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Lorenzo Barrault-Stella
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Creating Target Publics for Welfare Policies

A Comparative and Multi-level Approach

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Chapter 1
The Making of Target Publics for Welfare Policies. From Targeting Practices to Resistances of Governed People

Lorenzo Barrault-Stella and Pierre-Edouard Weill

Abstract This opening chapter provides a general sociological framework for the contributions collected about the targeting practices in the institutional framework of the welfare State and the making of the "right" publics for social policies. The paper builds on the diversity of existing international research, before sketching out complementary lines of investigation in which this collective work is grounded. More specifically, we suggest the use of a comparative and multilevel approach, anchored in empirical research and mindful of the effective practices of targeting, as well as of the way in which the diverse groups within the potential publics react. Connecting in-depth case studies thus allows the observation of transformations occurring in modes of government at the international level. Finally, the text suggests a few ways in which the welfare State's targeting practices can be reformulated, without obscuring the social relations and the various forms of inequalities (of class, race, gender) to which targeting participates.

Keywords Welfare state · Target publics · Multilevel analysis · Comparison · Individualization · Inequalities

In most Western countries, the way political power is exercised has been profoundly transformed in the last centuries, meaning that the modes of domination have been

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rationalized (Weber 1947 [1919]).[1] In particular, historical processes such as the concentrating of military and fiscal resources (Elias 2000 [1939]; Tilly 1975), led to the emergence of so-called "modern" States, during the 18th and 19th centuries. One of the political aims of these States was to produce 'nations' through a symbolic and cultural unification of territories. Within these, State agents were granted a political legitimacy to regulate social relations. In the West, this institutional and political organization was significantly developed during the decades following the Second World War, a time characterized by strong economic and demographic growth. Depending on national contexts, this led to varying models of welfare States (Ewald 1986; Esping-Andersen 1990; De Swaan 1988). Many comparative academic works ritually consider that starting from the 1970s, these welfare States – particularly the most interventionist ones – have undergone transformations inspired by "neoliberal" policies (Esping-Andersen 1996; Clayton and Pontusson 1998; Pierson 2001; Wacquant 2009). These changes are still occurring today (for example Peters 2010; Le Galès and King 2017). They particularly affect social policies, as well as other forms of public intervention. These were directed towards greater "flexibility", and social policies were gradually territorialized, as well as adapted to specific audiences and local configurations.[2]

Changes affecting administrations and modes of government were accompanied by a significant transformation of the way those who are governed by social policies are represented. This was the case especially in fields covered by the welfare State. For a long time, the study of public policies focused on their "recipients",[3] in relation to the objectives pursued by the governments. After the now classic *Binging the State back in* (Evans et al. 1985) was published, the concept of "target public" was coined in the academic literature on public policies. This concept centers on the relationship between politically-defined problems and the behaviors of those who are governed. In order for a policy to meet its purpose, the targeted groups must change their practices and adopt behaviors that are in the line with the expectations of those who govern – be that to refrain from specific attitudes or to take advantage of opportunities opened up by public action (Sabatier and Mazmanian 1979). In order to break with this line of thought, different works have suggested centering the analysis on "target audiences" (Schneider and Ingram 1993), particularly by specifying in which ways they are defined and categorized (Yanow 2003). These works adopt a constructivist perspective and sometimes – but not necessarily – draw on theoretical tools forged by Bourdieu (1985) and Boltanski (1987) to study the genesis of social groups. Their hypothesis assumes that the State and publics institutions do not simply tend to pre-existing groups, but rather actively participate in the

[1] We thank Jean-Gabriel Contamin, Anne-Cécile Douillet, Vincent Dubois as well as the participants to the panel intitled « Creating target publics for welfare policies » which we organized at the congress of Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) in July 2015. We are also grateful to Myrtille Picaud for the editing of the book's introduction and conclusion.

[2] For an exemple of the transformation of modes of government pertaining to the public regulation of education and its link with social reproduction in France, see Barrault-Stella 2013.

[3] On the creation and use of this category, see Warin 2016.

definition of public policies' audiences and, more generally, in the making of social groups. This perspective highlights the fact that the way a specific policy is designed and justified results not from a linear deduction of the target group's pre-existing and natural interests, but of the way these are framed and produced by the State and the other institutions involved in public action.

About this topic, Schneider and Ingram's research is central. Following a constructivist approach, they argue that the answer to the classical question "who gets what, when and how?" does not lie within the target group's natural properties, but in the way the group is *socially constructed*. According to Schneider and Ingram (1993: 335), the social construction of target publics refers to "the recognition of the shared characteristics that distinguish a target population as socially meaningful, and the attribution of specific, valence-oriented values, symbols, and images to the characteristics". In this sense, they refer, for example, to groups as "deserving" or "undeserving", terms that correspond to audiences deemed (or not) legitimate as "recipients" of welfare benefits. For these authors, it is at the same time the way in which public action is conceived and the political philosophy underlying it, as well as the choice for a specific policy design that select the "target group". However stimulating, this approach calls for additional perspectives for whom wishes to study the production of the publics of welfare policies.

1.1 From Universalism to Individualization?

Restoring the welfare State's historicity in different national contexts amounts to taking note of major trends (Pierson 2001). These changing processes constitute ideal-types as defined by Max Weber (1949 [1922]): their use as analytic tools does not prevent taking into account national trajectories or sectorial specificities.

A first kind of welfare State transformation can be characterized as a universalistic trend,[4] which is not specific to the Beveridgian system. Rising levels of coverage against social risks and the widening of eligibility criteria feature this "universalistic" trend, generally associated with the expansion of the welfare State in Northern and Western Europe during the post-war period until the late 1970s (Huber and Stephens 2001). However, it is not unlikely that the "universal" welfare State and its "golden age" have probably been partly mythologized (Wincott 2013) – a classic case of retrospective illusion leading to a nostalgic enchantment. Several chapters in this book seem to confirm this.

A trend reversal appears in the early 1980s. A significant number of comparative studies highlight a general move toward individualization in various countries and policy domains (e.g. poverty alleviation, housing, disability, vulnerable youth, dependence among the elderly, etc.). They describe a shift from an impersonal

[4] In spite of its contextual variety, the concept of universalism retains its essential core by always referring to something that is "common to all". For a critical discussion of this concept as it applies to welfare policies and their international or cross-sectorial comparison, see Anttonen et al. 2012.

bureaucracy and automatic processing to a more pragmatic approach of individual situations and behaviors (Wincott 2013) – a classic case of retrospective illusion leading to a nostalgic enchantment. Several chapters in this book seem to confirm this. A trend reversal appears in the early 1980s. A significant number of comparative studies highlight a general move toward individualization in various countries and policy domains (e.g. poverty alleviation, housing, disability, vulnerable youth, dependence among the elderly, etc.). They describe a shift from an impersonal bureaucracy and automatic processing to a more pragmatic approach of individual situations and behaviors (Ferge 1997; Achterberg et al. 2013; Lima 2013). Individuals are supposedly considered in their singularity rather than in terms of their belonging to a predetermined category. Giving more importance to the specificities of each individual would thus conform to a reasoning valuing equity, rather than equality. However, distancing from the State's thought pattern (Bourdieu 2015) asks, at the very least, for the interrogation of this "individualization" concept. Does the individualization of welfare lead to a complete fragmentation of the audiences of public action? In particular, it is necessary to examine whether important regularities in the public treatment of poverty are maintained? This may be done by relating individual people to categories (even implicit ones) that the welfare State targets in practice.

1.1.1 Targeting Versus Universalism: The Dialectic of Welfare Reform

Over the last decades, welfare States in the West have entered a phase of accelerated reform. Structural differences persist between systems in the various "worlds" of the welfare State that Esping-Andersen (1990) and his followers distinguish (Ferrara 1996; Arts and Gelissen 2016; Falkner and Treib 2008). The reforms implemented vary widely from one country to another and their content reflects the specificities of legal, economic and cultural frameworks (Pierson 2001; Palier 2010). Nevertheless, these reforms seem to share a similar drive: a constantly renewed dialectic that opposes universalism to the targeting of social policies. Finland, where the universal model is historically dominant as in other Scandinavian countries (Bergh 2004), is a pioneering country as regards universal income, tested since the beginning of 2017. However, only a sample of job seekers is eligible to this universal income, limited to 560 euros per month, a quarter of the country's average income. In France, the universal family policy, developed in the post-war era, has been seriously questioned, with the limitation of family allowances for households with the highest incomes, starting in 2015. In the United States, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act – also known as Obamacare – is currently threatened. Donald Trump's government is reluctant to generalize health coverage by making insurance compulsory, and apparently wishes to undo the law. This, however, is only the last episode of a long series of confrontations in the political field: on the

conservative right, the "universal fallacy" (Gilens 2012) is constantly denounced. On the left, initiatives for universal insurance systems are being promoted, although the benefits imply necessary forms of targeting (Sckocpol 1991).

On both sides of the Atlantic, the legitimacy of targeting has historically been challenged in the name of the middle classes' interests. Indeed, these are often described as paying a high price for a social State that does little for them (Barbehön and Haus 2015). During the second half of the 1970s, promoters of increasing social policies' selectivity have progressively gained the upper hand over defenders of universalism. Putting the universalist principle into question was fueled by the erosion of the Fordist system and the rise of job insecurity, in contexts as different as those of France (Castel 2003), Sweden (Rothstein 1998) or Japan (Ribault 2011). Korpi and Palme show that the end of full employment in the most developed countries coincides with austerity policies (Korpi and Palme 2003). The increasing selection of beneficiaries of social policies reflects this. This heightened targeting is not a mechanical result of the growth slowdown. During the early 1980s, the emergence of mass unemployment contributed to put "new poverty" on the political agenda, in North America (Cheal 1996) or in Western Europe (Gallie and Paugam 2000). Greater salience of these questions in the political and public spheres is an important component of the process of public action itself (Culpepper 2011), in particular because it leads political elites to do everything possible to avoid being blamed (Weaver 1986; Hood 2011). Initiated by politicians, senior officials or leaders of non-profit organizations, this social construct must also be linked to the development of the "welfare mix": civil society representatives play an ever more substantial part in the definition and the implementation of social policies (Lipsky and Smith 1993; Harris and Bridgen 2007). These policies thus tend to converge[5] towards a support model directed towards the most deprived populations, especially where the so-called "universalist" insurance system tended to exclude them. Social policies formally call for greater responsibility on those who are the most dependent on welfare benefits. They seek to 'activate' them (Peck 2007), sometimes even punishing (Wacquant 2009) or at the least disciplining them (Soss et al. 2011), especially the poorest.

A strong assumption here is that social policies' increasing focus on the most disadvantaged populations or territories partakes in a managerial turn.[6] Public authorities and their partners consider public action the achievement of goals according to the means available, rather than as arising from social demand. The targeting of social policies participates in a process of instrumental rationalization, as defined by Max Weber. In a context of global fiscal austerity measures (Bezes and Siné 2011; Brown and Spencer 2014), adjusting the political ends to the financial means is synonymous with "doing better with less". This is also the case because of local welfare policies increasing autonomy: universalism is challenged by the

[5] On this question, see for example (Benett 1991; Dolowitz and Marsh 1996).

