



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

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IDEA OF THE BOOK

The welfare state has been a central societal experience not only in Western countries but in various other parts of the world since the mid-twentieth century. Despite the growing manifold criticism and the alleged crisis of the welfare state since the 1970s, it still has a reputation as a desired model for social development. In particular, the challenges caused by numerous global crises in the 2000s have made the welfare state a strong option again.¹

¹For example, Laenen, T., Meuleman, B. and van Oorschot, W. eds.) (2020). *Welfare state legitimacy in times of crisis and austerity: Between continuity and change*. Edward Elgar; Taylor-Gooby, P. and Lerut, B. (eds.) (2018). *Attitudes, aspirations and welfare: Social policy directions in uncertain times*. Palgrave Macmillan; Svallfors, S. (ed.) (2012). *Contested welfare states: Welfare attitudes in Europe and beyond*. Stanford University Press; Lindert, P. (2004). *Growing public: Social spending and economic growth since the eighteenth century*. Cambridge University Press; Koivunen, A., Ojala, J. and Holmén, J. (eds.) (2021). *The Nordic economic, social and political model: Challenges in the 21st century*. Routledge; Hänninen, S., Lehtelä, K.-M. and Saikkonen, P. (eds.) (2019). *The relational Nordic welfare state: between utopia and ideology*. Edward Elgar.

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This collection introduces the history of experiences as an approach to the analysis of the welfare state. The title, *Experiencing Society*, crystallizes our approach to how a particular relationship between the individual and society is *lived*. *Experiencing Society* introduces new theoretical, methodological and empirical insights for bridging the from-below analysis of daily life and the macro analysis of societal structures to explain how societies are constructed and constituted in everyday life and by citizens themselves.

The concept of the *lived welfare state* provides a new way to understand and explain the history and current challenges of the welfare state in different contexts. The lived welfare state is both a methodological concept and an empirical object/subject of study. Methodologically it looks at the welfare state as an idea and practice that has become an integral part of living in a modern society. Empirically the prefix *lived* means that we explore the welfare state as an everyday experience and examine how it is connected to overarching social issues, such as equality, trust, and collective and individual agency. Thus, our collection aims to offer new perspectives on the larger question of the construction and legitimation of society.

We apply a long-term perspective from the mid-nineteenth century to the 2020s to analyse the experience of society that made the building of the welfare state possible and made the welfare state a resilient model of social order. To elaborate on the changing national variations, this collection goes beyond the mainstream focus on welfare states usually limited to Western democracies. We provide a more varied look by broadening the focus from the Nordic welfare states (Denmark and Finland) to mid-twentieth-century authoritarian Southern Europe, colonial Asia and post-colonial South America. The global dimension, with case studies from Portugal, Chile and Singapore, enriches our approach by providing a different contextual frame for the lived welfare state.

We use the case of Finland to deepen the temporal analysis of the experience of society in its historical context. The focus on one country allows us to capture long-term historical continuity, discontinuity and change. It allows for the linking of large- and small-scale realities with diverse but entangled logic and opens up a perspective to ponder the formation of the modern individual–society relationship.

After the introductory chapter, the collection consists of five parts. *Theoretical and Methodological Approaches* (Part I) introduces a socio-historical framework for analysing experiences as a societal phenomenon and a narrative-theoretical approach to the welfare state. Parts II and III

focus on the welfare state as a lived social security system. *Experiences from Welfare Systems* (Part II) amplifies the early initiatives for building social security from the perspective of the social workers and civil servants in various contexts on three continents. *Agency and Experience “from below”* (Part III) turns the focus onto the recipients of the benefits and their lived encounters with the welfare institutions. The final two parts look beyond the institutional settings of social benefits and social services to explore *Space, Age and Class as Experience* (Part IV) and *Experience of Equality and Fairness* (Part V) within a broader societal frame.

