1 Exploring social policy ideas and language

Daniel Béland and Klaus Petersen

INTRODUCTION

The literature on the role of ideas in public and social policy has expanded dramatically over the last two decades (Hall 1993; Merrien 1997; Stone 2001; Blyth 2002; Parsons 2007; Campbell 2004; Orenstein 2008; Padamsee 2009; Jenson 2010; Mehta 2011; Béland and Cox 2011; Schmidt 2011; Béland 2016a). The objective of this chapter is to map different types of ideas and the actors carrying them in order to show how ideas can play a direct role in social policy change, at both the national and the transnational level, in Europe and beyond. The first part of the chapter defines ‘ideas’ and their various types before answering two related questions about the potential impact of ideas on social policy change: where do policy ideas come from; and how, and through which actors, are global ideas diffused and adapted to national context? As suggested, studying the role of ideas requires an analysis of the different forms they can take, the diversity of actors carrying them, and the diffusion and translation processes through which ideas move back and forth between the national and the transnational level. The second part of the chapter focuses on a less-studied issue directly related to the role of ideas: how social policy language and key concepts such as ‘welfare state’ and ‘social security’ emerge and diffuse over time, at both the national and the transnational level. As suggested, the analysis of social policy language and concepts offers a new research agenda about the relationship between ideas and social policy development.

MAPPING THE ROLE OF IDEAS IN SOCIAL POLICY

The objective of this first part of the chapter is to map the ways in which ideas can have a direct impact on social policy development.¹ An appropriate way to begin this discussion is to clarify what we mean by ‘ideas’.

Defining and Classifying Ideas

Ideas as causal beliefs

The study of ideas in social science and policy research is contested in part because defining and, therefore, analysing ‘ideas’ is a tricky endeavour. One of the main challenges here is that ‘ideas’ take different forms, and the concept of ‘ideas’ can seem overly broad, at least if scholars fail to distinguish between types of ideas and levels of ideational analysis. Yet, it is important to note that the term ‘ideas’ is not more inherently vague or problematic than other broad social science concepts. For instance, ‘institutions’, which are often associated with ‘ideas’, also take a variety of forms and encompass many levels of reality (Campbell 2004). In social policy research, careful use of the term ‘ideas’ is less

problematic than referring to other broad terms – such as ‘interests’ or ‘institutions’ – without properly defining them.²

Throughout this chapter, the term ‘ideas’ is just another way to refer to what Craig Parsons (2007) calls ‘ideational processes’, which are one of the four types of explanation in political and policy analysis, alongside institutional, psychological and structural explanations. From this perspective, although both ideational and psychological mechanisms are about what Parsons (2007) calls the ‘logic of interpretation’, according to which actors make sense of their environment, ‘ideas’ are distinct from purely psychological processes, which are about how the brain works in general, regardless of the actor’s historical and social ‘position’. Importantly, the four types of explanatory processes (ideational, institutional, psychological and structural) can interact to shape certain outcomes and behaviours, depending on the context (Parsons 2007). That is, ‘ideas’ are often linked to other types of processes and they do interact with them, just as policy actors interact with one another and with their environment (Padamsee 2009).

In this chapter, we define ideas as ‘causal beliefs’ (Béland and Cox 2011).³ At the broadest level, such beliefs are assumptions about how the world works and how to change it. From this angle, ideas as causal beliefs can have both cognitive and normative components. This means that ideas can be as much about ‘knowledge’ as about the ‘proper action’ to take (Béland and Cox 2011). Importantly, ideas are closely related to the actors formulating and carrying them, meaning that a historical and comparative analysis of social policy ideas involves a study of the individual and collective actors involved at different stages of the policy process. Such an actor-centred approach to ideas is emphasized throughout this chapter.

Policy moments and types of ideas

Ideas can take different forms and their roles are likely to change from one moment of the policy process to the other. A good way to map the policy process and the role of ideas within it is John W. Kingdon’s (1995) now-classic distinction between the problem, policy, and political streams, three aspects of policy development that interact with one another in complex, non-linear ways (Kingdon 1995; Béland 2005; Mehta 2011).

Within the problem stream, where actors identify and give meaning to the policy challenges facing society and the state, ideas take the form of contested problem definitions (Stone 2001; Mehta 2011). From this perspective, social policy problems are not purely objective realities but historically contingent definitions that change over time, as new problems are identified and older problems are redefined. A striking example of this type of problem definition and redefinition is the now-popular concept of ‘new social risks’, which is about how recent demographic, economic and social trends have transformed the uncertainty workers and families face in contemporary societies (Taylor-Gooby 2004). The idea of ‘new social risks’ encompasses a certain way to define today’s socio-economic reality and the problems social policy actors should tackle in priority. This is why this idea is related to particular policy prescriptions (Hacker 2006) and to the adoption of new social programmes (Bonoli 2005). The same remark about the historically constructed nature of policy problems applies to the emergence of the idea of social exclusion (and social inclusion) on the world stage over the past two decades, and to the ongoing redefinition of the concept of poverty (including the concept of feminization of poverty) within national and transnational policy communities, which are each having a direct policy

impact, in Europe and beyond (Béland 2007; United Nations 2010; Council of Europe 2012; Foli and Béland 2014).

