Care Policies in Local Settings: Municipal regulation and provision of care services

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Overview

- Background & aim of the current study
  - ERC CAPABLE project
- Decentralization in context
- Towards social innovation: a community-based capabilities approach
- Data and methods
- Results
- Moving forward
Background (I)

• Advanced decentralization in many European welfare states (Martinelli et al, 2017).

• “Social policies are essentially delivered and experienced at the local level” (Ciccia and Javornik, 2019: 3).

• Decentralization: both vertical and horizontal subsidiarity (Kazepov, 2010; Mätzke et al., 2017; Jansen et al., 2021)

• Changed ‘welfare diamonds’ (Leibetseder, Anttonen, Overbye, & Vabo, 2017)
• Result? A local policy paradox:
  • Shifting responsibilities: central-local interplay, tensions, rising inequality (Ranci, Brandsen and Sabatinelli, 2014; Jansen et al., 2021)
  • Shifting responsibilities: opportunities new collaborations, thus potentially social innovation (e.g., Yeandle, 2016)

• In short: increased chance for conflict and policy stagnation as well as cooperation and policy innovation.

• Impact of decentralization on ECEC? (Fraisse and Escobedo, 2014; Da Roit et al., 2019)
Background (III) & Aim

- Fundamental question remains unanswered: capacity of local policies to act as a resource for citizens?
- The availability of policies and services does not guarantee equal access (e.g., Yerkes et al., 2019).
- Despite potential importance of decentralization and local policy for work and family, this aspect of access at the local level relatively understudied.
- Aim: to study extent to which local ECEC policies and services function as (potential) resources for residents in eight European cities.
CAPABLE – Enhancing Capabilities?
Rethinking Work-life Policies and their Impact from a New Perspective

www.worklifecapabilities.com
a policy-oriented methodology, evaluating the means intended to ease work-life balance as well as quantifying and analysing these means cross-nationally across 8 representative European countries (SPI);

an interpretive process-oriented methodology, conducted in a sub-set of four countries, investigating how conversion factors at the micro, meso and macro level interact; and how they translate into actual capabilities to achieve a valued work-life balance (SPs 2-5);

an analysis of whether work-life policies enhance individual wellbeing (SP6); and

a comparative analysis across the case countries to develop policy tools (SP7).
Decentralization in context

- Countries with variation in dominant policy operating mechanism for work-family policies (Björk Eydal & Rostgaard, 2018).
  - UK: market; far-reaching decentralization
  - SLO: public sector; early decentralization
  - ES: family; early decentralization (regional importance)
  - NL: mixed; late but far-reaching decentralization
- Municipalities key providers of services in all four countries
Towards social innovation? A community-based capabilities approach

- Capability approach (CA; e.g., Sen, 1985, 1992; Nussbaum, 1987; Robyens, 2005, 2017)
- Social policy as a resource (Javornik and Kurowska, 2017; Kurowska, 2018; Yerkes et al., 2019) - vs. instrumental (CA) approach
- Local policies source of welfare rights/services AND social innovation (Adelbert, Ewert, & Brandsen, 2014)
Towards social innovation? A community-based capabilities approach (2)

- Social innovation: rearranging social practices in an intentional way (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2017)
  - Not intended as compensation for social policy shortcomings
- Integrating CA and social innovation: whether policies function as resources in local contexts
- Community (Yerkes, Hoogenboom and Javornik, 2020):
  - Local relationships
  - Locality (place, space, scale)
  - Local policies and services
Towards social innovation? A community-based capabilities approach (3)

- Local ECEC & a community-based capabilities approach:
  - ECEC policy design: *availability, accessibility, affordability, quality, and flexibility* (e.g., Ciccia & Bleijenbergh, 2014; Björk Eydal & Rostgaard, 2011; Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Plantenga & Remery, 2005, 2009; Saraceno, 2011; Yerkes & Javornik, 2019)
  - 8 municipalities (*places*); varying connectedness of local scale (e.g., in regional settings)
### Data and methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total number of documents</th>
<th>Total number of interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2 policymakers (combined interview); 1 NGOs; 1 union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nijmegen</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1 policymaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3 policymakers; 2 NGOs</td>
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<td>Pamplona</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2 policymakers</td>
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<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1 policymaker; 3 NGOs</td>
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<td>Leeds</td>
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<td>2 policymakers; 1 NGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ljubljana</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2 policymakers, 1 NGO, 1 researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maribor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3 policymakers, 1 NGOs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analytical strategy

- Theory-driven codes
  - ECEC policy design
  - Social innovation
  - Decentralization/governance
  - Community (place, scale)
- Inductive codes
- Coding by multiple researchers; continual discussion to increase intercoder reliability
Preliminary results
Complex mixes of national-local ECEC governance

- UK: devolution; minimal free childcare (15 hours/week)
- SLO: public provision & regulation (96%)
- ES/NL: public-private mix (limited public sector)
Contrasting struggles at local levels

- Availability an issue in larger cities relative to national context (e.g., Barcelona, Amsterdam)
  - Urban growth areas; high demand
  - Population decline in London
- Accessibility: targeted populations most affected (e.g., single parents)
Contrasting struggles at local levels (2)

- Affordability in market-driven localities (e.g., Amsterdam & Nijmegen; London & Leeds; Barcelona & Pamplona)
  - Barcelona: affected by low supply
  - UK: affected by austerity and budget cuts
  - NL: affected by childcare allowances ‘affair’
Contrasting struggles at local levels

Interviews demonstrate how interrelated policy design affects ECEC resources locally:

“Availability of nurseries is a key problem. Lotteries are used to access a place to a public nursery (with approximately 4 out of 10 families applying, not getting a place) for the past 3 years. A private nursery can cost between 500 and 600 euros per month per child. The city council is then working on the expansion of public nurseries (which are of high quality but take a long time to build). Expansion is very slow, so many families are left out of coverage.

[...]

Although there are public daycare centres, they are not so useful if you don’t “touch all the buttons”: if the daycare centre closes at 4:30pm (there is no flexible schedule), but working hours are until the late afternoon, someone has to care for children during that gap: grandparents, babysitters, leaving work, or reducing work hours (which happens among women.)”

Int BCN_000
Signs of social innovation?

- Policy design issues creating a space for social innovation
  - But: local initiatives resulting from inability of local governments to provide ECEC services in a fair and equitable manner?
  - Or: innovative practices (e.g., new collaborations)?
- Examples of collaborative initiatives in Barcelona, Leeds
  - Leeds: municipality and parents (e.g., Short breaks)
  - Barcelona: municipality and not-for-profit organisations (e.g., Concilia)
- Some public-private mixed initiatives: Pamplona, Ljubljana
Moving forward

• Continuation of analysis via inductive codes
  • E.g., stigma, others

• Reflecting on relationship between policy design issues and social innovation:
  • Social innovation possible *despite* policies being an unequal resource?
  • Social innovation possible *because* policies are an unequal resource?

• Back to the ‘local policy paradox’: tensions *and* innovation?

• And what does this mean for inequalities in access to work-family policies?
Questions? Thanks for listening!

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