EXPERIENCING SOCIETY: AN APPROACH TO THE WELFARE STATE

In recent welfare state historiography, cultural history has made the daily practices of the welfare state the focus of analysis, and conceptual history has pointed out the need to analyse the shifting and varied key terminology—such as *society*—in the meaning-making of the welfare state. Within the transnational comparative approach, one of the latest interpretative models has emphasized the multilayered historicity of welfare state institutions and discourses. All these fields have opened up and called for reflections on everyday experiences.²

This collection opens a view to how the elaborated concept of experience can enhance the analysis of the welfare state. In this collection, *experiencing society* is the shared starting point for approaching the welfare state across time and place. *Experiencing Society* analyses the *lived* relationship between the individual and society: how people experience the

²van Oorschot, W., Opielka, M. and Pfau-Effinger, B (eds.) (2008). *Culture and welfare state: Values and social policy in comparative perspective*. Edward Elgar; Autto, J. and Nygård, M. (eds.) (2015). *Hyvinvointivaltion kulttuurintutkimus*. Lapland University Press; Crane, J. and Hand, J. (eds.) (2022). *Posters, protests, and prescriptions: Cultural histories of the National Health Service in Britain*. Manchester University Press; Bude, H. (2003). Generation: Elemente einer Erfahrungsgeschichte des Wohlfahrtsstaates. In S. Lessenich (ed.), *Wohlfahrtsstaatliche Grundbegriffe: Historische und aktuelle Diskurse*. Campus Verlag; Béland, D. and Petersen, K. (eds.) (2015). *Analysing social policy concepts and language: Comparative and transnational perspectives*. Policy Press; Edling, N. (ed.) (2019). *The Changing meanings of the welfare state: Histories of a key concept in the Nordic countries*. Berghahn Books; Kettunen, P. and Petersen, K. (eds.) (2011). *Beyond welfare state models: Transnational historical perspectives on social policy*. Edward Elgar; Ebbinhaus, B. and Naumann, E. (eds.) (2018). *Welfare state reforms seen from below: Comparing public attitudes and organized interests in Britain and Germany*. Palgrave Macmillan.

intangibly abstract and holistic entity as a structure in which they live, have membership or identify. It is about how people understand their rights and responsibilities within such a frame, and how they feel society meets their needs and expectations. *Experiencing Society* consists of the manifold everyday societal practices that are constantly present in one's life by setting limits to and preconditions for life-chances. How people experience society with its requirements and options in their daily life deeply relates to the experienced legitimation of society. Thus, the analytic result of our approach, the *experience of society*, captures the two-way experiential influence between the individual and society. It opens a perspective to individual agency by explaining societal development through experiential change.

In the experience of society, a temporal dimension is always present. In his classic work, C. Wright Mills emphasized how the interactive basis of an individual–society relationship extends from past generations to the future:

Every individual lives, from one generation to the next, in some society (...)
By the fact of his living he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove.³

The generational view concretizes the multilayered historicity of experiencing society. The experiences of past generations shape the structures that the next generation faces as the institutions, traditions, prerequisites and possibilities in their lives. Thus, the experience of society is an interface of the past generations' experiences, the current meaning-making and the future horizons of the ideal society. Significant for the analysis is that the experience of society is not only expressed in thoughts and words, but it results in the changing acts and social practices that historically construct and reshape society. This perspective, explored in Kokko and Harjula's theoretical-methodological approach in Chap. 2, points out one central dimension in the historical analysis of experiences: experiences not only reflect the social reality but are crucial constructive elements of it. Kokko and Harjula introduce *layers*, *scenes* and *sediments of experience* as analytic tools for approaching experiences in socio-historical research.

³Mills, C. Wright (1959). *The Sociological imagination*. Oxford University Press, 6.

The book explores the experience of society in the welfare state through its variations and similarities around the globe. In John B. Thompson's terms, an overarching feature in the development of modern societies is "a complex reordering" of experiences. According to Thompson, modern societies have removed certain experiences—such as death, disease and starvation—"from the locales of everyday life" and made them rarely encountered daily by creating an institutional setting of social security systems.⁴ Following this idea, we could argue that the welfare state as a societal framework has especially made these experiences rare in daily life. From this perspective, our collection recognizes, addresses and analyses the reordering of experiences as the shared feature in modern welfare states.

Ideally, modern welfare states can be characterized as societies that aim to protect their citizens from extreme experiences. The key concept of the mid-twentieth-century welfare state, *social security*, captured the increased predictability and decreased uncertainty of life as the main aim and achievement of the welfare state.⁵ As Pauli Kettunen and Klaus Petersen have emphasized, the welfare state regulates the uncertainty of the future with concepts such as risk and insurance.⁶ This means that difficulties in human life—such as diseases or inability to work—are no longer seen as a result of sin or as personal hardships to be solved by the individuals themselves. Instead, they are perceived as social problems, caused by social risks that anyone could face and that society has a collective responsibility to jointly prevent and relieve. Such an interpretation regulated the social and

⁴Thompson, J. B. (1995). *Media and modernity: A social theory of the media*. Polity Press, 226–227.

