

Uk post-war welfare settlements

[Society](#)



Compare and contrast the trends in the 'settling' & 'unsettling' of the political, economic & social settlements for the UK social policies relating to healthcare and social housing. (Approx 2 pages) Explain and illustrate the broad nature of the UK post-war welfare settlements (namely political, economic, social & organizational) and their reconstruction in the 1980s and 1990s. In what ways has the discourse of management affected the above two areas of social policy (i. e. health care & social housing).

In the United Kingdom, after the destruction weathered by the British populace during World War II and the subsequent poverty weathered by so many of the British peoples, the argument for the right of universal public services or the creation of an all-encompassing welfare state became popular. The idea that all British citizens had the innate right to accessible roads and a clean and healthy environment was extended to education, social housing, and to health services. Even then, however, there was some disagreement within Parliament about extending such social welfare programs to all, namely that of " cost.

Selectivity is often presented as being more efficient: less money is spent to better effect. There are problems with selective services," because " recipients have to be identified, the services can be administratively complex and expensive to run, and there are often boundary problems caused by trying to include some people while excluding others. Selective services sometimes fail to reach people in need," and to limit the elitism that had so often marked policies in the past, universalism was adopted as the ethos of all social policy programs in the United Kingdom.

Thus, unlike the solidarity system of social policy adopted in France, which attempts to provide care via mutually shared social obligations, the United Kingdom created what could be called 'unsettling' challenge to its former institutional system of social welfare. It created a new system, one in which need was accepted as a normal part of all British citizens' social life. (" Social Policy," 2005) This guarantee of minimum standards included a minimum income for all Britons. (" The Welfare State, 2005)

The United Kingdom became a unitary state in which central government substantially directed most government activities of social welfare policy, rather than leaving the enforcement of these policies to private industry. (" Social Policy in the United Kingdom," 2005) Welfare such as universal health care for all citizens was provided for the population as a whole, in the same way as public services like roads, and the school system was rendered more accessible to all, as students who distinguished themselves received government support for their educations. In an institutional system, welfare is not just for the poor: it is for everyone. "

The Beveridge Report of 1942 proposed a system of National Insurance, based on three cornerstones, of equal family allowances, a national health service, and the goal of full employment-this created a new idea of natural human rights than had existed before in England, and settled the question of what constituted innate human rights for the next decades, until the event of Thatcherism in the 1980's. (" Social Policy in the United Kingdom," 2005)

Eventually, the Beveridge Report " became a major propaganda weapon, with both major parties committed to its introduction," because of its popularity. During the war, the coalition government had already committed itself to full employment through free universal secondary education, and the introduction of family allowances, and the right to public housing for all in the form of such innovations council flats as part of the war effort, but unlike the United States social welfare policies during World War II, the British government made a commitment to retaining this philosophy and these formal institutions even after the end of conflict.

" Social Policy in the United Kingdom," 2005) After World War II, all references to the working classes were removed from British laws. " The replacement of the housing stock, particularly through clearances, became council housing's main role, with mass building. The subsidies favoured industrial, high-rise building, though this was often more expensive than the alternatives. Quantity was more important than quality. (Housing and Urban Policy," 2005)

When the Labour Government was elected in 1945 it introduced three key acts: the 1946 National Insurance Act, which implemented the Beveridge scheme for social security and old-age pensions, the National Health Service Act 1946; and the 1948 National Assistance Act, which abolished the Poor Law while making provision for welfare services such as housing. " (" Social Policy in the United Kingdom," 2005) Thus, the United Kingdom became a unitary state in which central government substantially directed most government activity.

However, during the 1980's and 1990's, the rise of Thatcherism began to bring a new ethos to the land. In terms of social housing policy, for example, " the growth of owner-occupation in Britain" based on tax advantages became more common in the 1980s and 1990s. The Building Societies once founded on a social, co-operative and non-profit making basis, became banks during these decades, abandoning the original " mutualist tradition" on which they had been founded. " Housing and Urban Policy," 2005)

In terms of health care, in the 1980s, Enthoven, an American economist, made an influential criticism of National Health Services' organization. Enthoven argued that the NHS was " inefficient, riddled with perverse incentives and resistance to change," and in the need of capitalist styles of management. " The reforms which followed were based in the belief that the NHS would be more efficient if it was organised on something more like market principles.

Enthoven argued for a split between purchaser and provider, so that Health Authorities could exercise more effective control over costs and production. The NHS administration was broken up into quasi-autonomous trusts from which authorities bought services. The role of Regional Health Authorities was taken over by eight regional offices of the NHS management executive. " (" Health Care," 2005) The United Kingdom to this day retains the managerial innovations (or setbacks) depending on one's point of view of the Thatcher era.

Thatcher was unable to institute some politically unpopular and reactionary ideas, such as a poll tax, during the decline of her power, but the privatization

of health care and housing continued, as did such policies as asking for students to pay for more of their post-secondary educations, and limiting social welfare policies within the United Kingdom. The welfare system in the United Kingdom remains universalist in theory, but less and less universalist in practice after the ending decades of the 20th century required the government to make cutting costs and competing in the global marketplace the bywords of political rhetoric and policy.