

Social Policy Needs and Welfare

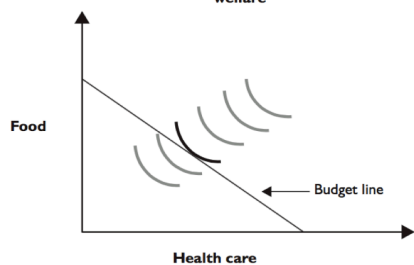
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Economic Perspective on Wellbeing

- Ability to make choice
- Subjective moral argument
- Objective interests
- Welfare can be seen as depending on the satisfaction of 'needs', not just of choices.

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Figure 5.1: Utility curves: the economic representation of welfare



Assumptions

1. People are generally willing to trade off one commodity in order to get more of another
 2. Higher indifference curves are always to be preferred to lower ones
- But.....
- ✓ Some things are not practically tradable –
 - ✓ There are admittedly circumstances where People can have too much food; and there are levels of health care that people do not want to receive

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Assumptions

3. Choices are expressed effectively through the combination of individual choices within a market system.
4. Analytical welfare economics generally takes it that **a group** is nothing more than **the sum of the people** who make it up: social groups, religious congregations, cities, cultural groups or nations have no specific interests that are not the interests of their individual members

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Subjective Wellbeing (SWB)

- Well being can be interpreted in terms of 'happiness' 'interests' or what is 'good' for people
- Thus needs, understood as things without which they are liable to suffer.

But.....

SWB may not be understood in the same way by different people, and the enhancement of welfare from one perspective may be seen as its reduction from another.

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Needs

- The idea of 'need' is used to refer to things that people must have – things which are, in some sense, 'essential'.
- ✓ Physical health
- ✓ Physical integrity and functioning;
- ✓ The absence of pain or disfigurement;
- ✓ A minimum degree of intellectual activity;
- ✓ Emotional stability;
- ✓ Engagement in a normal social life;

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Basic Needs

- UN list of essential items

Firstly, they include certain minimum requirements of a family for private consumption: adequate food, shelter and clothing, as well as certain household furniture and equipment.

Second, they include essential services provided by and for the community at large, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport and health, education and cultural facilities

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Needs & Social Policy

- The idea of need is particularly important for social policy in practice. Needs are what many social policies, and social services, respond to.
- Some of the needs are 'human needs', which everyone shares as a human being – for example, needs for food, water, warmth, shelter.

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Poverty, Needs & Social Policy

- One set of approaches describes poverty in terms of material need.
- ✓ Poverty as need
- ✓ Poverty as a *pattern of deprivation*
- ✓ Poverty as a *low standard of living*

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Poverty, Needs & Social Policy

Poverty in terms of people's economic circumstances.

- ✓ Poverty as a *lack of resources*
- ✓ Poverty as *economic distance*
- ✓ Poverty as an *economic class*

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Poverty, Needs & Social Policy

- Poverty as a set of social relationships
- ✓ *Social class*: Poverty, for many, refers to the position of the lowest class, people who lack status, power and opportunities available to others.
- ✓ *Dependency*
- ✓ *Social exclusion*
- *Lack of entitlement* Amartya Sen argues that famines happen, not because of a shortage of food, but because poor people are not entitled to eat the food that is there

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Need Groups

- Need groups refer to people in similar circumstances which require some kind of collective response. They include
 - ✓ Life cycle
 - ✓ Disabilities
 - ✓ Contingencies

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Needs in the life cycle

- *Childhood*
- *Parenthood*
- *Old age*

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Limitations in ordinary activity

- *Physical disability* Physical disability is not one issue, but a term referring to a wide range of issues of different kinds.
- It sometimes refers to people who are physically different even if they are able to function physically in the same way as people without disabilities

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Continued.....

- The World Health Organisation identifies three elements in disability:
 - problems in bodily function or structure, which they used to call 'impairment'
 - problems relating to activities, or 'disability';
 - problems related to social participation, which they called 'handicap'

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The social model of disability

- The social model of disability understands disability in terms of the social norms and expectations which shape the experience of people with disabilities.
- The primary emphasis in services based on this model has been
 - 'normalisation'
 - 'empowerment'.

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Risk, vulnerability and insecurity

- the probability that something will happen, identified in terms of incidence over time
- a 'lack of basic security', a term which is closely identified with poverty;
- insecure circumstances, which imply that policy has to deal with unpredictable contingencies
- vulnerability, which is the possibility that when things happen, the vulnerable person might suffer harm.
- The opposite of risk is 'security'; the opposite of vulnerability is 'resilience'.

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Risk, vulnerability and insecurity

- People can be vulnerable without being insecure (for example, low-paid public sector workers, who have secure employment but little capacity to deal with emergencies)
- It is vulnerability, rather than risk, which is the main focus of social protection policies.

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Old needs and new needs Need Assessment

■ Assessing the need for social care

'Needs assessments' have become an important aspect of the provision of social care.

- ✓ The shape of such policies is, roughly, that after an identification of needs, a range of appropriate responses is selected,
- ✓ the test of whether policy is effective is whether the needs are met.

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Need Assessment

- Counting needs depends, in the first place, on counting problems. It is possible to respond to the same problems in many different ways
- Needs assessments have to serve two purposes.
 - ✓ In the first place, they are used to deliver services to individuals.
 - ✓ Second, they have to be capable of aggregation in order to yield global figures.
- The first function implies diversity, individual responsiveness and complexity; the second calls for uniformity, simplicity and mechanisms to share information.

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Needs and responses

- 'Needs' refer, in part, to problems which people experience
- Needs are not just problems, however; they are also needs for something.
- Needs have to be understood, not only in terms of problems, but also in terms of responses.
- People are thought of as being in need not simply because they have a problem, but because they are lacking something which will remedy that problem
- There is no simple, fixed relationship between the kind of problems that people experience and the kinds of response which have to be made
- 'Needs' are not neutral concepts.

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Take Home Task: Group Task

Design operational procedure to ensure food security for working poor during the lockdown in the Country

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