⁵Haapala, P. and Lloyd, C. (2018). Johdanto: Rakennehistoria ja historian rakenteet. In P. Haapala (ed.), *Suomen rakennehistoria: Näkökulmia muutokseen ja jatkuvuuteen (1940–2000)*, 23–25. Lister, R. (2021). *Poverty*. Polity, 4–11. On stability and predictability as the goal of the welfare state: Moisio, P. (2021). Attitudinal change to the welfare state: From compensating social risks to creating opportunities. THL. Retrieved 28 April 2022, from <https://thl.fi/en/web/social-welfare-and-health-care-reform/finances/optimi-articles-on-health-and-social-economics/attitudinal-change-to-the-welfare-state-from-compensating-social-risks-to-creating-opportunities>. On the connection between the welfare state and well-being and health, for example Chung, H. and Muntaner, C. (2007). Welfare state matters: A typological multilevel analysis of wealthy countries. *Health Policy* 80(2), 328–339; Lundberg, O. et. al. (2008). The role of welfare state principles and generosity in social policy programs for public health: An international comparative study. *Lancet* 372(9650), 1633–1640. Bergqvist, K. and Yngwe, M. Å. and Lundberg, O. (2013). Understanding the role of welfare state characteristics for health and inequalities: An analytical review. *BMC Public Health* 13 (1234).

⁶Kettunen and Petersen (2011), 8.

reframed the experience of society—and the entire social reality—in a new way, which can be seen as a basic experiential character of the welfare state.⁷ The joint social responsibility both presumed and produced experiences of loyalty, solidarity, inclusion, communality and belonging. Furthermore, the aim to minimize social risks shaped new expectations of equality and equity. In the ideal case, both the individual and societal aims of the welfare state pursued a positive vision for the future with progress, prosperity, integration, trust and confidence.

From the perspective of modernization, the dilemma between the individual and collective in a welfare state involves a paradox, as the acceptance of the joint social responsibility that incorporates hardships not as personal and individual but as social, collective and general seems to be contradictory to the general trend towards individualization.⁸ To explore how such an experience of the individual–society relationship emerged, took shape or failed as a part of the reordering of experiences, a look at the everyday life and lived practices is needed.

Within the framework of the welfare state, society is often understood as a national entity, as the nation state in which the individual–society relationship is defined as the relationship between the citizen and the state. In the globalizing world of the twenty-first century, where people’s social worlds extend beyond national borders, the transnational approach has questioned the methodological nationalism of confining society as a social world to the nation state only.⁹ The focus on *experiencing society* points

⁷Steinmetz points out, based on van Stolk and Wouters, that regulating the social in a welfare state results in a changing “emotional ground-tone of everyday life”. Steinmetz, G. (1993). *Regulating the social: The welfare state and local politics in imperial Germany*. Princeton University Press, 1, 223; Schultz-Forsberg, H. (2012). Welfare State. In H. K. Anheier, M. Juergensmeyer and V. Faessel (eds.). *Encyclopedia of Global Studies*. SAGE Reference Online. SAGE, 1–6.

⁸On the dilemma between the traditional and the modern in the welfare state: Kettunen, P. (2011). The transnational construction of national challenges: The ambiguous Nordic model of welfare and competitiveness. In P. Kettunen and K. Petersen (eds.), *Beyond welfare state models: Transnational historical perspectives on social policy*, Edward Elgar, 19–20. Beck, U. and Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization: Institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences*. SAGE Publications Ltd., 26–44; Rautakivi, T, Siriprasertchok, R. and Melin, H. (2022). *A critical evaluation of individualism, collectivism and collective action*. Tampere University Press.

⁹For example, Kettunen, P., Pellander, S. and Tervonen, M. (eds.) (2022). *Nationalism and democracy in the welfare state*. Edward Elgar; Couldry, N., and Hepp, A. (2017). *The mediated construction of reality*. Polity Press, 17–21; Conrad, C. (2011). Social policy after the transnational turn. In P. Kettunen & K. Petersen (eds.) (2011), *Beyond welfare state models: Transnational historical perspectives on social policy*, Edward Elgar, 218–240.

out how the national frame itself is historically not at all a taken-for-granted experience but a complex and gradual process of belonging and membership that was built, strengthened or undermined in daily life. The collection indicates how the special relationship between the individual and society—or the citizen and state—was mainly constructed locally. This means that experiencing the nation state as society took place within local institutions, and the shared meaning of society and citizenship was shaped within families and the social neighborhood.