In the context of the policy stream, experts formulate potential policy alternatives to address the problems that emerge within the problem stream (Kingdon 1995; Mehta 2011). One way in which actors design and select potential policy alternatives is by referring to a coherent economic policy paradigm, such as Keynesianism or monetarism (Hall 1993).⁴ Yet, actors do not always draw on one coherent approach to develop policy alternatives, as ‘bricolage’ is a common type of ideational process, where ideas borrowed from various sources are combined and recombined to create something new (Campbell 2004; Carstensen 2011). It is probably better to see paradigms and bricolage as two poles between which most policy alternatives formulated within the policy stream are located, rather than as two radically distinct and incompatible realities.

Finally, within the policy stream, policy entrepreneurs are busy linking different problems and proposals to promote concrete policy decisions (Kingdon 2005). In this context, strategic framing becomes especially central, as policy entrepreneurs and their allies do their best to convince other political actors as well as the general public that their policy proposal should be enacted (Campbell 2004; Béland 2005). Such discourses can take different forms and target different constituencies, depending on the institutional context at hand (Schmidt 2011). For instance, from an ideological standpoint, policy proposals might be framed in ways that make them appear ambiguous, which could lead people on both the left and the right to support them (Palier 2005). For instance, a particular pension reform might please unions for a certain reason, and employers for a different reason (Bonoli 2000). Another example is ‘maternalism’, a gendered approach to social policy that appealed to both state officials and women’s movements for very different reasons (Bock and Thane 1991). In this context, emphasizing some aspects of the proposed reform in front of one audience and other aspects of it in front of other constituencies is a potentially effective framing device used by policy entrepreneurs and their allies to help foster ambiguous yet resilient political coalitions (on ambiguity and coalition building, see Palier 2005).

Beyond these three streams, students of ideas and social policy should take into consideration two other policy moments located beyond agenda-setting and the enactment process and, therefore, not central to Kingdon’s (2005) model: policy implementation and policy evaluation (Howlett et al. 2009; see also Béland 2016a). First, during the implementation of social policy reforms, the collective beliefs of bureaucrats, labour officials, professional groups, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in implementing them can have a direct impact on their actual fate on the ground. For instance, the way health professionals in sub-Saharan Africa perceive user fees may affect the success of recent policy initiatives to waive them (Béland and Ridde 2016). Second, once policies are implemented in their jurisdiction or even abroad, national policy actors can evaluate them and draw lessons for their future policy initiatives (Rose 1991; Hall 1993). Simultaneously, international organizations and other transnational actors can draw lessons from a social programme adopted in a specific country and transform that country into a sought after ‘model’ other countries are invited to study and draw inspiration from. The example of Chile in the international debate about pension privatization illustrates this claim (Merrien 2001; Orenstein 2008).

Finally, it is worth mentioning two other key ideational concepts that are not closely

associated with a particular policy moment: public sentiments (Campbell 2004) and political ideologies (Freeden 2003). Public sentiments refer to what is commonly known as ‘public opinion’, which has direct implications for different aspects of social policy development (Brooks and Manza 2007). Political ideologies, such as liberalism, socialism and social democracy, provide broad cognitive and normative templates, genuine ‘world views’ through which political parties, pressures groups and individual citizens locate themselves (Freeden 2003; Berman 2011). These slow-moving and all-encompassing political ideologies constitute the macro-historical side of the ideational landscape, as they interact with specific policy ideas such as problem definitions, while appearing as potential sources of symbols that political actors and policy entrepreneurs may use to shape public sentiments and, more generally, oppose or support concrete social programmes. In France, for example, the term ‘solidarity’, which is embedded in that country’s Republican ideology, has long been used to legitimize social programmes of various kinds (Bourgeois 1896 [1998]; Henderson 1905; Rosanvallon 2000; Paugam 2007).

Actors and Processes

To better understand the role of ideas in social policy development, we need to briefly address two basic questions: where do policy ideas come from? How, and through which actors, are transnational ideas diffused and adapted to national context?

Where do policy ideas come from?

This is one of the most central questions in understanding the role of ideas in social policy research (Béland 2016b). The most basic answer to this question is simple: ‘ideas can come from anywhere’ (Kingdon 1995, p. 72). As Kingdon (1995, p. 72) puts it, ‘nobody has a monopoly on ideas. They come from a plethora of different sources’. Although it is clear policy experts are the most common sources of policy alternatives, actors as different as business leaders, labour officials, feminist advocates and social movement leaders can formulate new policy proposals. More important, the nature of the actors most likely to formulate new ideas or reframe existing ones varies greatly from one type of ideas to the next (Campbell 2004). For instance, political ideologies are typically framed and reframed by politicians and public intellectuals (Freeden 2003), while policy alternatives are more likely to emerge within ‘policy communities’ populated by experts (Haas 1992). In any particular country, existing political institutions and policy legacies shape the production of expertise and explain why some actors are more prominent than others. For example, as far as the production and diffusion of policy alternatives are concerned, state bureaucrats play a greater role in the production of expertise in France, and experts working for think tanks are more influential in the United States (Campbell and Pedersen 2011). In contrast, framing processes may originate from a number of sources, ranging from journalists, political parties and social movements, including feminist and civil rights organizations (Snow et al. 1986; Ferree 2003; Campbell 2004; Béland 2005).