[6] For example, about the consequences that the transformation of the welfare State had on urban segregation, see Musterd and Ostendorf 2013.

growing differentiation of social policies, implemented in sub-national territories that are unequally endowed with economic resources (Kazepov 2011).

However, social protection systems retain many appearances of universality, which are sometimes strengthening. This is the case in very different contexts, especially when the coverage of various social risks is justified politically be reference to human rights. But in practice, many social programmes are increasingly selective, as evidenced by the distribution of income support or jurisdictional mechanisms such as the enforceable right to housing in France or Scotland, where public authorities filter social demand. (Weill 2017). This is also illustrated by way the refugee crisis is managed: supplying the most basic needs in the name of universalism calls for criteria restricting the admission of displaced populations (Lendaro 2016). One would be tempted to assert that, paradoxically, the universal principle is never referred to as often as when it masks the growing conditionality in the allocation of social rights and welfare benefits.

This international trend – the strengthening of boundaries between insiders and outsiders of social protection systems (Ferrera 2005) – must be further researched. To this end, Warin suggests a distinction between different elements affecting the variation in social policies' selectivity (Warin 2010). Firstly, targeting social groups or territories requires that specific risks (e. g. sickness, disability, unemployment, etc.) be considered. Secondly, in order to define targets, it draws on criteria (*e.g.* gender, resource level, age, ethnicity, etc.) relative to the individual or territorial levels. Many recent works, such as those in the following chapters, converge and show that the increased targeting of social groups according to various categories (*e.g.* single-parent families, vulnerable households, dependent persons, etc.) is integral to the transformations undergone by social policies. Finally, attention must be paid to the technical modalities that allow the implementation of selectivity. Public regulations generally define the criteria opening access to social rights, as well as the nature or amount of welfare benefits. Meanwhile, numerous studies highlight the fact that individualized procedures are developed and linked to the individuals' situation or behavior. However, the ambiguous relationship between these processes of individualization and targeting can in itself be questioned.

1.1.2 Individualization as a Smokescreen for Categorization?

At first sight, the individualization of social policies seems incompatible with claims to universality, as well as with increased targeting according to administrative criteria. However, this double opposition must be overcome by returning more precisely to what individualization means: firstly, from the perspective of the authorities elaborating and implementing these social policies; secondly, from their recipients' point of view. This will highlight the concept's heuristic contribution in order to grasp the contemporary transformations of social policies. One question raised here is whether individualization is the most appropriate concept to analyze the

intensification in the targeting of welfare recipients, or, on the contrary, whether it works as a smokescreen for the a more intense process of categorization.

Whether it is based on universal rights or defined according to categorical criteria, access to social benefits are traditionally associated with the figure of the *sine era e studio* bureaucrat (Weber 1947 [1919]), and thus to the impersonal treatment of citizens. However, many studies have shown that, from the beginning of the 1970s, social policies tend to evolve towards a more personalized treatment of their recipients. Robert Castel was one of the first to highlight such a process of individualization (Castel 1991). Focusing on the margins of welfare, he examines mental health policies and highlights the advent of a form of individualized management of social risks, which is a prerequisite to the development of the individualized management of social rights' allocation.

In order to materialize what resembles a double bind, governments summon individual rights as a vehicle for subjectivation, as defined by Michel Foucault. Social policies' increased targeting is paradoxically accompanied by the growing legal recognition of 'rights-debts', defined as the rights to obtain from the State through social laws, the minimum resources ensuring a reasonable living standard, according to the collective wealth. This is the case for the right to education, health and housing in most developed countries, where they are linked to more or less restrictive legal mechanisms in order to ensure their effectiveness. These "human rights policies" are sometimes seen as a means to challenge the welfare State. In opposition to the liberal thinkers' – such as Tocqueville or Hayek – diatribes against social rights, Gauchet denounces a return to the legal abstract individual, whereas the social State gives concrete content to social rights. According to this author, these rights would then lose their capacity to foster solidarity and become mere instruments of economic reparation (Gauchet 2000). In a sociological perspective, Bernheim and Commaille emphasize justice's growing weight in the management of social affairs. They connect the rise of discourses surrounding human rights to the distributive policies' stronger conditionality (Bernheim and Commaille 2012). Numerous empirical studies show how the recipients of these policies are called upon to become experts of their own situation, but also to pay the costs of self-exposure in order to assert their rights (Fassin 2001; Siblot 2006). Incentive mechanisms are introduced, based on theoretical presuppositions derived from economics or psychology rather than from law. These also refer to individual responsibility and freedom as central principles ensuring access to social protection (Diamond and Giddens 2005). Welfare recipients are encouraged to take advantage of existing procedures in order to improve their situation. Nevertheless, they must comply with a system of reciprocity with the administration (Peck 2007; Duvoux 2009).

Many social policy experts are highly critical of such an individualization process. Two main critiques can be distinguished. The first relates to its ideological principles and denounces the growing conditionality of social programs in itself. Such a statement, tinged with nostalgia for the post-War decades of massive economic growth and welfare State expansion, has a normative character. The second critique, generally more empirically grounded, deals with the process of individual-

ization's social effects. According to this line of research, the demands of reciprocity placed on the poorest reinforces the dichotomies between the "good" and "bad" poor (Wacquant 2009; Soss et al. 2011). Welfare recipients' increasing autonomy and ensuing responsibility enhances the difficulties of those who are most dependent on social benefits to gain access to them, by making administrative procedures more complex. This also contributes to a growing "non-take-up" of social rights among the poorest (Barghava and Manoli 2012; Warin 2016). However, such critiques more readily question the ultimate effects of the process of individualization than its social mechanisms. In order to fill this gap, some authors suggest an Eliasian thesis: the individualization of social policies partakes in the long-term process of civilization. They explain the shift from social norms imposed on the individual to an individual self-control by the joint rationalization of social and psychic structures (Orianne et al. 2008).

Although this process of individualization appears to be a common finding, and as seductive as the theoretical avenues to apprehend such a phenomenon may be, it should not be considered as the alpha and omega of social policies. In fact, the multiplication of target populations for risk management purposes or the attribution of social rights raise questions about the widespread use of the concept of individualization. Indeed, does it not obscure the ongoing development of various forms of categorization, tending to the citizens as well as their environment[7]? The recent growth in the use of statistics for governmental purposes, particularly in the management of social affairs (Bruno et al. 2016), testifies to this. This preference for categories over individuals as basis of public intervention can be traced back to the social reformers of the late nineteenth century (Rabinow 1989). Going back in time, there is also the case of the policies implemented in order to fight the epidemic of smallpox, a founding example used by Foucault to operationalize his concept of "safety apparatus" (Foucault 2004). This early preventive policy, which precedes the emergence of the social State, targets sub-populations deemed at risk, the indications of this risk being framed by a scalable system of predictability. Similarly to more contemporary social experiments on disadvantaged populations (Chelle 2013), the objective is the codification of symptoms and the identification of the affected social groups' the characteristics, rather than finding solutions to individual situations.

Nowadays, the treatment of welfare recipients is increasingly differentiated. But the method of equity, which is specific to the "politics of large numbers" (Desrosières 1998), thrives on the diversity of individual situations, to which social policies contribute within differing territories. Rather than a tension, the empirical studies presented in this book highlight a movement going back and forth between categorization and individualization. Finally, it is assumed here that individualized policies are concretely based on evolving categorizations (Yanow 2003), which are (re)translated at different levels of public action.

[7] This is a classical question in the sociology of organizations (Blau 1955).

1.2 A Research Program: Comparative and Multilevel Approach

In order to study the making of target publics for welfare policies and its contemporary transformations, we build on several in-depth case studies. The list of these is neither exhaustive nor representative. What is at stake is rather to suggest that the targeting of populations becomes a transversal process. Although it may take highly diverse shapes, it is encountered in different national contexts and fields of public action. To this end, we provide an international and multi-sectoral comparison of several surveys. These were presented at the International Congress of Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) in July 2015, in the panel entitled "Creating Target Publics for Welfare Policies". These diverse case studies share a similar conceptual approach. Two other points bring these papers together and help illustrate our own approach. On one hand, the research presented here focuses on targeting practices from a multi-level perspective. This sheds light on the reconfigurations of category-making in public policy at different levels, drawing on empirical study of these categories' use by various policy makers. On the other hand, these surveys are based on diverse and robust empirical material, often first-hand. These give an accurate view of targeting that goes further than the actors' discourses alone. However, the qualitative and even ethnographic dimension of these surveys should not suggest that quantitative approaches are devoid of interest on this issue. Indeed, most of the works presented here simultaneously build on qualitative and quantitative methods, illustrating the fecundity of mixed methods.

1.2.1 Linking Case Studies Together to Build an International Comparison

Traditionally, top-down approaches dominate the field of research on welfare policies and their social outcomes. Comparative surveys between several countries are valuable, because they situate national contexts in relation to each other. Some of these studies also provide explanatory models for the causes (historical and political) of the variations observed between countries (for example: Esping-Andersen 1990; Ferrara and Rhodes 2000). But this type of research risks overlooking important elements. Driven by constraints of comparability, one generally uses 'macro-sociological' indicators, a large number of official sources (such as legal texts) and draws on institutional statistics or rarely first-hand surveys. Besides, the comparative studies addressing public demand for welfare and public support for reforms (Brooks and Manza 2007; Jordan 2013; Gonthier 2017) are essentially based on quantitative surveys. They do not take into account the daily practices of welfare agents, recipients or outsiders. In doing so, one loses sight of

the actual the actors' practices and the contexts' specificities, although the actors who populate the welfare State derive meaning from just these. Putting together disseminated legal texts and opinion data whose modes of production have not always been controlled (see for example Caveng 2012; Jayet 2017) is mainly relevant when the research approach addresses the general contextualization of a phenomenon, for example when identifying a typology of welfare States in Western Europe. This operation proves more perilous if it aims a fine-grained analysis of the social and institutional mechanisms that transform the practices of policy makers in different local contexts. In other words, it is a more finely contextualized sociology that is lacking in this type of research[8] which, when looked at more closely, often reveals itself to be very descriptive.

This gap in existing research was the starting point of our project – its challenge is thus to provide another form of comparative reasoning. Indeed, practices defining the 'good' publics of the welfare State and social benefits recipients constitute one of the welfare studies blind spots, especially when adopting a comparative perspective. Indeed, some works emphasize that inequalities in access to health care are the most unacceptable, before inequalities in income levels or access to employment. However, they generally draw on opinions reported through surveys using questionnaires. Here, we seek to compare in-depth case studies[9] of targeting practices, relying on differing apparatuses and implemented in varying contexts. This sociological approach pays specific attention to the way institutional actors and populations who experience welfare (both target and non-target) are socially and politically anchored. Here, each case's specificity enables the contextualization of observations, rather than being denied. On this basis only, we can assert specific forms of generalization. In the social sciences, the study of individual cases allows various forms of generalization, not in the statistical sense, but by broadening our knowledge of processes that, in reality, are never integrally singular. Targeting in social policy is only one example. The case studies indeed allow a fine understanding of social phenomena studied as closely as possible. To quote Howard Becker: "we invariably note, even in the most ordinary situations, that the quantity of variables involved is much greater than the small number of those which can easily be measured, and that each element of the situation has an effect on what happens next." (Becker 2016: 10). He also explains that such an approach may seem heterodox. Indeed, "we prefer to measure the relationships between measurable variables, rather than trying to explain how these connections produce the effects that we try to understand." (Becker 2016: 10). But each particular case contains general elements (Geertz 1983; Strauss and Corbin 1990) that only comparing allows to objectify (Alexander et al. 1999).