This collection provides insights into the interlinked processes of nation state and welfare state building. Both Denmark and Finland are examples of how Nordic small-state nationalism legitimated the welfare state. In her analysis of the agency of poor relief recipients in mid-nineteenth-century Denmark, Leonora Lottrup Rasmussen (Chap. 7) points out how the experiences of local citizenship that were negotiated in the town administration preceded the national experience of social rights. By international comparison, Denmark turns out to be an exceptionally early laboratory of modern social citizenship. The case studies on Finland (Chaps. 8, 10, 13, 14 and 16) show how the idea of a modern society that could give all citizens access to social rights was adopted only gradually in the 1940s to 1960s as part of a rapid structural change from an agrarian latecomer to industrialized society. The case studies reveal the local variation in the experience of society. Ville Erkkilä (Chap. 13) and Kirsi Saarikangas, Veera Moll and Matti O. Hannikainen (Chap. 10) indicate how the rural and suburban experiences of 1950s to 1970s Finland represented two different and clashing lived social realities. Rural underdevelopment and injustice were contrasted with the modernity and progress represented by new suburban areas.

In their analysis of postcolonial Chile, Maricela González and Paula Caffarena (Chap. 4) indicate how social workers as the first representatives of the emerging social security system and as the “female face of the state” started to build the experience of society from the 1920s.¹⁰ Ho Chi Tim’s study of postcolonial Singapore after World War II (Chap. 6) points out that the new idea of the “state as the community”, which was responsible

¹⁰On social development in Chile since the Pinochet dictatorship: Calderón, F. and Castells, M. (2014). Development, democracy, and social change in Chile. In M. Castells and P. Himanen (eds.), *Reconceptualizing development in the global information age*. Oxford University Press, 175–204.

for the social welfare of “the community as individual citizens”, was only gradually constructed without any local precedent.

The nation-based societal frame for the welfare state is often linked to democracy, and the Danish case especially illustrates how even the poorest could have their say in negotiating the practices that regulated the social.¹¹ Similarly, in Denmark and Finland (Chaps. 7 and 8), the inclusion of poor relief recipients into political citizenship with voting rights was a slow process that framed their agency until the 1960s and 1970s. The Singaporean case points out how communal centres that integrated social, educational and recreational aims were built as training grounds for democracy in the mid-1950s. By contrast, Ana Carina Azevedo’s analysis of the exclusive and authoritarian welfare solution in the Portuguese dictatorship (Chap. 5) indicates how the *Previdência Social* was used as a tool to produce obedience and hierarchies by creating privileges instead of equality.

Comparisons with other, either more or less advanced societies were central in the media narratives and political discourse that shaped and mediated the experience of society in a welfare state. Heidi Kurvinen (Chap. 11) indicates how the Global South was used as a comparison to the ideal presentation of Finland as a more advanced, child-friendly welfare state in the late 1970s. Jussi Lahtinen (Chap. 12) analyses the mediated popular narratives of the working class in the changing contexts of the Western “affluent society” when working-class identification was blurred by the new middle-class lifestyle.

THE LIVED WELFARE STATE: FACING EVERYDAY COMPLEXITIES

The concept of the *lived welfare state* allows us to understand and explain the history and current challenges of the welfare state as a part of daily life in modern societies. In this collection, the analytic concept broadens and nuances the scope of welfare state research in two ways. First, in Parts II and III, the concept turns the focus to everyday experiences within the institutional frameworks of the welfare state. By exploring how the emerging and established welfare state is lived out by the recipients of social benefits and social services and by the professionals who work in various welfare state institutions, these chapters present a from-below perspective of the making of the welfare state as a social security system. This

¹¹ Kettunen, Pellander and Tervonen (2022).

perspective emphasizes the meaning of individual agency in the construction of the system.

Furthermore, Parts IV and V look beyond the social security system and ask how the welfare state as a general societal experience has been lived out since the mid-twentieth century. In these chapters, the welfare state is analysed as the societal framework for suburban planning, the working class and childhood, and for experiences of equality and fairness. The dual contents of the concept amplify how the welfare state is lived both as a mosaic-like institution consisting of various social services and benefits—which date back to different decades and which each may carry and produce slightly different experiences of society—and as more general, pervasive experience of society. Besides traditional historical data, like legislation and political, academic and professional discussion, a variety of research material—letters to welfare institutions, memoirs, biographies, interviews, buildings, photos, newspapers, TV series and social media discussions—is utilized to trace everyday experience.