Beyond identifying the categories of actors especially influential in the formation and diffusion of particular types of ideas, the question of where ideas come from also concerns their geographical origin. For instance, today are most policy ideas generated at the national level in a particular country or at the transnational level by international organizations and other transnational actors? Because, even within the European Union

(EU), social policy remains largely the prerogative of national states, most if not all policy ideas emerge at the national level before they are diffused and reframed by transnational actors who can use national experiments to promote and diffuse particular ‘models’ across jurisdictions (Orenstein 2008). For example, the idea of social exclusion first appeared in France, before it began a rich transnational life in Europe and even beyond (Béland 2007; Goguel d’Allondans 2003; Levitas 1999 [2005]; Saith 2007; Silver 1994). The idea of pension privatization emerged among US neoliberal economists in the 1970s, before being implemented for the first time in Chile under Pinochet and, finally, being diffused by the World Bank and other international organizations in the 1990s (Blackburn 2004; Merrien 2001; Orenstein 2008). More recently, conditional cash transfers (CCTs), simultaneously designed in Brazil and Mexico, began a successful transnational policy life through the actions of prominent actors who helped diffuse this policy model around the world (Fenwick 2013).

How are transnational ideas diffused and adapted to national context?

The above examples suggest that social policy ideas emerging in specific countries can be later diffused at the transnational level, and much has been written about transnational actors and diffusion processes (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Campbell 2004; Stone 2004; Deacon 2007; Orenstein 2008; Mahon 2009; Jenson 2010).⁵ This now abundant literature clearly shows that policy ideas diffused at the transnational level often find their way back to the national level, as international organizations and other transnational actors such as consultants and think tanks attempt to shape social policies in countries all over the world.

Take large international organizations such as the World Bank, for example. Alongside financial constraints related to concrete loans known as ‘conditionality’, which is a central tool of policy influence in only some countries, such international organizations have many other ways to diffuse the particular policy ideas they support at a particular point in time (Deacon 2007; Orenstein 2008; Jenson 2010). For instance, these organizations organize conferences, publish policy reports online, send consultants to different countries, and talk directly to state and other national and even sub-national actors. As Orenstein (2008) suggests, typically, in order for international organizations to diffuse their preferred ideas at the national legislative and policy level, they must collaborate with the ‘veto players’ (political actors who can prevent or permit the enactment of national policy change) in power in specific countries. This means that such organizations have to work with powerful national, country-based actors who are in a position to implement concrete social policy ideas at the national and sub-national level. That is, the politics of transnational ideas is more than a story about coercion and imposition on the part of international organizations (Orenstein 2008).⁶

This point is clearly illustrated by the case of the EU. There is no doubt that the EU has developed as a powerful transnational arena for the formulation and diffusion of social policy ideas. Over the past two to three decades, the EU has actively tried to influence member countries through a process of open method of coordination (OMC), using instruments such as benchmarks, guidelines, recommendations, national reporting and multi-lateral surveillance.

The effects of the OMC in the field of social policy are much debated (see de la Porte and Pochet 2012). The ideational influence of the EU in promoting concepts

such as flexicurity, social investment or lifelong learning has been seemingly strong. Simultaneously, owing to national interpretations and selective uses of OMC recommendations by the member states, these are vague concepts allowing for variation across different types of welfare regime. As de la Porte and Pochet conclude (2012, p. 343): ‘This does not mean the OMC has no ideational impact, but that governmental actors use it to learn from the EU or from peer countries only when it coincides with the national political agenda.’

Other researchers have critically engaged with translation processes within the EU, pointing out that the ‘EU English’ or ‘international English’ (Barbier 2014) serving as the lingua franca of the EU elite often results in neologism or ‘Euro jargon’ – such as ‘flexicurity’ or ‘social inclusion’ – often not directly translatable into the national languages of the member states. As a consequence, both EU concepts in the national context, and national discourses at the EU level have a high risk of getting lost in translation (Lendvai 2015). Social policy researchers have only paid scant attention to how this can blur the diffusion process of policy ideas and concepts. On the one hand, it is clear that such translation processes reflect asymmetrical power relations between a hegemonic language (such as EU-English) and dominated languages. On the other hand, the EU vocabulary’s fuzziness also leaves substantial room for the reframing of social policy language and concepts by national experts, policy-makers and interest groups.

Keeping these remarks in mind, within the EU and beyond, when dealing with the diffusion of social policy ideas and their implementation at the national level, ‘translation’ is an especially relevant concept, as it refers to the ways in which actors adapt foreign or global policy ideas to make them fit into the dominant categories and institutions of their jurisdiction (Campbell 2004; Kennett and Lendvai 2014). Translation is a crucial concept to understand how social policy ideas travel and change from place to place, and how different ideas interact in a particular context. For instance, the same policy alternative can be framed differently in two otherwise similar countries, because of a variation in the nature of dominant problem definitions or political ideologies between these countries. Overall, ideas interact with other types of factors, such as institutions and structural forces (Parsons 2007; Padamsee 2009). At the same time, different types of ideas – and the various actors carrying them – constantly interact with one another, which can foster change at both the national and the transnational level.

SOCIAL POLICY CONCEPTS AND LANGUAGE

The objective of this second part is to map the ways in which social policy concepts and language matter.⁷ We begin this discussion by explaining why attention to social policy language is essential to social policy analysis.