Besides, the importance of developing an ethnographic approach to the socially differentiated relationships to the public institutions is no longer to be demonstrated.

[8] At the birth of sociology, Durkheim writes about such bias Durkheim (1988 [1895]).

[9] That is to say "in-depth studies of situations, organizations, or types of singular events" (Becker 2016, p.11).

Empirical work thus sheds light on the "hidden costs" of accessing one's rights (Brodkin and Majmundar 2009), on the citizens' unequal capacity to benefit from assistance during procedures (Weill 2017), as well as on the disqualification ensuing from some forms of assistance (Paugam 1991). Others highlight the social constraints that induce practices contrary to the 'rational' choices promoted by social policy agents (Perrin-Heredia 2013), but also the clandestine appropriation of policy programs by non-targeted audiences (Barrault-Stella 2013) or their attempts to subvert rules regulations (Barnes and Prior 2009). Nevertheless, surveys of "user" procedures within social welfare institutions rarely lend themselves to international comparison (Guimarães et al. 2010).

In addition to their in-depth and empirical study of these topics, the eight papers in this book all frame their analysis of the welfare policies' targeting practices in converging ways. If most of the investigations presented here focus on the Western world (European countries such as France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Finland, but also the United States), the post-colonial context of Mayotte provides an interesting counterpoint. The contributors draw on the comparison of national contexts and their different policy making processes, but also highlight global trends in welfare system transformations and public targeting. Furthermore, the contributions focus on various fields of social policies (eg. minimum social benefits, unemployment, social housing, parenting support). Several chapters focus on the different aspects of the bureaucratic treatment of marginalized population (homeless people, immigrant women, single mothers, etc.). However, in a relational perspective, the middle class is also considered to be a key issue. Bringing together eight case studies on the mutations of the production of target publics for welfare policies enables a comparative reasoning that highlights the unity lying in the diversity of these situations.

However, drawing on an international and relational comparison does not imply an opposition between the methodological take on this subjects. The localized analysis, mainly based on qualitative surveys, presented here does not inherently object to quantitative investigation, including those methods most widespread in the field of research around the welfare State. The case studies give priority to qualitative methods in different chapters. The authors analyze public discourses to identify the main political issues in public targeting. Some explore administrative records or use extensive interviews with diverse actors at different stages of policymaking, shedding light on their social backgrounds and motives. They also explore administrative records and conduct participant observation in various public or non-profit organizations, spaces that are particularly suited to investigate the daily routine of welfare beneficiaries (Dubois 2009; Watkins-Hayes 2009) and explore administrative records. They also conduct extensive interviews with diversified actors at various stages of policy making to reveal their social backgrounds.

Several of the contributors combine this qualitative material with quantitative data: they provide an ethnographic and contextualized approach to targeting in social policies, but they also rely on quantitative sources, such as institutional statis-

tics.[10] About this, we would like to point out that the ethnographic survey – in the field of public policy and elsewhere – can be based on statistics and *vice versa* (Weber 1995). Mixing methods and points of view to study the making of target publics for welfare policies is not so much a matter of making a virtue of necessity. Indeed, it allows one to take a step back, in order to analyze how the interdependent networks in which the actors are enmeshed structure their intentions and make them possible (Elias 1987).

1.2.2 Multi-level Analysis: Targeting in Practice

Beyond these methodological considerations, this book provides a multi-level approach to target populations for welfare policies, whatever the local or national context. Indeed, we analyze the different steps of policymaking – starting from the definition of social problems to the implementation of the related policies. Classic studies reveal both the gap and the continuity between the definition and the implementation of public policies (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973, Sabatier 1986) or distinguish different sequences of policymaking (Jones 1970). More recent research, based on different case studies, distinguish three levels of public action: (1) the production of law and governmental programs; (2) the making of localized decisions about law enforcement; (3) the relationships between publics and their institutional interlocutors.

But these works also demonstrate the extent to which the actors and organizations involved are embedded in chains of interdependence, even if they operate on changing scenes and within different temporalities. Indeed, the targeting process involves a range of policy-makers from different levels and various institutions, from political leaders to street-level bureaucrats, as well as journalists or representatives of civil society. Therefore, the study of these policies and their targets cannot limit itself to the analysis of the legal rules that bind them, nor to the debates they set off. Of course, it remains essential to understand the transformations of law, of policy programs, and of the policy tools that materialize and operationalize governmental action (Lascoumes and Gales 2007). However, public policies' social effects relate both to the institutional environment and to their effective recipients. Similarly, surveys of the citizens' or frontline institutional actors' behaviors are rarely linked to the transformations in policy objectives that are developed upstream (Dubois 2010). A major objective of this book is therefore to decompartmentalize the analysis of the making of laws and policy programs, by drawing on the localized study of their implementation. The different levels of policy making correspond to more or less delimited social spaces, within which various actors and organizations are neither independent nor impervious to one another. Some actors are multiple stakeholders and intervene at different levels, depending on the institutions to which they

[10] But the use of these materials necessarily entails reflexivity, since statistics are also subjected of sociological analyzing processes of quantification (for example: Bruno et al. 2016).

belong and their field of action. For example, some lawyers assist their clients in order to assert their social rights in the administration and sometimes even in court, but they also contribute to the production of jurisprudence or to political debates, especially when they occupy elective positions (Marshall and Hale 2014).

Accordingly, the contributors to this book first analyze the representations of the boundaries between insiders and outsiders of social protection systems, whether forged in ministerial offices or in the public sphere. They then address the way the criteria for selecting beneficiaries within social action procedures are defined and prioritized. Finally, the way in which these categories are implemented is studied. Thus, the aim of this book is less to compare contributions on targeting in different areas of social policies than to put them into perspective. By doing so, the chapters provide answers to three series of questions:

1. How do the most influential policymakers define the target audiences for welfare policies? How do they discuss the frontiers of these groups in public controversies? In whose name do stakeholders intervene in the public debates, and what interests do they defend?
2. What kind of government instruments are used by policymakers to delineate and legitimize target groups?
3. How do street-level bureaucrats take into account the target populations defined at higher levels? Do their interactions with welfare recipients redefine these targets, and if so, according to what kind of processes? And how do welfare recipients deal with these categories? What kinds of behavior and resistance do they oppose in their daily practices to assert their rights and with what effects?

Responding to the first set of questions is largely a matter of studying the way public problems are transformed into 'problematic' audiences, a process that is akin to a double movement. On the one hand, the official discourses that accompany specific targeting policies help to establish boundaries between populations designated as normal or deviant in order to detect social problems before they occur. This is particularly true of preventive policies in health care, daycare and primary education, which help to establish and reinforce stereotypes (Møller and Harrits 2013). While certain aspects of the designated social groups' lifestyles are being identified as risky, especially among the most disadvantaged populations, others are, on the contrary, valued, as in the case of the middle classes. These often serve as a point of reference for "normal behavior" in political debates, for negotiating 'appropriate' policy designs. On the other hand, targeting policies often rely on shared common sense. This is why Ingram and Schneider propose to study the social construction of target populations as a process of transformation of collective meaning, especially about "deserving" welfare recipients, into apparently objective and clear-cut official categories (Schneider and Ingram 1993).

In their most recent work, the two sociologists devote particular attention to the policy tools which allows to delineate target groups. They affirm that their collective representation determines which tools are chosen to fulfill the policy's intention: the more advanced and deserving the target group is perceived in the public eye, the less coercive and more helping are the tools available to agents implementing the policy

(Schneider and Ingram 2005). The choice of policy tools depends on representations of common sense and on political choices relating to its legitimacy in the public sphere. Nevertheless, policy tools also come with representations that determine the target populations. Alain Desrosières's work (Desrosières 1998) and its most recent developments (Bruno et al. 2016) show how statistical tools carry values and can modify the outlines, but also the representations, of social groups. Targeting thus relies essentially on administrative categories, in other words, representations produced by social structures. Several contributions in the book are therefore concerned with the use of law and statistics, and more precisely with the material arrangements in which relations between representatives of the State and partner organizations take place. Specific legal arrangements defining social groups, their associated needs and the policy objectives to be attained can be distinguished. However, law and statistics are increasingly combined in the targeting of social policies in order to rationalize public policy. This is illustrated by the increasing use of data mining and profiling techniques in the control of the welfare benefits' recipients (Dubois et al. 2018), or to mention sovereign powers, in the matter of predictive justice (Harcourt 2005). This trend is reinforced by the electronic turn-around of social work, computerization that facilitates the storage and cross-fertilization of administrative and partner organizations' files (Parton 2008). An increase in the use of localized data by the central administration also reinforces this level of government, to the detriment of intermediary levels and street-level bureaucrats' discretionary power. In this context, Michel Foucault's concept of a "security apparatus", in the case of health policies, allows us to understand how legal, statistical and technical tools are combined (e.g. computing and the mutualizing of files between different public administrations) to increase control over populations deemed "at risk" (eg. fraud). In these cases, it is less a matter of eradicating problems than of codifying their symptoms and identifying the affected populations. Targeting subpopulations can then be combined with more 'classical' legal mechanisms.[11]

Finally, street-level bureaucrats who are face to face with the public (targeted or not) are the last to adjust the categories and instruments of public action to the realities of the field. Their practices thus play an essential role in the selection of "good" welfare recipients. Indeed, basic agents of the welfare State are faced, to quote Foucault's formula, "to an infinite (or almost) demand in the context of probably increasingly limited resources" (2001). Depending on the context (and the agents), through their daily routines, they retrace, refine, negotiate, deconstruct and reconstruct the categories of governed people considered legitimate to benefit from the social State. In any case, the official categories defined politically and/or in the central administrative circles are never clear-cut (Yanow 2003).