As the concept of the *lived welfare state* brings concrete daily life into focus as an experience of society, it differs from the more abstract concept of the *welfare state*. Even though people may identify their countries as welfare states and even express this self-understanding with pride,¹² the concept of *welfare state* does not always resonate with everyday life. For example, since the adoption of the concept of *welfare state* in the Finnish language in the early 1950s, it has not been generally used either by common people or by staff at social security institutions, but it remained in the discourse of politics and research.¹³ Instead, people usually refer either generally to “society” or the “state”, or to the specific institutions they encounter—such as the social office, employment office, maternity and child welfare clinic, or school—when talking about their daily experiences. As Juho Saari indicates in Chap. 15, the welfare state experience as a general attitude measured in opinion polls is a complex phenomenon. It

¹²For example, Edling, N. (2019a). Introduction. In N. Edling (ed.), *The changing meanings of the welfare state: Histories of a key concept in the Nordic countries*. Berghahn Books, 6; Edling, N. (2019b). Conclusion. In N. Edling (ed.), *The changing meanings of the welfare state: Histories of a key concept in the Nordic countries*. Berghahn Books, 326; van Kersbergen, K. (2016), The welfare state in Europe. In D. Acemoglu et al. (eds.), *The search for Europe: Contrasting approaches*. Fundación BBVA, 269–286.

¹³Kettunen, P. (2019). The conceptual history of the welfare state in Finland. In N. Edling (ed.), *The changing meanings of the welfare state: Histories of a key concept in the Nordic countries*. Berghahn Books, 225–275.

reveals trends in the support for and legitimacy of the societal framework, but because of its abstract and ambiguous character, it leaves room for narratives that emphasize both fairness and inequality.

It is telling that in the conceptual history of the welfare state in the Nordic countries, Nils Edling asked, “was ‘the welfare state’ a description of the contemporary state, a concept encapsulating historical experiences, or a future-oriented political objective, a concept filled with expectations and promises?”¹⁴ Pertti Haapala (Chap. 16) points out how the success story that characterizes the national self-understanding of Finnish modern history as a welfare state intermixes all these aspects. However, compared to the United Kingdom, where the National Health Services (1948) rapidly became the symbol of the established national welfare state, the welfare state remained a non-dominant and contested future goal in Finland in the 1950s. Sophy Bergenheim (Chap. 14) distinguishes how the temporal perspectives of the recent past and near future expanded to long-term trajectories within the planning optimism of the 1960s. By the late 1980s, the Finnish welfare state had turned into a past achievement that needed to be defended.¹⁵ As the idea of a ready, everlasting welfare state was short-lived, this made the present society an experience of the “not-yet-a-welfare state” or “not-any-longer-a-welfare state”. Such a concept of welfare state emphasizes normative expectations rather than serving as a description of empirical everyday life.¹⁶ The unnarrativeness and untellability of the twenty-first-century welfare state, analysed by Maria Mäkelä (Chap. 3), is associated with the process. Mäkelä points out how as an implicit script, the master narrative of a functional welfare state generally materializes only when it is countered with personal stories of its failure.

The aim of this book is not to categorize the welfare state by defining a certain period when it “appeared” as a lived experience. Instead, this collection considers how the small, everyday face-to-face encounters with the representatives of the emerging welfare institutions were significant for the experience of society that gradually brought the ideals of the welfare state to life. Case studies from Denmark, Chile, Singapore and Finland each point out how encounters where individual worries and misery were

¹⁴ Edling (2019a), 4.

¹⁵ van Kersbergen (2016), 270; Crane & Hand (eds.) (2022); Kettunen (2019), 260–261; Kettunen, P. (2015). Hyvinvointivaltion yhteiskunta. In J. Autto & M. Nygård (eds.), *Hyvinvointivaltion kulttuurintutkimus*. Lapland University Press, 71–109.

¹⁶ Kettunen (2015), 82–83.

recognized and feelings of insecurity were relieved paved the way for trust and membership and strengthened the welfare state as institution. Such a societal relationship of recognition—as Anna Metteri has phrased it—was the central promise of the emerging welfare state.¹⁷ This underlines the crucial meaning of the commitment of street-level professionals in building the individual–society relationship that made the welfare state possible.