Language Matters

After mapping different types of ideas and their role in specific moments of the policy process as they relate to concrete actors, we must now stress that a focus on social policy ideas necessitates a close attention to the historical development of social policy language and concepts, which are, in themselves, ideas that actors use to make sense of

the world surrounding them, or to wage political battles against other actors promoting alternative policy prescriptions. In the history of social policy, the emergence of new terms and concepts, such as 'social insurance', 'welfare state' and 'social security', has played a key role in shaping both policy decisions and the political battles over them. This is true because both newer and older social policy language and concepts are about the constant definition and redefinition of state action in society, as the state interacts with other actors, including businesses, labour unions and NGOs (Béland and Petersen 2014). Consequently, the terminology we use to talk about social programming is not innocent, and social policy concepts can become relatively stable 'cultural categories' (Steensland 2008) capable of shaping the perceptions of actors and, ultimately, policy decisions. The work of sociologist Brian Steensland (2008) on the negative meaning of the term 'welfare' in the United States and its impact on social assistance reform during the Nixon presidency (1969–74) illustrates this claim about the role of social policy language as a consequential ideational and political reality.

Towards a Conceptual Approach

The study of social policy terminology can be characterized as an empirical approach to trace the career and influence of ideas. Ideas are often linked to certain semantics and key concepts. Furthermore, drawing on the tradition of conceptual history, this also directs our attention towards the notion that key concepts are contested and historically contingent. They are part and parcel of the political struggle in modern societies. For instance, historian Reinhart Koselleck (1979) has stressed the importance of combining diachronic analysis (the almost archaeological unearthing of the historical layers of meanings attached to a single concept) and synchronic analysis in taking into account the relationship between concepts within a particular semantic field. Another historian, Quentin Skinner (1989) turned his attention to the process of 'rhetorical redescription', in which concepts, through the agency of actors, are used in a new context, in the form of 'rhetorical strategies' or 'innovating ideologists'.

Traditionally, conceptual historians have focused on pre-1900 eras and on major political concepts such as democracy, state or liberalism. Only more recently have they turned to the twentieth century and broadened the analysis from the study of concepts to the study of 'semantic fields' (Steinmetz 2007, 2012). Social policy language is a semantic field where concepts, language, ideas, discourses and narratives are intertwined in the ongoing political struggles over social programmes (Lessenich 2005; Kettunen and Petersen 2011). For instance, Noel Whiteside (2005, p. 213) has, on the basis of a detailed study of the different meanings and understandings of unemployment in Great Britain and France, noted the importance of integrating conceptual analysis to comparative welfare state research, which is 'plagued by problems of similar policies disguised by different terminology and different policies, agencies and instruments that possess almost similar labels. Words get in our way'.

Other recent examples of social policy scholars exploring the development of social policy language includes case studies such as the origins of the concept 'welfare state' (Petersen and Petersen 2013), the use of 'welfare state' in British politics (Wincott 2011), the concept 'social security' in France and the USA (Béland 2011) or the genealogy of the concept of 'dependency' in the USA (Fraser and Gordon 1994). More systematic and

comprehensive studies are rare and include an elaborated study of the semantic field of the German welfare state (Lessenich 2005) and of EU social policy language (Barbier 2008), as well as a recent comparative volume dedicated to key social policy concepts within the developed world (Béland and Petersen 2014).

Language and the Policy Process

In order to understand how social policy language influences policy change, we need to take a closer look the different types of social policy concepts as well as address the historical and transnational dimensions of social policy language.

Key concepts and ‘second order’ concepts

Studies of social policy language have focused on the international prominent concepts such as ‘welfare state’, ‘social security’ or on nationally prominent concepts such as Germany’s ‘Sozialstaat’ and ‘Sozialpolitik’ (Kauffmann 2001; Lessenich 2014). Such concepts are the cornerstones of national welfare state paradigms that serve as cognitive frames for social policy debates and policy-making – and are generally characterized by continuity and relative stability over time. Radical shifts in social policy language are often associated with political regime change, such as was the case for East European countries after the Second World War and post-1989 (Aczél et al. 2014), or for Spain after the end of dictatorship in 1975 (Guillén and Luque 2014).

Social policy language, in this way, becomes entangled with political struggles around class, ethnicity and gender. Labour actors – such as the labour movement – developed a specific political language around the concept of class (Jones 1983), a pattern that had direct influence on social policy language. Here we can point towards the importance of concepts such as inequality and social rights. Simultaneously, modern social policy language emerged as gendered and racialized (Scott 1986). This probably is most clear in the US context, where social political language has ‘drawn persistent racial and gender boundaries, even as policies themselves changed’ (Klein et al. 2014, p.277). In that country, the language of the ‘deservingness’ (Steensland 2008) and ‘dependency’ (Fraser and Gordon 1994) have long been related to the male breadwinner model and racial hierarchies. In recent years, European debates on the social policy rights of immigrants have underlined the continued relevance of including not only gender but also ethnicity and ‘race’ when analysing social policy ideas and language.