This was shown in classic works on the "implementation" phase of public policies, but also though the study of the street-level bureaucrats' discretionary power (Lipsky 1980; Adler and Asquith 1981; Evans and Harris 2004). Indeed, their

[11] The disciplinary model that Foucault describes as having emerged at the end of the eighteenth century combines legal mechanisms with "modern" surveillance instruments (Foucault 1977 [1975]).

interpretation of legality and social or racial stereotypes (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003; Watkins-Hayes 2009; Dubois 2010) are confronted to real citizens' agency and resistance. They demand interpretation not only in the phase of policy design, but also in the phase of implementation. We also know that contemporary social policies increasingly resort to face to face interactions (Dubois 2010). The desk or counter, a physical or symbolic partition between the State and the governed (Chevallier 1983), partly conditions the reception of public action in general, and of social policies in particular. But the relationship between public institutions and welfare recipients are not limited to "face to face" relations. In the last decades, the e-administration has been considerably developed (Fountain 2001; Dagiral 2011). Besides, a growing number of localized committees bring together civil servants and representatives of the civil society to distribute "scarce goods" (Elster 1992) or to grant priority access (Barrault-Stella 2013; Weill 2017). Indeed, the participation of civil society representatives to the formulation of collective and contextualized judgments on individual situations becomes more legitimate politically than would be the extension of bureaucrats' discretionary powers. Generally speaking, various forms of (non) reception of public policies can be contemplated, ranging from conformation to circumvention, through negotiation (Barrault-Stella 2013). These forms of appropriation and reception can be considered both at the institutional actors' and at the targeted (or not) publics' level. Schneider and Ingram consider this reception to be a phenomenon in which "social constructions become embedded in policy as messages that are absorbed by citizens and affect their orientations and participation patterns" (Schneider and Ingram 1993: 334). Meanwhile, we know that non-take up partakes in the daily relations with the social State, with large fractions of the population staying away from social benefits, be this due to a lack of information and/or a strategy (Warin 2016). In some cases, this is evidence of a cultural agency displayed by groups not acculturated to administrative institutions and/or of resistance to the State (Scott James 2009). Analyzing "street corner" targeting therefore asks for the inclusion of the people in the analysis, and more specifically the ambivalence of their tactic activities aimed at being included or excluded.

The multi-level analysis that we suggest makes it possible to adopt a truly relational approach to analyze "the causal series leading from the most central sites of the State to the most disinherited areas of the social world and, at the same time, to emphasize the properly political dimension of these processes (no doubt infinitely more complex), which have led to a state of affairs no one ever either dreamt of or wished for" (Bourdieu 1999: 187).

1.3 Outline of the Book: Different but Congruent Cases

The contributors analyze how welfare policies target different social groups, in several geographical areas, at various stages of the policy making process. To do so, they use diverse theoretical approaches and investigation methods. Despite the

methods' and empirical objects' heterogeneity, the authors all give importance to the recipients of social policies. In doing so, they collectively contribute to the understanding of how these publics are produced, or at least qualified, by the policymakers' discourses and through their interactions with administrative agents or other policy providers. Their work testifies to regularities and reveals structural transformations of the contemporary welfare State. However, this does not prevent studying the ways in which transformations vary according to national trajectories or sectorial specificities. The book is organized in three sections that articulate an analysis of the welfare State at different levels and in different countries, so as to think together the highest realms of the State and the most vulnerable areas of the social world (Bourdieu 1999), as well as the mediations between these environments.

1.3.1 Legitimizing Categories in Public Debates

The first part deals with the construction and legitimization of the categories used to designate the welfare State's publics and priority targets. In the second chapter, Andrea Rapini adopts a socio-historical perspective to analyze the making of social policies' target groups in Italy since the beginning of the 1920s. Thus, Mussolini's contemporaries, such as Gramsci, had already noticed that the middle class were majorly supporting fascism since 1919. There is a relative consensus to assert that the regime's propaganda was targeting the middle classes – through rhetoric, privileged social protection policies and syndicalist organizations. The aim was to bring this part of society to embrace the fascist political project. However, it is less known that the invention of the italian middle class takes place between the end of the nineteenth century and the Great War. In order to shed light on such an invention, Andrea Rapini focuses on an unknown top civil servant's social trajectory. He examines his public discourse and activities within two public institutions: the International institute for the study of the middle classes and the Real committee for the study of the post-War. This enables him to identify the middle classes as a connective tissue within the italian social and economic life and, therefore, as a target for welfare policies.

Marlon Barbehön and Michael Haus also show, in the third chapter, the importance of the public designation of the middle classes as the preferred target population for social policies in various Western contexts. In public debates, the middle class and the welfare State typically entertain an ambivalent relationship, as the middle class significantly benefits from the social security system while at the same time being its main contributor. The middle class is therefore a particularly important target group to secure the functioning of social policies and the welfare institutions' long-term stability. At the same time, however, the social boundaries, the interests and the normative meaning of the middle class do not come out of an objective definition. Indeed, they find their way into political

discourses and decisions through specific interpretations. As regards the design of social policies, the 'middle class' can therefore be expected to serve as a major landmark for political orientation, although its definition is at the same time open to a variety of interpretations. Starting from there, Marlon Barbehön and Michael Haus study more precisely the German case: how, firstly, the middle class becomes a meaningful discursive category in public debates and, secondly, how these discourses leave marks in the design of social policies. They identify the discursive practices that construct the middle class, which then operate as a yardstick in political processes, both as an explicit target of welfare policies and as an implicit point of reference for negotiating "appropriate" policy designs. In this sense, the first two chapters contribute to the study of symbolic policies.

However, political sociology has established that "in order to understand its construction as well as its consistence, it is not primarily at the level of the institution that one must situate one's analysis, neither is it at the level of official discourses about the institution, mentioned by those who – in one way or the other – are interested in it" (Lacroix and Lagroye 1992: 9). This implies that we cannot reduce the welfare State's logic, and more specifically targeting practices, to the analysis of public discourses or even to that of political circles. It is indeed necessary to analyze *public action* and its reforms relationally and while they are *being undertaken* (see for example: Belorgey 2012; Barrault-Stella 2013; Weill 2017), meaning that they are examined through the practices of the actors in charge of their daily production.

1.3.2 Sketching the Outlines of Target Groups

The second part of the book tackles the mediation operated by those categories that are presented as legitimate in public debates within the State and the other organizations involved. This section's focus is, in short, the processes contributing to the refining of target audiences, as they appear in the activities of policy-makers.

In the fourth chapter, this is indeed Elisa Chelle's focal point in her analysis of the construction of a moral agenda. On the basis of a comparison between the United States and France, she analyzes how the idea of conditioning welfare to recipients' behavior is now considered by most experts as a fair and efficient set of tools to tackle long-term poverty. Inspired from behavioral economics and social experiments, behavioral targeting is based on a both scientific and moralistic background. A more thorough analysis reveals that exposing the poor's behavior to public scrutiny provides the grist for moral government. The task of alleviating poverty thus appears less as a matter of bettering living conditions than reassessing core social values that structure social stratification. By assigning economic value to moral worth, this type of anti-poverty program primarily targets the middle classes, in its broad sense. This gap between policy targets and policy audience compels us to reconsider the notion of "efficiency" in social policy.

Focusing more intensively on the control of welfare State recipients in France, the fifth chapter by Vincent Dubois, Morgane Paris and Pierre-Edouard Weill shows convergent processes and draws on a multi-level approach. In France, the family branch of Social Security has used the statistical tools of *datamining* to select beneficiaries' files and control them since 2011. This tool is central to the strengthening the control policies. The method of probabilistic and predictive reasoning that it implements is in affinity with managerial thinking in terms of "risk control", that has redefined the control of beneficiaries since the early 2000s in France and in other national contexts. This chapter reestablishes the historical and political logics of this tool's importation and use in public action. It reveals the socio-economic and organizational stakes (policy centralization, control and lessening of the fieldworkers' initiatives), underlining control's increasing focus on the most deprived welfare recipients. The translation of official categories into administrative practices then leads to an increasing targeting of the most precarious households. To summarize, the contemporary reconfigurations of the government of the poor, combining legal and statistical tools, are at the heart of this research.

This second part ends with Céline Borelle's contribution, which deals with medical aspects of the welfare State in the sixth chapter. Drawing on the case of autism, she studies the translation from a "medical model" (in which disability is examined through the lens of individual deficiencies) to a 'social model' (in which disability is conceived as a relational reality in a given environment) in the French administration of disability. She shows how parents' organizations have contributed to the reframing of autism since the end of the 1980s, redefining autistic disorders as being a behavioral rather than psychological issue. They have also claimed the right to educative care as opposed to a psychiatric care. The reframing of autism at this first level has generated unease in the administration of disability, especially regarding the allocation of benefits to parents of children diagnosed with autism. The emerging right to educative care for children diagnosed with autism questions both the definition and the boundaries delineating the target public. Thus, Celine Borelle explores the ways in which the administration deals with these uncertainties, especially in asking for psychiatric expertise. She underlines psychiatry's paradoxical role in the definition of a public eligible to non-psychiatric care, and more generally, she explores the limits inherent to the transition from a medical to a social model of disability.

The three texts gathered in this section fall in line with the adopted multilevel perspective. This allows a focus on mediation processes between a political legitimization of the welfare State's target categories and their putting to work within administrative institutions. Beyond the studied cases' diversity, these mediations involve new translation practices in order to make operational targets. This implies, in particular, the refinement of the categories of the audiences actually targeted by the public policies.

1.3.3 Adjusting the Targets Through Daily Practices

In the third section of the book, issues pertaining to the circulation and the reworking of target audience categories lead to a focus on the outcomes of the implementation phase of welfare policies. Indeed, the last three chapters analyze the final adjustments to the definition of target publics by examining the reality of the street level bureacrats' daily working practices. These chapters revisit the hypothesis of the growing use of discretionary power by the basic agents of the welfare State, that takes place during their interaction with governed people.

In the seventh chapter, Linda Haaparjärvi studies immigrant integration policies in a comparative perspective between France and Finland. Her analysis focuses on Helsinki and Paris and deals with the process of institutional socialization. She shows how those policies increasingly try to fashion "good" citizens out of migrant women, and the convergences and the variations between the two contexts. Different national conceptions of women's citizenship do not alone suffice to explain the differences that are observed. Neither are the individual street-level bureaucrats' attributes enough to explain these divergences. A careful analysis of the local institutional context and of ordinary integration practices is necessary in order to understand why these policies (re)produce inequalities through different delineations of boundaries. The comparative case study shows that in France, ethnic divisions inform inequalities more strongly, whereas in Finland it is rather the gender boundaries that define in practice the category of "deserving" citizens.

In the eighth chapter, Marine Bourgeois highlights similar processes through an ethnographic study of the French administration of low-rent housing. Previous research highlights a trend toward the individualization of social policies and the bureaucrats' ever-greater autonomy. But her inquiry into two French cities engages a critical discussion with the general hypothesis of social policies' individualization. Observing agents at work, she questions the way target publics are defined and identified in practice. Her work considers the processes of qualification and categorization according to which frontline workers make their selection, questioning boundaries that are drawn by the administration between the insiders and outsiders of social housing. This chapter first analyzes how housing authorities elaborate rules to deal with legal uncertainties. It then shows how these categories are taken up and actualized by street-level bureaucrats in their everyday practices. More broadly, it sheds light on selection mechanisms that regularly occur, and leads to a deeper understanding of the process of individualization.

