



Welfare Conditionality

SANCTIONS, SUPPORT AND
BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Mapping the key concepts: issues, questions and debates

Conceptual and theoretical aims

1. A comprehensive theoretical **map of the families of key concepts** associated with welfare conditionality
2. A theoretically-informed interrogation of the ethicality of the motivations for conditionality, viewed via the 'lens' of **competing normative frameworks** and a range of morally-relevant criteria



Mapping families of key of concepts

- Distilled key concepts from the bid and key literature
- Grouped key concepts into overlapping ‘families’
- Collapsed and expanded categories based on consultation across team
- Developed working list of ‘families’ to focus on in mapping exercise
- Each ‘family’ is interrelated, and there is no implied hierarchy

Mapping families of key concepts

1. **Conditionality**, conduct, behaviour, eligibility, sanctions, contractualism, paternalism, mutualism, desert, reciprocity, universalism
2. **Incentives and sanctions**, punishments, rewards, positive sanctions, negative sanctions, motivation, social control
3. **Social control**, social order, regulation, norms, coercion, sanctions, socialisation, conditionality
4. **Power**, force, coercion, authority, persuasion, enforcement, governmentality, legitimacy
5. **Rights**, entitlement, (social) citizenship, human rights, natural rights, moral rights, legal rights, enforceability, legalism, juridification
6. **Responsibilities**, duties, obligation, responsabilisation
7. **Discretion**, judgement, charity, legalism, creative justice, proportional justice

Mapping families of key of concepts

8. **Dependency**, culture of dependency, welfare dependency, underclass, personal responsibility, self-reliance, independence, interdependence
9. **Underclass**, culture of poverty, dependency culture, deviance
10. **Activation**, workfare, active/passive welfare state, active/passive labour market policies, welfare-to-work, rationality, agency
11. **Libertarian paternalism**, nudge, budge, behavioural economics, behaviour change, choice architecture, hard paternalism, soft paternalism, autonomy
12. **Assertive engagement**, assertive outreach, interventionism, non-interventionism, coercive care, activist state, support, social control, rough sleeping
13. **Welfare subjects**, service users, welfare beneficiaries, welfare recipients, clients, customers, consumers, agency

Approach to conceptual mapping

- **Key words:** identify broad 'family of concepts' covered in the entry
- **Definition(s):** definition(s) of key terms; relevant typologies and key distinctions
- **Key perspectives:** explores key perspectives and debates (academic and policy focussed) relevant to the family of concepts (e.g. 'for' and 'against')
- **References:** collated in Endnote database.
- c.100 pages and counting!

Defining conditionality

Access to certain welfare entitlements should
*“be subject to the condition that those who
receive them behave in particular ways, or
participate in specified activities”*

(Deacon, 1994, p. 53)

Broader forms of conditionality

Level of conditionality	1. Category	2. Circumstance	3. Conduct
Levers of conditionality	Category definitions	Eligibility and entitlement criteria	Behavioural requirements
Examples	Being past retirement age (Pensions) Being sick (Universal health care)	Work history/ contributions (social security benefits) Extent of need/ 'vulnerability' (Homelessness)	Actively seeking work/ work focused activity (Unemployment benefits)

Table 1: Adapted from Clasen and Clegg's (2007) framework for conceptualizing and analysing (changing) patterns of conditionality in benefit provisions

Conditionality and welfare state change

- An ‘organising concept’ for understanding welfare state change
- A broad and far reaching qualitative shift in the nature of welfare provision towards a new form of risk management
- A “*new politics of the welfare’... intent on converting the welfare benefits system into a lever for changing behaviour*” (Roger, 2008, p. 87)
- Extended across a diverse range of groups and social policy areas
- Generally understood in the context of welfare state retrenchment, but this is challenged by a comparative perspective (e.g. Bastalgi, 2009)

Sanctions, incentives and support applied to different welfare groups

- Conditionality as a mode of social control which employs primarily sanctions, but also incentives and support, to enforce norm-conforming behaviour
- > Unemployed people, low paid workers, disabled people, lone parents, and offenders = JSA/ESA benefit sanctions and the Work Programme
- > Social tenants = probationary, fixed-term and family intervention tenancies
- > Homeless people = 'care and control' measures, e.g. ASBOs, assertive outreach, reconnections
- > Migrants = 'earned citizenship', no-choice dispersal

Justifications of conditionality

Deacon (2004)

Contractualism: citizens and the state have mutual obligations (e.g. to actively seek work/provide safety-net for the unemployed)

Paternalism: conditionality encourages behaviour in the best interests of the welfare claimant (e.g. encourage people to work, take up support, engage with services)

Mutualism: people have obligations and responsibilities towards each other

Paz-Fuchs (2008)

Deterrence: harsh requirements deter potential recipients from claiming relief

Morality: certain activities (e.g. work) have inherent moral value; social control of certain groups necessary

Economics: 'fiscal' focus on using resources efficiently minimising public costs

Quid-pro-quo: providing 'relief' or assistance requires beneficiaries to 'give something back'

Objections to conditionality

- **Conditions of fair reciprocity** are not met: basic needs claims *prior* to social obligations (Doyal and Gough, 1991; White, 2003)
- **Undermines core principles of the welfare state** and represents abandonment of **universalism** (Dwyer, 2004; Standing, 2011)
- **Disciplinary** mechanism for **punishing marginalised groups**: places further burdens most excluded sections of society and imposes costs on 'third parties' e.g. children. **Uneven** and **hypocritical** (Flint, 2002; Fitzpatrick, 2005; Rodger, 2008)
- High administrative **costs** (not offset by savings) and **deters** take up of benefits or services (Bastalgi, 2009)
- **Democratic deficit** and inadequate mechanisms of appeal/redress (Patrick, 2011; Standing, 2011, Webster, 2013)
- Can **undermine public support for welfare** provision/redistribution and promote '**politics of resentment**', anti-welfare populism (Larsen, 2006; Hoggett, et al., 2013).

Relevant normative lenses

Citizenship (liberalism vs. communitarianism)

- Do conditional welfare policies recognise and uphold the social rights of citizenship?
- Do conditional welfare policies encourage mutual respect and solidarity?

Human rights

- Do conditional welfare policies recognise and uphold relevant conceptions of global human rights?

Social justice

- Do conditional welfare policies deliver distributive outcomes that are 'fair' with respect to meeting need, rewarding desert, recognising merit, promoting equality, or enhancing capabilities?

Utilitarianism

- Do conditional welfare policies 'work' in maximising overall societal welfare?

Next steps

- Conceptual and normative mapping will inform project outputs and fieldwork
- 40+ key informant interviews with policy-makers and key stakeholders exploring motivations, justifications and ethics of conditional approaches
 - Continuities and differences across welfare groups
- 24 focus groups with frontline practitioners
 - Focus on moral reasoning of frontline staff
 - Implementation of formal rules and informal modes of control
- 480 welfare recipients subject to conditionality across 8 groups, interviewed 3 times at 12 months intervals
 - Transitions, adaptations and coping strategies, how these may change over time and why there may be diverse outcomes for different people
 - Normative perspectives of recipients on ethics of conditionality

Discussion

- Is our conceptual mapping appropriate/comprehensive?
- Are we missing any key concepts/inter-relationships?
- Are there other normative lenses that we should consider?
- Are there bodies of work or key works that we need to be aware of?