If we look beyond key concepts, we find a social policy language that is more narrowly attached to a constituency (such as churches, experts, bureaucrats, welfare critics, women’s movements or philanthropic actors), or a policy areas (such as old age pensions, family policy or social services). In Europe and beyond, the history of social policy is a history of professionalization and institutionalization, and new professional groups or social programmes have actively contributed to the development of social policy concepts and language. Such ‘second order concepts’ may take on a life of their own, while in other contexts they may serve to either support or challenge key social policy concepts. One example is the language of the New Left, where a more critical perspective utilized concepts such as ‘social exclusion’, ‘inequality’ or a stronger focus on ‘well-being’ (vis-à-vis formal rights). Another later language stream is that of neoliberalism, popularizing discussions of ‘privatization’, ‘freedom of choice’, ‘consumers’ or ‘competition’ within

the mainstream social policy vocabulary. Most recently, we find the language attached to social investment strategies promoted by the EU and diffused to many countries within and outside Europe (Palier et al. 2011).

The historical development of social policy language

The development of a new social policy language can include both new concepts and the re-emergence (and reframing) of older concepts. Furthermore, social policy language is often characterized by strong continuity over time. Consequently, even when studying recent episodes of policy development, we need to adopt a long-term historical perspective to fully grasp the importance of social policy language.

Here are a few remarks about the historical development of modern social policy language. Around 1900, the modern idea of social policy was established in several European countries, and with the emergence of new academic disciplines and policy institutions, a new social policy discourse crystallized. Studies of the emergence of this social policy language show that it did not emerge independently from existing ideological traditions (Béland and Petersen 2014). In countries such as Denmark, Sweden and the USA, for example, the older distinction between deserving and undeserving poor persisted, and the more interpersonal (and religiously founded) language of the philanthropic tradition was folded into modern social policy language. This continuity with traditional concepts and distinctions has helped legitimize new social programmes created at the time.

The second historical ‘stage’ – starting in the 1930s in some countries and after 1945 in others – is characterized by a growing emphasis on the role of the state in social policy provision and language. In this context of social policy expansion, the concept of the ‘welfare state’ was mobilized by both social reformers and critics of statist tendencies. It is important, however, to underline that within these two ‘stages’, we find major variation from country to country (see Béland and Petersen 2014). In countries such as Germany, Denmark, Britain, the Netherlands, France and, to some degree, Finland, New Zealand and the USA, key social policy concepts developed early and often led to the emergence of well-established and nationally distinct social policy languages. These languages changed over time, but the existence of early, well-developed concepts meant that the dominant social policy language in these countries was characterized by the presence of historical legacies and incremental forms of change such as drift and layering (Hacker 2004; Mahoney and Thelen 2010), rather than dramatic ‘paradigmatic shifts’ (Hall 1993). The most illustrative example of linguistic and vocabulary continuity is Germany, where the concept of ‘*Sozialstaat*’ (and the social policy language related to it) survived three changes in political regime. In other countries, such as Hungary, Poland, Japan and Spain, changes in political regime had a much more dramatic effect on the development of social policy language (Béland and Petersen 2014).

Starting in the 1970s and 1980s, developments in social policy concepts and language in different countries began to converge. Following Paul Pierson’s (2001) discussion about ‘the new politics of the welfare state’, we also find that new languages of social policy developed in a markedly different context than the language used in previous periods. The international debate about the apparent ‘crisis of the welfare state’ meant that existing social programmes faced extensive criticisms, while what became known as ‘neo-liberalism’ provided uniform answers to the ‘crisis’. During this period, ideas about competitiveness, free choice, work incentives and privatization entered social policy

language. This convergence in social policy language is related to the influence of new social policy ideas and concepts advocated by international organizations such as the European Union and the World Bank.

National and transnational patterns of social policy language

The transnational dimension of social policy language is far from a recent phenomenon. Comparing countries, we find both overlapping patterns and a strong degree of interdependence, which is consistent with other studies of transnational history and diffusion (Rodgers 1998). In the late nineteenth century, for instance, Germany became the epicentre of social policy in Europe and beyond. So-called Bismarckian social insurance attracted international attention, and German social policy thinking was discussed throughout the world. These German policy and intellectual developments affected social policy language not only in neighbouring countries such as Hungary and Denmark, but as far away as Japan. The dominance of German scholarship in the field of social policy gradually faded during the twentieth century, and other centres of social policy thinking emerged (Béland and Petersen 2014). For example, British debates during the interwar and the 1940s were picked up in Scandinavia and spread throughout the Commonwealth including Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Simultaneously, the intense Nordic social policy cooperation led to social policy ideas and concepts travelling easily within the region (Petersen 2006) and beyond, as the 'Nordic model' attracted much international attention (Musial 1998). On the one hand, on the left, the Nordic (or Scandinavian) model had iconic status as the most progressive social policy model, combining economic growth, equality and social protection. On the other hand, on the right, it was also cited as a dystopia with excessive state intervention in the everyday life of citizens (Marklund and Petersen 2013). That is, political ideology filtered the perception and the discussion of the Nordic model.

The important role played by the USA in the development of social policy language during the post-war era should not be overlooked. During the 1930s and 1940s, the concept of 'social security', as articulated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, diffused throughout the world (Béland 2011). During the Cold War, the USA served as a model of modernization for the entire Western world (de Grazia 2005; Ellwood 2012). Even though European welfare regimes took a different pattern of development than the US welfare regime (Esping-Andersen 1990), it is possible to trace US influence on European social policy debates at the time. US scholars had a great influence on European social sciences and, in Europe, the experts (and politicians) trained within these disciplines became the 'ideological innovators' (Skinner 1989) of social policy language.

