancement of social problems. New liberalism led to a transformation in the nature of and relations between the state and the market.

Explain the parliamentary policy-making process.

Within the parameters of British state, the central state may be considered to be crucial as it is where many decisions are made. Constitutionally Britain operates a tripartite division of powers between the legislature, the judiciary and the executive. Crucial to this is the role of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, which are pivotal in the making of policy. The job of the legislature is to debate and consider the introduction of new laws. Members of parliament exercise the power through the system of Parliamentary committees, where they are able to question Ministers and senior Civil Servants. New legislation passes through the laborious process of First, Second and Third Readings in the House of Commons, interspersed with detailed discussion of a Bill's content at the Committee stage. A Bill will then receive consideration from the House of Lords, and during this process the MP's and Lords from the government and the opposition have the opportunity to question and debate the principles and provisions of new legislation, and to suggest amendments. Finally a Bill receives Royal Assent and passes into law as an Act of Parliament.

Detail the New Right critique of the welfare state.

During the 1970's both the Conservative and Labour Party attempted to halt the apparent economic decline, yet neither were successful. Both parties experiences an increase of radical activity in the far wings of the party. The 'New Right' formed as a branch of the Conservative Party, campaigning for a break from the previous reliance on Keynesianism as part of economic and social policy. From 1979-1997, Britain was governed by a Conservative Party that was under Thatcher's leadership and was inspired by the New Right, and was rooted in economic liberalism combined with social conservatism.

According to the work of the theorist Friedman Britain began to build up a neo-liberal analysis of state welfare during this time. His main argument was that public expenditure was being driven up by the increase of state intervention within welfare services. This interfered with the operation of the market economy.

The New Right arguing that free welfare services only encouraged useless people to become dependent upon benefits and provided no incentive for families to protect themselves and their welfares through savings. The Conservatives tried to shift the costs of welfare through changes in taxation and the benefits system, burdening the poor and disadvantaged, and this served only to increase the amount of citizens who were in need of state support. This was further intensified by policies that sought to achieve wage discipline through mass unemployment. Neo-liberals wanted to roll back the state and reduce the role of the government, with the aim to restoring

Britain's international competitiveness. Welfare benefits were seen as detrimental to labour market flexibility, as they kept up wages.

### Bibliography

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