Similarly, the ninth and last chapter by M'Laili Condro, Violaine Girard, Élise Palomares deals in more depth with the selection processes of housing policy beneficiaries in a postcolonial context. This collective research conducted in Mayotte shows that public housing policies have dramatically changed since 2005 in this French overseas administrative department. The access to social housing is bureaucratized and policymakers intend to redefine types of public housing that are

being built, as well as the way target publics are categorized. Their paper focuses on the front office interactions between the street-level bureaucrats and the decreasing number of potential of public housing beneficiaries. This chapter also takes into account the former's social and professional backgrounds. The ethnographic inquiry shows how, despite the little room for maneuver left by administratively prescribed eligibility conditions, these administrative agents take an active part and redefine and differentiate the different targets of social housing. In particular, they are able to gain extensive knowledge of local families, and thus give extra value to their counselling activities towards households. Through their everyday use of political categories, these street-level bureaucrats redefine the target publics of social housing policies. The last stage of these targeting processes leads to favoring specific social or ethnic groups to the detriment of others.

To conclude, these eight empirical surveys allow us to analyze sociogically the reconfigurations of the welfare State in the global context of decreasing public spending. The final chapter insists on the regularities that are visible today as regards transformations occurring in the control and supervision of populations, with particular attention to the working classes, without neglecting gender and race issues. Looking beyond the diversity of contexts and historical situations, one of these regularities (and perhaps the main one?) is that the increasing targeting of welfare policies reinforces the maintenance of social order.

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Part I
Legitimizing Categories in Public Debates

Chapter 2
"Organize and Defend Yourself". The Invention of the Middle Class Before Fascism: Actors, Discourse and Institutions

Andrea Rapini

Abstract There is broad consensus that Italian Fascism addressed the middle classes – through its rhetoric, privileged policies of social protection and trade union organization – with a view to consolidating a loyal area in society. On the contrary, what is less widely known is that appearance of the middle classes dates back to the period between the end of the nineteenth century and the Great war. To shed light on this "invention", the chapter carries out a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the emergence of a discourse on the middle classes prior to the First World War. It then outlines the biography of Italy's most intense propagandist for the middle classes, Vincenzo Magaldi, and describes the International Institute for the Study of the Middle Classes in which he operated. The next section focuses on the Commission for post-war problems established in 1918 that was the first to incorporate the middle classes into a proposal for "global" reform of social legislation. Finally, the article discusses the mobilization of the middle classes at the dawn of the Fascist era.

Keywords Middle class · Fascism · Propaganda · Social reformers · Constructivism

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2.1 Introduction

The Credit Suisse *Global Wealth Report* 2015 devotes an entire chapter of its statistical analysis to "The global middle class", defined "in terms of a wealth band rather than an income range".[1] The figures for Italy show that the proportion of adults in that category is a surprising 59.7%. Italy thus ranks fourth in the world, preceded only by Australia (66.1%), Singapore (62.3%) and Belgium (62.1%). The Italian middle class would appear relatively more numerous and healthier than that of the UK (54.7%), France (49.2%), Germany (42.4%) and the USA (37.7%), where the blows of the financial and economic crisis seem to have wiped out whole sectors of the middle class. Even in absolute numbers, Italy's 29 million members of the middle class, beat Germany and the United Kingdom (both 28 millions) as well as France (24 millions).[2] As for the trend, the Report provides an assessment for the entire European continent. Between 2000 and 2015, despite the financial crisis of recent years, the number of adults belonging to the middle class in Europe would appear to have increased from 189.5 to 223.9 millions: an increase of 18%.[3]

In the same period, the Italian public discourse features articles like this one by Alessandro Sallusti, editor of the newspaper *Il Giornale*, which belongs to the Berlusconi family: "Renzi uccide la classe media" (*Prime Minister Renzi is killing the middle class*).[4] Referring to a study by a Venetian Association of Artisans and Small Businesses, Sallusti claims that, "The new poor have the face of artisans, tradespeople and those with a VAT number (the self-employed)" whose situation has worsened as they have no political representation. Although these are people who "work hard from morning to night, taking on risks and generating wealth for all" – he continues – they are treated "by the left-wing political class as at best a bunch of tax evaders" Sallusti is convinced that "the artisans, traders and those with a VAT number form the country's real emergency" and that a government that really cares about the fate of the country and not only its own survival "should launch a rescue plan without delay that includes radical measures regarding both taxes and bureaucracy".[5] A few months later, Prime Minister Renzi solemnly announced during a live comment on Facebook and Twitter the

[1] More exactly: the adults with wealth between USD 50,000 and USD 500,000 in 2015. Research Institute Thought leadership from Credit Suisse Research and the world's foremost experts, *Global Wealth Report 2015*, pp. 28, 38 (https://www.credit-suisse.com/je/en/about-us/research/research-institute/global-wealth-report.html accessed on 8 September 2016).

[2] *Ibidem*, pp. 31–32.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 35.

[4] Lo studio: artigiani, commercianti e partite Iva sono diventati i nuovi poveri, *Il Giornale,* 29/11/2015 (http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/renzi-uccide-classe-media-1199601.html accessed on 8 September 2016).

[5] Ibidem. The article was taken up by Alessandro Caporalini, Chairman of the Federprofessional/Associazione delle Alte Professionalità Indipendenti, who "from daily contact" with many members has perceived "for a long time now both discontent and the feeling that they had been abandoned, marginalized and deprived of the proper chance of success", 30/11/2015, (http://www.federprofessional.com/renzi-uccide-la-classe-media/ accessed on 8 June 2016).

intention to "cut middle classes taxes", because it is necessary "to make a move to help out the middle class and families".[6]

The "malaise of the middle class" is insistently present in the public debates and is politically taken into account. So argued Arnaldo Bagnasco, a leading Italian sociologist, when commenting on the results of a study by the Italian Council for Social Sciences dealing entirely with this topic and published by the prestigious publisher Il Mulino (Bagnasco 2008: 9). Are the middle classes actually "the country's real emergency"? And who exactly are the middle classes? Can we accept the economicist and unidimensional definition of the Global Wealth Report? I cannot say. Certainly, the political strategy that surrounds them needs to be interpreted. Perhaps we should firstly ask ourselves: to whom does this term refer, what criteria are used to classify them and who creates such a classification? Historical research permeable to the social sciences provides some insights that can enable us to avoid mistakenly believing that the middle classes have always existed as we now know them. Moreover, it could help us to grasp the elements that have remained unchanged in the discursive strategies focussing on the middle classes, and equip us better to perceive them. Such an approach allows us to judge more clearly the few scraps of discussion on the middle classes reported above.

Combining an historical and sociological approach to the making of classes (Boltanski 1987) and of polical lexicon (Zimmermann 2003) enables us to analyse the social construction of a "target population" for Welfare policies (Schneider and Ingram 1993). This study also highlights the evolution of the boundaries of this target-public, and the relationship between the representatives of the "middle classe" interests and the State.

The catalogue of the Italian national library service can be used to verify the occurrence of words over time.[7] A search for the presence of the key-word "classi medie" (middle-classes) in the title of works in this catalogue enables us to see where, if, and how frequently a public discourse arises about the middle classes. Although this source is not perfect, as it does not cover the contents of the smaller libraries lacking computerized inventories and documents that are not published as separate texts – a fairly widespread practice at the time – it does provide valuable information. The period considered in this article covers the time between the unification of Italy and the Second World War: this is when the middle classes asserted themselves in the public arena with a timing and specificity that vary from one State to another.

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[6] Renzi: taglieremo le tasse al ceto medio", *La Repubblica,* 18/05/2016 (http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2016/05/18/news/renzi_risponde_in_diretta_sui_social-140093353 accessed on 8 June 2016).

[7] The Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale (SBN) is the network of Italian Regional and University libraries promoted by MIBACT (Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo). Current members include libraries of the state, local authorities, universities, public and private institutions. In June 2015 there were over There currently members of the state libraries, local authorities, universities, public and private institutions. In June 2015 there were over 5600 (http://www.sbn.it/opacsbn/opac/iccu/free.jsp last accessed 8/06/2016).

Occurrence of the labels in the catalogue of titles of the Italian national library service 1860/1939

	1860/1900	1901/1918	1919/1939
Ceto medio	0	0	1
Ceti medi	0	0	2
Classe media	0	1	0
Classi medie	1	13	16

In the last 40 years of the nineteenth century, the labels "ceto medio" and "ceti medi" do not appear in any of the titles found. The same is true for the label "classe media"in the singular, while the plural form "classi medie" features as the subject of a single publication. In the following period, there was an extremely significant change. While "ceto medio" and "ceti medi" still fail to stir the imagination of those giving titles to their works, and these labels do not appear, "classe media" is present in one title and "classe media" or "classi medie" in no less than 14. Until the late nineteenth century, none of the the terms "ceto medio", "ceti medi" "classe media" or "classi medie" were used to identify the vague social nebula between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Of course, this in no way excludes the existence of an intermediate area of society in Italy in the late nineteenth century, rather this factor merely suggests that it was not defined, bounded and unified under those labels. In the first 15 years of the following century, however, a discourse emerges that calls attention to a new social and political actor.[8] Moreover, the lexicon chosen to identify thus new actor in Italian was "classe", a term endowed with great evocative potential in a season marked by the rise of the working class ("classe operaia"). This term was preferred to that of "ceto", which in Italian possessed a more cumbersome past.[9] If we look at the quantity of titles in the period 1919/1939 they are: (1) containing "ceti medi", (2) with "ceto medio" and 16 with "classi medie".

There is thus confirmation of both the semantic shift from "ceto" to "classe" and the focus on this subject during the period of Fascist rule, which has been the primary focus of the historiography that identified the "classi medie" as one of the bulwarks of fascist power (Salvati 1992a; Tacchi 2014). However, the total production of titles during the Fascist period only slightly exceeds than that of the previous period. Hence it would seem that the turning point in its use occurred in the early years of the twentieth century.

What is meant, however, by the "middle classes", what are their political and cultural characteristics and what, finally, are the State's tasks when dealing with them? The answers can only be found by performing a qualitative analysis of the most significant contributions to that discourse. In this perspective, the article addresses this analysis in the first paragraph. It then outlines the biography of Italy's most intense propagandist for the middle classes, Vincenzo Magaldi and describe the International

[8] For the exact list see the site of the SBN: http://www.sbn.it/opacsbn/opac/iccu/avanzata.jsp

[9] The Italian word "ceto" has no exact equivalent in English. The term most generally used now, especially in the field of Sociology, is "status group" which translates the German "Ständ". In this Chapter I have chosen to keep the Italian lemma "ceto" because this seems fitting given the specific historical context. I would like to thank Marco Santoro for sharing his views on this tricky issue.

Institute for the Study of the middle classes in which he operated. Bearing specific interests in the intellectual sectors and among the leaders of the State's organization, Magaldi was one of the architects of that apparently natural situation that in reality hid a socially constructed object (Boltanski 1987). The following section focuses on the Commission on post-war problems (1918), which for the first time incorporated the middle classes into a proposal for "global" reform of the social legislation. Finally, the article focuses on the mobilization of the middle classes at the dawn of the Fascist era.