In his seminal essay *Citizenship and social class* (1950), T. H. Marshall emphasized how the process of receiving social benefits in cash produced a new common experience of citizenship in a welfare state:

All learn what it means to have an insurance card that must be regularly stamped (...) or to collect children’s allowances or pension from the post office.¹⁸

Even more importantly, he stressed how equal social services, such as health services and an undivided educational system, could produce experiences that undermined social differentiation and constructed community membership and belonging.¹⁹

Besides these positive experiences of an emerging welfare state, Marshall’s perceptive notion of the “superstructure of legitimate expectations” pointed out one challenge of the welfare state. As the standard and quality citizens expect from the social services (and benefits) rises, “as it inevitably must in a progressive society”, as Marshall argued, “the target is perpetually moving forward”.²⁰ The contradiction between the recipients’ rising expectations and the reluctance of the ageing social workers to adopt the new ideals of the 1960s and 1970s Finnish social legislation that embraced individual rights is illustrated by Minna Harjula in Chap. 8. As a result, the legacy of previous poor relief policies still survived in the welfare state practices that framed the everyday encounters with clients.

The generational view of the welfare state highlights that in many countries the post-war baby-boomer generation has shaped the growth of the welfare state by its very existence. At the same time, the baby boomers have experienced the rise of the welfare state as an integral part of growing

¹⁷ Metteri, A. (2012). *Hyvinvointivaltion lupaukset, kohtuuttomat tapaukset ja sosiaalityö*. University of Tampere, 192.

¹⁸ Marshall, T.H. (1987). *Citizenship and social class*. In T. H. Marshall and T. Bottomore, *Citizenship and social class*. Pluto Press, 33 (original work published 1950).

¹⁹ Marshall (1987), 33–34.

²⁰ Marshall (1987), 34–35.

up, as they have encountered the various new welfare state services—such as child welfare clinics, day care, schools and health care—and social benefits (for studying, housing, maternity leave, unemployment, sickness, disability and old age). As Pertti Haapala emphasizes in Chap. 16, for the baby-boomer generation, the experience of the welfare state is a part of their life course, whereas for the older generation, the welfare state is an accomplishment and achievement that is made through work, and for the younger generations it is a self-evident structure.²¹

In Chap. 11, Heidi Kurvinen indicates how children’s voices in the media are filtered and defined by an adult interpretation of childhood in a welfare state. Besides age and generation, also the intersections of race, gender and class, among others, have had profound yet varied consequences for the individual’s agency and experience of the welfare state. For example, Jussi Lahtinen explores how the class experience of the working class, which originated in the local communities at the turn of the twentieth century, has become an ongoing globally mediatized process of narrativization. This has complex political implications for the lived welfare state (Chap. 12).

One dilemma of the lived welfare state is that the ways in which the welfare state balances between individual and societal aims and structures peoples’ lives can produce unintended experiences, too. The practice of welfare institutions, such as applying or receiving social benefits or services, may cause both individual insecurity—shame, neglect, abuse or loss of freedom—and experiences of social exclusion or social inequality. More broadly, the welfare state as a societal framework can produce unplanned dependencies. As two thirds of the population of Finland in the late twentieth century either worked for the public sector or lived on income transfers, any change in the institutional structure or in the coverage or level of social benefits had profound impacts on the lives of these people.²² Anna Sofia Salonen’s analysis of Finns who live on the breadline (Chap. 9) points out a striking paradox of the 2020s welfare state: In comparison to the faceless, complicated and computerized public services that leave people in absurd situations, the service users feel that they receive more human respect, recognition and care in charity breadlines.

²¹ Haapala, P. (1998). The fate of the welfare state. *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja/Historical Journal* 96(2), 142–149; Worth, E. (2021). *The welfare state generation: Women, agency and class in Britain since 1945*. Bloomsbury.

²² Haapala (1998), 142–143.

Pertti Haapala's reading of Finnish public documents and discussions on the welfare state from the 1960s to 2020s ends the book by synthesizing how societal change can be explained by relating the experiences of society to societal structures, ideas of society and the resulting actions. Haapala points out legitimacy and trust as the structural mega-experiences for the welfare state.

Throughout this book, the focus on experiences emphasizes the classic starting point of a societal analysis: people themselves make their society. This message has implications when anticipating the future of welfare states. First, to understand the development of society, one must understand people's experiences. Second, even though the legitimation of the welfare state seems to be fading along with global development, it is useful to note that the future is always anticipated as linear, but history has never followed such patterns. The global information technology of the twenty-first century is inevitably transforming the boundaries of the social world beyond the societies of nation states. Nevertheless, the basic experiential idea of a democratic welfare state in regulating individual risks and protecting citizens against extreme experiences will be a desirable recipe for the good society also in the future.

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