Finally, in more recent decades, international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank have become leading advocates of social policy reform, typically demanding 'activation', a slimmer and leaner public sector and a stronger emphasis on growth in the private sector, among other things. The EU also joined the chorus, favouring the addition of concepts such as 'social investment', 'social inclusion' and 'flexicurity' to the international social policy vocabulary (Barbier 2014). These new ideas and concepts were picked up in national policy debates. Overall, in part because of the influence of these transnational actors, the general tendency was a shift towards a market-oriented social policy language that challenged the more statist language of the post-war era.

International organizations are typically more dynamic than national systems and are able to change their social policy concepts and language according to the changing political goals of the organization. This general conclusion reflects the nature of these organizations as ‘open systems’ capable of profound ideational change (Béland and Orenstein 2013), or as members of ever changing ‘epistemic communities’ (Haas 1992). The examples of the EU, the OECD and the IMF/World Bank all demonstrate how a change in the political agenda through a top-down process leads to a significant change in social policy concepts and language.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank Tanya Andrusieczko, Rachel Hatcher, Noemi Lendvai, and Patricia Kennett for their comments and suggestions. Daniel Béland acknowledges support from the Canada Research Chairs Program. Klaus Petersen acknowledges support from the The Danish National Research Foundation (grant number DNRF127).

NOTES

1. This first part is largely based on a paper presented in April 2014 at the workshop New Directions in Social Policy: Development Alternatives from and for the Global South, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva.
2. For a critical take on ‘interests’ see Parsons (2007).
3. For an early perspective on ‘causal beliefs’ different from that adopted in this chapter, see Goldstein and Keohane (1993).
4. For critical perspectives on the concept of policy paradigm see Carstensen (2011) and Daigneault (2014).
5. As Kingdon (1995, p. 72) reminds us, however, finding out where and when a particular policy idea emerged in the first place is not always necessary, at least when the primary goal is to explain specific policy decisions in a particular country. Yet, it is unfortunate that the comparative and transnational history of social policy ideas, concepts and languages mentioned above is such a neglected aspect of contemporary welfare research. This is true because tracing the development and diffusion of such ideational processes over time can help both scholars and practitioners better understand why they think the way they think, and how other experts and political actors around the world perceive concrete policy issues the way they do, over time (Béland and Pedersen 2014).
6. These remarks should not obfuscate the existence of asymmetrical power relations, the vulnerability of countries in dire need of conditional loans, or the fact that social movements and policy actors who do not hold a formal ‘veto point’ within a country’s political system have no power to shape the politics of ideas, and even collaborate with transnational actors to foster policy change and the ideas necessary to bring it about. It is also worth noting that, beyond transnational consultants and international organizations, other actors such as academics, public intellectuals and social movements may participate in the transnational diffusion of policy ideas.
7. This second part draws on Béland and Petersen (2014).

REFERENCES

- Aczél, Z. and D. Szelewa and D. Szikra (2014), ‘The changing language of social policy in Hungary and Poland’, in D. Béland and K. Petersen (eds), *Analysing Social Policy Language*, Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 35–58.
- Barbier, J.-C. (2008), *La longue marche de l’Europe sociale (The Road to Social Europe)*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