2.2 Discourse on the Middle Classes at the Outset of the Twentieth Century

In 1874 Giancarlo De Simoni published a volume entitled Mutual aid among the middle classes of the citizenship. Thoughts and hopes.[10] The book is dedicated to his brother Giovanni, head of the bursar's office of the town of Genoa, an executive clerk. This detail is of considerable importance, because the book is devoted to clerical workers. It is therefore an expression of that social *milieu*. The French Revolution – says the author – has consigned the distinction between *ceti* and its related privileges to history, but it has not eliminated the inequalities between different social groups. Among these clerical workers, some are more deserving than others of the support of "charities" because of the burden of their condition. Unlike others, he continues, they have a fixed salary that does not allow them to "grow". It is desirable, therefore, to protect them in case of "illness, extraordinary occurrences in life, old age, honourable misfortune",[11] to help them cover the expenses of rent for their home and their children's education in order to improve the lot of the middle classes.[12] Who should do so? Little more than 5 years after the birth of the modern welfare State (De Swaan 1988), the author calls upon the mutual aid societies and not "the Government, the Municipality or other state institution".[13] He assumes that the conditions for considering state intervention in welfare were not yet mature, at least in Italy. Instead, the author entrusts the protection and the aid of the middle classes to the mutual aid societies in a perspective of solidarity that denies the class struggle and upholds individual hard work and the family, as the fundamental nucleus of society. Hence, De Simoni's approach is a far cry from any form of mutualism that might approach socialism, which remains for him a spectre to be shunned.

[10] Giancarlo De Simoni, *Mutuo soccorso tra le classi medie della cittadinanza*, Genoa, Pensieri e speranze Tipografia del Regio istituto sordo-muti, 1874. There is little information available on the author. Secretary of the Italian Committee for the education of the people and a teacher at the Boy's Scuola magistrale in Genoa.

[11] *Ibidem*, pp. 21–22.

[12] *Ibidem*, pp. 27–28.

[13] De Simoni, *Mutuo soccorso tra le classi medie della cittadinanza*, pp. 14–15.

In recent years, however, the label "classe media" has remained strongly ambiguous not only sociologically speaking, considering the continual shifting perception of the social groups it identifies, but also in an ethical and political sense. In fact, far from representing a single pattern of behaviour, this social group may be associated with attitudes judged morally reprehensible (Banti 1996: 235–336). Proof of this attitude may be found in a book of more than five hundred pages pulished 4 years later.[14] The author, Leone Carpi, came from an old family of the Jewish community in the district of Ferrara, and later moved to Bologna (Romanelli 1977). He was an economist, journalist and politician belonging to those fractions of liberalism that were hostile to *laissez faire* and favourable to State interventionism in order to avoid social cleavages.[15] The book contains the results of a questionnaire to all the Prefects of Italy and people of "special intellectual stature" on "the conditions of the upper social classes", which was supposed to "reawaken feelings of national dignity and invigorate" Italy.[16] Carpi devotes a chapter to the Italian "middle class"[17] suffering – in his opinion – from "corruption, devoid of higher energies, absorbed by finding a safe job and making money, idleness and string-pulling".[18] He introduces a moral definition of what the middle class should be:

> The good that prevails over evil, virtue over vice, industry over inertia, patriotism over political skepticism, and also – to a pleasing degree – religious spirit within families over indifference, bigotry and fetishism (…). The life, vigour and the backbone of the nation is to be found in the middle class. (…) The heart of the nation primarily beats within this class. The fine arts, industries, businesses, agriculture and great navigation, the crafts in all their infinite gradations are inexhaustibly fuelled by it.[19]

After the start of the new century, the discourse on the middle classes makes a quantum leap in three directions: the organization, self-representation and the relationship with the State. There is hope that federations or parties representative of *interests* might be formed; the definitions change form to include or exclude new actors. Lastly, the State is called upon directly in the reiterated perception that the middle classes have now become "an issue" or even at times "a problem".

In 1906 the Italian trade and industry Federation was set up in Milan to defend a whole range subjects from small traders to industrialists, especially the smaller entrepreneurs. The following year, the Federation founded its political arm, the Partito Economico. With about 1000 members and two MPs elected at the 1909 elections, the party failed both to take root outside Milan and to overcome the conflicts between its various souls (Maida 2009: 40–41). In one of the organization's publications, the architect Giovanni Giachi suggested that the "social block"

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[14] Leone Carpi, *L'Italia vivente. Aristocrazia di nascita e del danaro. Borghesia. Clero. Burocrazia,* Milan: Vallardi Editore, 1878.

[15] Carpi was in line with the currents of German police science (Mohl) or Romagnosi, one of the first theorists of Italian administration science, heir to the *Polizeiwissenchaft*.

[16] Leone Carpi, *L'Italia vivente*, pp. 7 and 10.

[17] *Ibidem*, pp. 281–365.

[18] *Ibidem*, p. 309, 313.

[19] *Ibidem*, p. 228.

around which the party should be built were the "middle classes", identified in the "petty bourgeoisie" that is: office workers (salaried, not wage earners), traders both "big and small", the lesser industrialists, small and medium landowners and artists. In a nutshell, "all those who would have everything to lose and nothing to gain from collectivism, and would definitely be destroyed by it".[20] The aim of the author, whose name is linked to the 1921 design of the new headquarters of *La Rinascente,*[21] is purely political: "to counter the socialist organizations, the enemies" – in his view – of "all trade". To this end, then, it can be useful to establish within the State a "Department of the middle classes" to support legislative initiatives and vocational training in favour of the petty bourgeoisie (Malatesta 1995).

While anti-socialist positions were prevalent among those intervening on the subject of the "middle classes" at the outset of the twentieth century, they were not the only ones to take an interest in it. Indeed, there is a documented and persistent concern, especially regarding the phenomenon of bureaucracy and office workers, by some members of the Socialist Party, including Filippo Turati and his *Critica sociale* (Melis 1980). Others include Roberto Michels, a professor of economic sociology in Turin, and originally a socialist before shifting towards fascism. He expressed himself on the subject 3 years prior to the publication of his famous book on political parties[22]. His article appeared in one of the most influential journals of the period, the *Giornale degli economisti*, thus evidencing the relevance of the topic.[23] In this article focussing on empirical data from Germany, Michels – who used the labels "ceto" and "classe media" indiscriminately – contrasted an "old middle class" with a new one. He claimed that the former, consisting of small landowners, artisans and small industrialists, was shrinking under the blows inflicted by the larger economic groups. The latter, however, was expanding in both the public and private sector, where the clerical workers of big business were gaining unprecedented social and political weight. One group was economically independent, while the other was made up of individuals with an employee salary. Far from identifying with the contemporary Marxist theories that predicted a trend leading to the disappearance of the "middle classes", this pupil of Max Weber distanced himself from this stance while also developing a thesis regarding the permeability of the new German middle class to an alliance with the socialist movement. He distinguished between the higher bureaucrats and the executives on the one hand, who enjoyed a privileged position and were hence more prone to feel part of the bourgeoisie, from the "salarymen" and "industrial clerical workers" on the other, who were almost

[20] Giovanni Giachi, *Sulla necessità che si abbia a costituire anche in Italia, accanto all'Ufficio del Lavoro, un Ufficio delle classi medie*, Genoa, Tipografia marittima, 1909, p. 7.

[21] La Rinascente was the first Italian department store that opened in 1865, modelled on the Bon marché.

[22] Roberto Michels, *La sociologia del partito politico nella democrazia moderna: studi sulle tendenze oligarchiche degli aggregati politici*, Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1912.

[23] Roberto Michels, Sulla scadenza della classe media antica e sul sorgere di una classe media industriale moderna nei paesi di economia spiccatamente capitalistica", *Il Giornale degli economisti*, 37, 2, 1909, pp. 85–103.

always former manual workers who had become educated and professionalized and were thus open to socialism.[24]

Michels' theses were to become one of the landmarks in the debate on the middle classes in the following years, partly because of the reputation the author gained from his studies on political parties and elites. In 1911, the *Rivista italiana di sociologia* published an article by Federico Chessa: "Le classi medie". After working in the Social Insurance Office, and thus within state bureacracy, the author became a professor of political economy in Sassari and later in Genoa (Giva 1980). He was to become one of the supporters of corporatism as a "Third way" between capitalism and communism in the '30s.[25] Who were the middle classes? For Chessa this group comprised all those with an income higher than the minimum necessary for material life and with a degree of economic autonomy procured "through intelligence and labour". This included small landowners, independent artisans, retailers and small traders, "clerical workers in industry and the state, thus forming a non-homogeneous group that covered the whole range from the petty to the upper bourgeoisie".[26] In addition to his outlining of the the social space occupied by the middle classes, Chessa disagreed with the theories of Michels, and with Marxism in general, claiming that this social space was bound to decline, or at least the part of it that was occupied by small landowners. Rather Chessa argued, identifying a particular characteristic of the Italian industrial economy, that small industry could exist alongside larger industries where there were specialized productions of quality or new goods, or during the stagnation phases of big industry. As for the smallholdings, the fact that they were run by families made it possible to reduce costs and offered the opportunity to perform work elsewhere when the rhythms of the countryside allowed. Moreover – he continues – the decrease in the numbers of rural workers, progressively emigrating towards the cities, causes an increase in the income available and contributes to the survival of this segment of the middle classes. Chessa's attention, finally, settles on the moral aspects that, for many other contemporary authors became one of the pillars of self-representation of the middle classes and of political normativity in that discourse, and which acquired ever greater importance in the first 15 years of the twentieth century. These classes would have a "moderating" function in the changes caused by capitalism as they would be inclined to saving, social security and virtue, not merely focusing on maintaining their property, but also on improving it and making it more fruitful. Ergo: they should be helped and supported by the State.

The year 1911 saw the release of the most ponderous essay on middle classes to come out in the period preceding the Great War. After arguing 2 years earlier that the middle classes represented a new social issue,[27] Benedetto Scarselli returned to

[24] This component created the Lega degli impiegati tecnici d'industria that, based on demands made also by the Socialists, requested that the State should include this group in compulsory insurance for old-age, disability, death of spouse and parents.

[25] Federico Chessa, *Economia politica corporativa*, Torino: Giappichelli, 1941.

[26] Federico Chessa, "Le classi medie", *Rivista italiana di sociologia*, n°1, 1911, pp. 62–82 .

[27] Benedetto Scarselli, «Per una nuova questione sociale: le classi medie», Rome,:Direzione del Giornale degli economisti, 1909, previsouly published in *Giornale degli economisti*, vol. 38, serie 2, 1909.

the subject from an international outlook taking into account developments in the major European countries and the existing literature.[28] The title speaks for itself: *The Problem of the Middle Classes*[29] But what problem is so important as to become a "crisis"? On the one hand – says the author – these classes are crushed by the great industrial and financial capital that leads to impoverishment and general degradation of trades. On the other hand, because of a certain laziness, lack of capital and organization, these classes are unable to "adapt to the new conditions of life" and revive "their energies weakened by a passive contemplation of their own ruin".[30] If the middle classes were destined to be "swallowed up" by the larger enterprises the problem would negligible. Yet Scarselli, renewing Chessa's claims with the support of statistical evidence from different countries, was convinced that the middle class would not disappear, especially if identified in small industrial firms and traders.[31] In any case, the purely economic principle of independent work to define the middle classes is insufficient. Certain social and cultural characteristics must be shared that could be summed up as the "identity of ideals and lifestyles".[32]

How can the middle class be helped to overcome the crisis? The node becomes exquisitely political. Scarselli believed the middle classes needed to organize themselves by modelling their actions on the labour movement to get a commitment from the State regarding vocational training, credit and cooperation. In his view, these were the main issues at stake, beyond a purely confrontational perspective that would cause detriment to the other classes. To this end – concluded Scarselli, raising the issue of political organization – the middle classes can find stable support in the Radical Party rather than the Socialist Party (Orsina 2002: 207, 250). However there may be convergence on some issues, as stated by the director of the Labour Office Montemartini[33] in his preface to the volume –. Considering the way the middle classes subsequently drew closer to fascism, this topic seems to bode no good:

> The middle classes and the young socialist aristocracy, that is the new element of these middle classes, could through the harmony of their ideals and by gradual evolution bring about the boldest reforms, instead of awaiting them in a future ominously marked by the blazing of blood.[34]

An essay that appeared in 1912, and focused entirely on the rhetoric of the "third way", possesses a paradigmatic value due to the clarity with which it summarized the characteristic traits of an entire line of analysis of the middle classes. At the same time, it enables us to understand the political intervention linked to the forces

[28] Scarselli was a member of the Radical Party with pro-socialist leanings.

[29] *Il problema delle classi medie*, Milan: Società Editrice Libraria, 1911.

[30] Scarselli, *Il problema delle classi medie*, p. 47.

[31] Ibidem, pp. 17, 20.

[32] Ibidem, p. 4.

[33] He is a central and influential figure of the whole movement for Italian social reform. He is a socialist.

[34] Scarselli, *Il problema delle classi medie*, p. 217.

of Catholicism or, more precisely, of certain fractions within it.[35] The thesis of Friar Minor Giulio Testaferrata is pervaded by both anti-socialist and anti-individualistic overtones.[36] Of course, the term "third way", which was to play a leading role in the European political lexicon of the 1930s, does not appear in the publication that, nevertheless, contains much of its trademark political reasoning. Who are the middle classes for Testaferrata? This is his definition:

> All those classes of people who thanks to their economic and social position can enjoy a certain degree of comfort, a certain independence in their work that cannot be encountered in the actual proletarians, but who yet require to use their freedom to produce to retain their position, and thus can be distinguished from the class of great capitalists and the aristocratic classes who are exempt from requiring a job to ensure an income.[37]

To this extremely vague and extensive socio-economic definition, Testaferrata associates a constellation of positive values and ethical codes that distinctively marks them apart from the excesses of both the lower classes and the elites. It is in fact their economic independence, autonomy and the "pride in their work" that form the basis for cultivating the moral virtues – inside and outside the family – that the middle classes can boast: moderation, balance, honesty, patriotism, and religiosity. To say nothing of their contribution through taxes to the construction of the modern State, since they are – in his opinion – the main consumers and savers.[38] Their historical genealogy – another theme destined for a bright future (Salvati 2006; Cerasi 2016) – can be traced back to the medieval guilds and the knowledge of crafts, which received a harsh blow from "individualism" and the "pagan ideas" introduced first by the Protestant Reformation and later by the French Revolution. Although aware of the impossibility of returning to corporate order, Tagliaferri evokes certain of its aspects related to trades and to the centrality of producers, through the filter of the traditional paternalism of the "Christian social concept".[39] If the middle classes are a moral bulwark and a bonding agent that holds society together, then it is easy to understand why the State should be interested in attending to its malaise, or indeed the very real "crisis" that is affecting those within this group. The author assigns the State the task of intervening legislatively to protect the activities of this class: professional training, protection of artisans, penalization of concentrations, tax measures and measures to discourage large-scale traders. To sum up, the social model advocated by Testaferrata for the "movement of the middle classes" is a kind of "organic-social" system in which the unbridled competition resulting from indi-

[35] Giulio Testaferrata, *La questione delle classi medie*, Firenze: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1912. This volume was published "with the approval of the ecclisiastical authorities". Along the same lines was the publication of Victor De Clercq in 1912, "Le classi medie in Italia", taken from *L'azione sociale popolare. Pubblicazione quindicinale*, n°14, pp. 44–53.

[36] The thesis is defended at the École des Sciences Politiques et Sociales of the Université Catholique de Louvain.

[37] Giulio Testaferrata, *La questione delle classi medie*, p. 19.

[38] Ibidem, pp. 28–30.

[39] Giulio Testaferrata, *La questione delle classi medie*, p. 40.

vidualistic capitalism is discouraged as is socialism, whose aim would be to create a wholly proletarian society thus eliminating men's very freedom.[40]

At the approach of the Great War, the theme of the middle classes crops up so frequently in public discourses as to inspire the setting up of a new journal, which title can be translated as *The Smile of Italy. Organ of the interests of the middle classes*. The lead editorial is an invective against the state of "abandon" faced by the middle classes, that the magazine identified as the "class of clerical workers".[41]

2.3 Vincenzo Magaldi and the International Institute for the Study of the Middle Classes: The Role of the Actors and the Institutions

Scrolling the list of titles you notice that the author with the highest number of contributions both within each period, and overall, is Vincenzo Magaldi: 3 between 1900 and 1918, 4 between 1919 and 1939. His public activity is closely connected with the life of the International Institute for the Study of the middle classes. Who was this man and what was this institution?

While a little-known figure for most people, Magaldi was certainly one of those most committed to raising the visibility of the middle classes, to organizing them and lastly to involving the State in their legitimation and protection through administrative and legislative interventions. Magaldi was born in southern Italy in Sava in the province of Taranto on January 23, 1848. His father Gherardo, a judge, could afford to allow his son to study in Naples, where Vincenzo graduated in Law in 1871. His social *milieu* was therefore that of the intellectual bourgeoisie employed within the civil service, where he himself was employed throughout his working life. In 1873, at the age of 25 years, he entered the Office of Statistics of the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce. The new director Luigi Bodio had been appointed just a year earlier (Favero 2001). For almost 20 years, this office functioned as a training ground for future senior civil servants and was marked by its international horizons, a vivid intellectual tension and the quality of its results. Magaldi was among the young people who had the privilege to train in this school. At the beginning of his career, he dealt with banks that collected small savings, such as the *casse di risparmio* (Tosatti 2015[42]).

In 1885, he was promoted to the position of President for credits, welfare and social security in 1908 inside the same Ministry. While the country was going

[40] Ibidem, p. 38. One of the primary references is Giuseppe Toniolo the leading exponent of the so-called Italian Social Catholicism. In particular, see: Giusepee Toniolo, "Problemi, Discussioni, Proposte intorno alla Costituzione corporativa delle classi lavoratrici a proposito di recenti convegni sociali", in *Rivista internazionale di scienze sociali e discipline ausiliarie*, Gennaio 1904.

[41] *Sorriso d'Italia. Organo degli interessi delle classi medie*, n°1, December 1914. This monthly magazine was produced in Milan.

[42] I thank Giovanna Tosatti for allowing me to read her paper while it was awaiting publication.

through an intense season of economic change and redefinition of the Italian civil service, Magaldi asserted himself as one of the most competent functionaries on the subject of welfare. This reputation gained him a place for 20 years in the *Consiglio della Previdenza* (Welfare Committeee) (1894–1922), one of the most crucial organs for Italian social legislation (Marucco 1984).

The third and final homogeneous phase in Magaldi's working life was in line with his earlier committments with his admission to the board, and subsequent appointment as Director, of the *Istituto Nazionale Assicurazioni* (National Insurance Institute, INA). Established in 1912 at the behest of the reforming Minister Francesco Saverio Nitti, the INA was the most important institute to be set up for Italian Social Security before the foundation of the *Istituto Nazionale Fascista della Previdenza Sociale* (Fascist National Institute Social Security, INFPS) in 1933. This, therefore, was the heart of the still fragile Italian welfare state. Magaldi contributed to the setting up and operation of this machine prior to his exit in 1921. He died in 1932. Although Magaldi neither entered parliament nor became minister, he was a "provoker of reform" and even "a real centre of government" reform that aimed at achieving – according to an obituary published in 1932 – the "final harmony between capitalists and workers" and the subordination of "all special interests to the best and permanent interests of the nation". This approach, the obituary continues, was "a precursor of fascism's social idea".[43] Throughout the different phases of his career, Magaldi stands out for being the most tenacious Italian builder, leader and propagandist of the International Institute for the Study of the middle classes. All his recorded articles, in fact, relate to this organization, which shows graphically the international extension of a "problem" relating to the middle classes.[44] The Institute had a strategic role in the transformation of that formless aggregate placed between the proletariat and the ruling classes, into a protagonist of the European political and social scene even before the Great War.

On 2 and 3 September 1903 the representatives of a dozen governments met in Stuttgart under the patronage of the Ministry of Interior of Württemberg. This was the founding act of the International Institute for the Study of the middle classes. Its leadership structure revolved around a central committee, which included two members for each country represented, and two delegates elected by a plenary assembly. The Committee in turn elected a *bureau* composed of a chairman, two vice-chairmen and a secretary. To guarantee pluralism and internationalism, the chairmanship rotated among each acceding country. Finally, there was a Secretariat consisting of a Director (appointed by the Plenary Assembly) and government delegates. At the time of its setting up, the Central Committee hosted the following Countries that officially sent delegates: Austria, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Russia, Hungary, Saxony, Württemberg, Prussia and Bavaria. France,

[43] Vincenzo Camanni, In memoria di Vincenzo Magaldi (1848–1932), *Difesa sociale. Rivista mensile d'igiene, previdenza e assistenza*, n°6, 1932, pp. 246, 248.

[44] Hector Lambrechts, *Trente années au service des classes moyennes*, Dison-Verviers: Imprimerie disonaise, 1935, p. 315; Georges Blondel, Création d'un Institut Internationale pour l'étude des classes moyennes, *La Réforme sociale*, série V, tome VI, 1903.

Spain and Switzerland were present unofficially. Magaldi entered the Central Committee on behalf of Italy, together with Gherardo Callegari, General Inspector for Industry and Commerce at the Agriculture Ministry.[45] Magaldi was to be Chairman between 1926 and 1928.