- Barbier, J.-C. (2014), 'Languages of "social policy" at "the EU level"', in D. Béland and K. Petersen (eds), *Analysing Social Policy Language*, Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 59–80.
- Béland, D. (2005), 'Ideas and social policy: an institutionalist perspective', *Social Policy & Administration*, **39** (1), 1–18.
- Béland, D. (2007), 'The social exclusion discourse: ideas and policy change', *Policy? Politics*, **35** (1), 123–39.
- Béland, D. (2011), 'The politics of social policy language', *Social Policy & Administration*, **45** (1), 1–18.
- Béland, D. (2016a), 'Ideas and Institutions in Social Policy Research', *Social Policy & Administration*, **50** (6), 734–50.
- Béland, D. (2016b), 'Kingdon Reconsidered: Ideas, Interests and Institutions in Comparative Policy Analysis', *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, **18** (3), 228–42.
- Béland, D. and R.H. Cox (eds) (2011), *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Béland, D. and M.A. Orenstein (2013), 'International organizations as policy actors: an ideational approach', *Global Social Policy*, **13** (2), 125–43.
- Béland, D. and K. Petersen (eds) (2014), *Analysing Social Policy Concepts and Language: Comparative and Transnational Perspectives*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Béland, D. and V. Ridde (2016), 'Ideas and Policy Implementation: Understanding the Resistance against Free Health Care in Africa', *Global Health Governance*, **X** (3): 10–23.
- Berman, S. (2011), 'Understanding the origins of ideology: the case of European social democracy', in D. Béland and R.H. Cox (eds), *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Blackburn, R. (2004), *Banking on Death: Or Investing in Life: The History and Future of Pensions*, London: Verso.
- Blyth, M. (2002), *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bock, G. and P. Thane (eds) (1991), *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States 1880s–1950s*, London: Routledge.
- Bonoli, G. (2000), *The Politics of Pension Reform: Institutions and Policy Change in Western Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bonoli, G. (2005), 'The politics of the new social policies: providing coverage against new social risks in mature welfare states', *Policy & Politics*, **33** (3), 431–49.
- Bourgeois, L. (1896), *Solidarité (Solidarity)*, reprinted 1998, Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion.
- Brooks, C. and J. Manza (2007), *Why Welfare States Persist: The Importance of Public Opinion in Democracies*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Campbell, J.L. (2004), *Institutional Change and Globalization*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Campbell, J.L. and O.K. Pedersen (2011), 'Knowledge regimes and comparative political economy', in D. Béland and R.H. Cox (eds), *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carstensen, M.B. (2011), 'Paradigm man vs. the bricoleur: bricolage as an alternative vision of agency in ideational change', *European Political Science Review*, **3** (1), 147–67.
- Council of Europe (ed.) (2012), *Redefining and Combating Poverty: Human Rights, Democracy and Common Goods in Today's Europe*, Trends in Social Cohesion No. 25, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Daigneault, P.-M. (2014), 'Reassessing the concept of policy paradigm: aligning ontology and methodology in policy studies', *Journal of European Public Policy*, **21** (3), 453–9.
- De Grazia, V. (2005), *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe*, Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- De la Porte, C. and P. Pochet (2012), 'Why and how (still) study the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC)?', *Journal of European Social Policy*, **22** (3), 336–49.
- Deacon, B. (2007), *Global Social Policy and Governance*, London: Sage.
- Dolowitz, D.P. and D. Marsh (2000), 'Learning from abroad: the role of policy transfer in contemporary policy-making', *Governance*, **13** (1), 5–23.
- Ellwood, D.W. (2012), *The Shock of America. Europe and the Challenge of the Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990), *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fenwick, T.B. (2013), 'Stuck between the past and the future: conditional cash transfer programme development and policy feedbacks in Brazil and Argentina', *Global Social Policy*, **13** (2), 144–67.
- Ferree, M.M. (2003), 'Resonance and radicalism: feminist framing in the abortion debates of the United States and Germany', *American Journal of Sociology*, **109** (2), 304–44.
- Foli, R. and D. Béland. (2014), 'International organizations and ideas about poverty in sub-Saharan Africa', *Poverty & Public Policy*, **6** (1), 3–23.
- Fraser, N. and L. Gordon. (1994), '"Dependency" demystified: inscriptions of power in a keyword of the welfare state', *Social Politics*, **1** (1), 4–31.

- Freeden, M. (2003), *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goguel d'Allondans, A. (2003), *L'exclusion sociale: les métamorphoses d'un concept (1960–2000)* (*Social Exclusion: The Metamorphoses of a Concept*), Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Goldstein, J. and R.O. Keohane (eds) (1993), *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Guillén, A.M. and D. Luque (2014), 'Evolving social policy language in Spain: what did democracy and EU membership change?', in D. Béland and K. Petersen (eds), *Analysing Social Policy Language*, Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 263–76.
- Haas, P.M. (1992), 'Introduction: epistemic communities and international policy coordination', *International Organization*, **46** (1), 1–35.
- Hacker, J.S. (2004), 'Privatizing risk without privatizing the welfare state: the hidden politics of welfare state retrenchment in the United States', *American Political Science Review*, **98** (2), 243–60.
- Hacker, J.S. (2006), *The Great Risk Shift*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hall, P.A. (1993), 'Policy paradigms, social learning and the state: the case of economic policymaking in Britain', *Comparative Politics*, **25** (3), 275–96.
- Henderson, C.R. (1905), 'Social solidarity in France', *American Journal of Sociology*, **11** (2), 168–82.
- Howlett, M. and M. Ramesh and A. Pearl (2009), *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*, 2nd edn, Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Jenson, J. (2010), 'Diffusing ideas for after neoliberalism: the social investment perspective in Europe and Latin America', *Global Social Policy*, **10** (1), 59–84.
- Jones, G.S. (1983), *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832–1982*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaufmann, F.-X. (2001), 'Der Begriff Sozialpolitik und seine Wissenschaftliche Deutung' ('The concept of social policy and its academic meanings'), in *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, vol. 1, Baden-Baden: NOMOS Verlag, pp. 3–102.
- Kennett, P. and N. Lendvai (2014), 'Policy paradigms, gender equality and translation: scales and disjuncture', *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, **30** (1), 6–16.
- Kettunen, P. and K. Petersen (eds) (2011), *Beyond Welfare State Models: Transnational Historical Perspectives on Social Policy*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar.
- Kingdon, J.W. (1995), *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd edn, New York: HarperCollins.
- Klein, J., D. Béland and K. Petersen (2014), 'Social policy language in the United States', in D. Béland and K. Petersen (eds), *Analysing Social Policy Concepts and Language*, Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 277–96.
- Koselleck, R. (1979), 'Begriffsgeschichte und Sozialgeschichte' ('Conceptual history and social history'), in K. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, pp. 107–29.
- Lendvai, N. (2015), 'Soft governance, policy fictions and translation zones: European policy spaces and their making', in J. Clarke, D. Bainton, N. Lendvai and P. Stubbs (eds), *Making Policy Move: Towards a Politics of Translation and Assemblage*, Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 131–57.
- Lessenich, S. (ed.) (2003), *Wohlfahrtsstaatsliche Grundbegriffe. Historische und Aktuelle Diskurse (Key Concepts of the Welfare State. Historical and Contemporary Discourses)*, Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.
- Lessenich, S. (2014), 'Germany: constructing the "win-win" society', in D. Béland and K. Petersen (eds), *Analysing Social Policy Concepts and Language. Comparative and Transnational Perspectives*, Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 143–56.
- Levitas, R. (1999), *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, 2nd edn 2005, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Mahon, R. (2009), 'The OECD's discourse on the reconciliation of work and family life', *Global Social Policy*, **9** (2), 183–204.
- Mahoney, J. and K. Thelen (eds) (2010), *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency and Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marklund, C. and K. Petersen. (2013), 'Return to sender. American images of the Nordic welfare state and Nordic welfare state branding', *European Journal of Scandinavian Studies*, **43** (2), 245–57.
- Mehta, J. (2011), 'The varied roles of ideas in politics: from "whether" to "how"', in D. Béland and R.H. Cox (eds), *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Merrien, F.-X. (1997), *L'État-providence (The Welfare State)*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Merrien, F.-X. (2001), 'The World Bank's new social policies: pensions', *International Social Science Journal*, **53** (170), 537–50.
- Merrien, F.-X. (1997), *L'État-providence*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Musial, Kazimierz (1998), *Roots of the Scandinavian Model: Images of Progress in the Era of Modernization*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag.
- Orenstein, M.A. (2008), *Privatizing Pensions: The Transnational Campaign for Social Security Reform*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Padamsee, T. (2009), 'Culture in connection: re-contextualizing ideational processes in the analysis of policy development', *Social Politics*, **16** (4), 413–45.

- Palier, B. (2005), 'Ambiguous agreements, cumulative change: French social policy in the 1990s', in W. Streeck and K. Thelen (eds), *Beyond Continuity: Institutional Change in Advanced Political Economies*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Palier, B. and N. Morel and J. Palme (eds) (2011), *Towards a Social Investment Welfare State? Ideas, Policies and Challenges*, Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 127–44.
- Parsons, C. (2007), *How to Map Arguments in Political Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Paugam, S. (ed.) (2007), *Repenser la solidarité: l'apport des sciences sociales (Rethinking Solidarity: The Contribution of Social Sciences)*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Petersen, J.H. and K. Petersen (2013), 'Confusion and divergence: origins and meanings of the term "welfare state" in Germany and Britain, 1840–1940', *Journal of European Social Policy*, **23** (1), 37–51.
- Petersen, K. (2006), 'Constructing Nordic welfare? Nordic Social policy cooperation 1919–1955', in N.F. Christiansen, K. Petersen, N. Edling and P. Haave (eds), *The Nordic Model of Welfare: A Historical Re-Appraisal*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, pp. 67–98.
- Pierson, P. (eds) (2001), *The New Politics of the Welfare State*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rodgers, D.T. (1998), *Atlantic Crossings: Social Policy in a Progressive Age*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rosanvallon, P. (2000), *The New Social Question: Rethinking the Welfare State*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rose, R. (1991), 'What is lesson-drawing?', *Journal of Public Policy*, **11** (1), 3–30.
- Saith, R. (2007), 'Social exclusion: the concept and application to developing countries', in F. Stewart, R. Saith and B. Harriss-White (eds), *Defining Poverty in the Developing World*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 75–90.
- Schmidt, V.A. (2011), 'Reconciling ideas and institutions through discursive institutionalism', in D. Béland and R.H. Cox (eds), *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 47–64.
- Scott, J.W. (1986), 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis', *American Historical Review*, **91** (5), 1053–75.
- Silver, H. (1994), 'Social exclusion and social solidarity: three paradigms', *International Labour Review*, **133** (5–6), 531–78.
- Skinner, Q. (1989), 'Language and political change', in T. Ball, J. Farr and R.L. Hanson (eds), *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 6–23.
- Snow, D.A. (1986), 'Frame Alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement participation', *American Sociological Review*, **51** (4), 464–81.
- Steensland, B. (2008), *The Failed Welfare Revolution: America's Struggle over Guaranteed Income Policy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Steinmetz, W. (2007), '40 Jahre Begriffsgeschichte – the State of the Art' ('40 Years of History – the State of the Art'), in H. Kämper and L.M. Eichinger (eds), *Sprache-Kognition-Kultur*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 174–97.
- Steinmetz, W. (2011), *Political Languages in the Age of Extremes*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stone, D. (2001), *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, 2nd edn, New York: W.W. Norton.
- Stone, D. (2004), 'Transfer agents and global networks in the transnationalisation of policy', *Journal of European Public Policy*, **11** (3), 545–66.
- Taylor-Gooby, P. (ed.) (2004), *New Risks, New Welfare: The Transformation of the European Welfare State*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- United Nations (2010), *Analysing and Measuring Social Inclusion in a Global Context*, New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (DESA).
- Whiteside, N. (2005), 'Conventions, institutions and frameworks for welfare state comparisons: an analysis of pension development in France and Britain since the Second World War', in J.C. Barbier and M.T. Letablier (eds), *Politiques Sociales: enjeux épistémologiques des comparaisons internationales (Social Policies: Epistemological Issues of International Comparisons)*, Brussels: Peter Lang, pp. 211–29.
- Wincott, D. (2011), 'Images of welfare in law and society: the British welfare state in a comparative perspective', *Journal of Law and Society*, **38** (3), 343–75.