Brussels immediately became the organization's headquarters. In fact, from the late nineteenth century, the spread of social Catholicism in Belgium and its influence on the country's political institutions and universities, such as Leuven, had created suitable conditions for the raising of the discourse on the middle classes that was simultaneously starting to spread even in Italy, where developments in Belgium were much admired. Indeed, in 1899, the Belgian Minister of Industry and Labour Gérard Cooreman had established a *Bureau* for the middle classes that soon became a point of reference throughout Europe. In 1906 the *Office des classes moyennes* was set up within this Ministry with tasks similar to those of the existing labour offices in Italy and France.[46]

Although from the beginning there is a plurality of opinions surrounding the Institute's objectives, those who aimed to carry out tasks of a purely informative nature prevailed, setting aside direct political engagement. In any case, despite the diversity of interpretations and emphasis – that would change over time – the desire to influence the social policy of the European governments was clear to everyone. To pursue these goals a Library was opened and a monthly *Bulletin* (in German and French) was established and a number of additional publications were planned. Most importantly, however, periodic international congresses were organized that were to become a cornerstone of association during the Institute's most intense of activities, between its founding and the First World War. The first Congress was held in Liege in 1905, the second in Vienna in 1908, the third and last before the conflict in Munich in 1911.[47]

The opening of the Congress in Liege was entrusted to Gérard Cooreman himself, who praised those men "of intelligence and heart" who had gathered, because they understood that "the vigour and prosperity of the middle class are indispensable for the balance and stability of society".[48] The themes tackled in Belgium between August 16 and 18, ranged from the definition of the middle classes, to the legislation of the various Countries and the role of the State, from technical and professional training to credit including, as well as the use of machinery and engines among artisans. As the debate in Italy revealed, the classification of the different components to be included among the middle classes, considered as a plural entity as the name of the Institute itself clearly indicated, was controversial and shifting.

[45] As alternate members the MP Silvio Crespi and Cav. Marco Besso.

[46] Vincenzo Magaldi, Il problema delle classi medie, *Rassegna della previdenza sociale*, n°7, 1921, pp. 6–8.

[47] There followed the Congresses in Paris in 1924, Rome in 1927 and Prague in 1935. The Institute's activities resumed after the Second World War.

[48] Cited in Elisabetta Caroppo, *Per la pace sociale. L'Istituto internazionale per le classi medie nel primo novecento*, Lecce: Congedo, 2013, p. 60. See this text for a more detailed analysis of the Congresses and the Italian component.

Generally speaking, the middle classes were classified as to what they were not, namely neither capitalists nor proletarians. Sometimes civil servants were included, other times not (Caroppo 2013).

In Vienna, 2 years later, the same topics were raised but new ones wereadded, such as affordable housing and disability and old age insurance. In the third congress in Munich, from 26 to 27 September 1911, the table of discussion extended to the problems of the female condition in crafts and industry at home, the periodic crisis of bread and meat prices, department stores and consumption cooperatives. The whole debate was, however, increasingly dominated by the theme of the State and of its involvement in support of a policy for the middle classes or, in the words of Magaldi, for "an élite, a class of men that bring life and prosperity to nations".[49]

As World War I approached, there was growing dissatisfaction with the Institute's objectives and results. For some of the members, its purely scientific and informative activity appeared insufficient and was judged ineffective, and there was a need for a "passing to action", in the words of Hector Lambrechts.[50] This group, favouring political activity, made a move on November 1910 in Paris, when numerous members met to consider the creation of a *Bureau Central* that would become responsible for all the previously prohibited tasks (Haupt 1979; Zalc 2010, 2012; Pech 2011). Although at the time the numbers supporting such a move were in the minority, this development clearly emphasized a shift in the purposes and practices of those who considered themselves as part of the middle classes. A shift that would demonstrate its true scope after World War I.

2.4 Total War and the Middle Classes: From Discourse to Reform

While the Great War was still underway, the Italian Prime Minister Paolo Boselli announced in Parliament the outline of a commission that would study all the problems involved in the transition from war to peace,[51] similarly to moves in other European countries.[52] However, this initiative collapsed with the fall of Boselli as Prime Minister in October 1917. It was his successor – Vittorio Emanuele Orlando – who eventually launched it.

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[49] Vincenzo Magaldi, Le classi medie, *Nuova Antologia*, n°881, 1908, p. 109. This is a quotation from the Belgian Minister Théodor Francotte.

[50] Hector Lambrechts, *Contribution à l'histoire de l'Institut international des classes moyennes*, Dison-Verviers: Imprimerie disonaise, 1935, p. 9.

[51] Letter of the Finance Minister Filippo Meda to Prime Minister Paolo Boselli 19-9-1917, Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Fondo Boselli, busta (b.) 1, fascicolo (f.) 11.

[52] Vittorio Scialoja, Cenni sulla preparazione negli altri stati, *I problemi dello stato italiano dopo la guerra*, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1919, pp. 9–35.

On March 21, 1918 a "government" Commission was established, chaired by Orlando himself, and split into two major sub-committees: legal, administrative and social areas and economic areas (industry, trade, agriculture).[53] At the end of June, 27 thematic sections were created. A total of no less than 636 people coming from the State administration, universities, political parties, trade unions and the business world, from cooperation and from journalism, were mobilized to present reform proposals on a very wide range of issues, relating in particular to the relationship between the State, society and the economy. This number exceeded the number of members in the Parliament!

Within the first sub-committee, the "social question" had become a burning issue in Italy, because of the weakness of previous government interventions (Flora and Heidenheimer 1982) and of the effects of total war. The Section X was entirely devoted to social legislation and welfare. Later known as the Rava Commission, from the name of the Chairman Luigi Rava (Rapini 2012), this section completed its task in less than 5 months. At the end of July the first meeting was held aiming to draw up "a programme of measures to be coordinated in a Labour Code". It officially ended its task with the decree of 14 September 1919, handing to the government the most ambitious organic and social reform in Italian history, comparable only to the Commissione D'Aragona after World War II (Rapini 2016; Mattera 2012). The co-opted members comprising this Commission consisted of 28 names, of which that of Vincenzo Magaldi stands out.[54]

The most pressing issue on the agenda at the Commission's first meeting was that of establishing the boundaries of its activities and thus to give substance to the term "social legislation", namely "what subjects were to be addressed"? It was decided to adopt a broad definition, that included not only the living conditions of industrial and agricultural workers, as the term had hitherto been used, but also those of "workers in commerce", "private and public employees" and to "also consider a fair balance in the relations between the industrial, merchant and the working class". In particular, the choice to include the "conditions of life of the middle classes" was emphatically made. The final proposals, therefore, devote a "vote" exclusively to the protection of the middle classes.

Used as a synonym for the term "classi medie", the label "ceto medio" was attributed to the "connective tissue of social and economic life in the country". The Section adds that this class is "deeply troubled" by the war and for these reasons should be helped as regards credit to facilitate the resumption of professional activities; in the field of tax through "large deductions" on income spent on "the educations of children"

[53] The first chairman was Vittorio Scialoja and the second, Eduardo Pantano.

[54] The complete list: Mario Abbiate, Luigi Albertini, Foscolo Bargoni, Alberto Beneduce, Lorenzo Borri, Pompeo Colaianni, Emilio Conti, Pasquale Di Fratta, Giuseppe Falciani, Cesare Ferrero di Cambiano, Andrea Finocchiaro Aprile, Ulisse Gobbi, Teresa Labriola, Achille Loria, Vincenzo Magaldi, Vincenzo Mangano, Luigi Marozzi, Gismondo Morelli-Gualtierotti, Orazio Paretti, Luigi Pontiggia, Emanuele Raimondi, Filippo Rainaldi, Luigi Rava, Ugo Scalori, Guido Toja, Michelangelo Vaccaro, Filippo Virgilii, Carlo Zucchini.

and the "creation of the necessary means to start up productive activities"; and lastly, in the area of insurance, by including this group in insurance.[55]

An analysis of the proposals made by Section X reveals a distillation of most of the themes raised in the discourse on the middle classes in the previous 15 years. The Section's vote would thus have been unthinkable without the sedimentation of the concept of middle classes that had previously been invented, in conjunction with the processes of transformation of the economic and social structure and of the State in the early twentieth-century. In fact, Italy had only embarked firmly on the road of industrialization in this latter period (Toniolo 2013). Industrial growth, as we know, serves as a catalyst for a whole jumble of phenomena linked to each other with variable geometries: the social strata took on new forms, new players appeared demanding recognition and both political and economic representation, the apparatus of the State expanded, the Parliament opened to sections of the population previously excluded, and more complex social policies were introduced. The proliferation of state bureaucracy, which gained visibility and public legitimacy was among the most macroscopic events (Melis 1996: 181–268).

On the other hand, the vote of the Commission, by recognizing the existence of a homogeneous entity under the label "middle classes" that bore special properties altered by the war, contributed to the spread of a belief in this group and its consolidation. Where before, in fact, there had been only the scattered statements and stances of a variety of authors, there was now a quantum leap since such discourse had received a formal mark of legitimacy from the machinery set up by Prime Minister, who also headed the Commission. In other words, directly by the State.

2.5 "Declassing" and Political Mobilization

The most ambitious proposals from the "Commissione Rava" were to remain on the Prime Minister's desk, without being either applied or discussed by the Parliament, as they would have deserved. Called to govern the transition from war to peace, and as part of this task to tackle the country's long neglected social ills, Ministers Nitti and Giolitti adopted few partial and sectorial measures. In the aftermath of total war, those sectors of the population located roughly between the proletariat and the capitalists, were particularly sensitive to the discourse on the "middle classes" and its new twist, as envisaged earlier by the supporters of a "passing to action" in the international Institute of the middle classes.[56] These sectors did not feel they were

[55] Commissione Reale per il dopoguerra, *Studi e proposte della prima sottocommissione presieduta dal sen. Vittorio Scialoja. Questioni giuridiche, amministrative e sociali*, Rome: Tipografia Artigianelli, 1920, p. 446.

[56] After the war there was strong pressures for a more political intervention both within and outside the Institute. Another institution was hence set up: the Internationaler Mittelstands Bund (IMB) in 1923 in Bern, coordinating the movement of the middle classes. See Hector Lambrechts, *Contribution à l'histoire de l'Institut international des classes moyennes*, p. 16.

sufficiently represented by socialism, by the liberalism of the ruling elites or by Catholic organizations. “Mobilized” during the war and feeling scared in the climate of post-war crisis, they were attracted by the “providential or charismatic men” (Gramsci 1949: 50) who intended to mobilize them once more (Gentile 1981: 24).

Evidence of this situation can be clearly found in this article by Vincenzo Magaldi published in 1921: *Il problema delle classi medie.*[57] After bringing the reader up to date on the activities carried out by the International Institute for the middle classes and reviewing the measures taken for this sector by the Italian Government, the author goes on to specify the content of the “problem”. Perhaps, we might add, the “new content”; the “problem of the middle class”, as we saw earlier, had been the subject of debate for 20 years or so: “the absorption of the middle class by the proletariat”. Magaldi argued that the cause of this “mad reversal of moral values” was a combination of the “ascending tide of prices” and the upward social movement of the “working classes”, that being “powerfully organized”, were gaining a “higher standard of living than that to which they had been accustomed before the war”. According to Magaldi there were numerous examples even of “workers engaged in the most humble manual tasks earning much more than a magistrate or a university professor”.

It is noteworthy that Magaldi felt in complete harmony with the traditionalist mood that was gaining consensus in France around Alfred de Tarde and the the International Confederation of Intellectual Workers (Le Béguec 1993). In a speech at the Musée Social in Paris a few years later, de Tarde argued the thesis of the crushing of the “*classe moyenne*”, especially at an intellectual level, between “the two emerging classes that despise it in equal measure: the nouveaux riches and war profiteers and the workers themselves who are well paid and safeguarded for the immediate future”.[58] The key word is *déclassement*. Magaldi explicitly used the same words as de Tarde in order to draw comparisons between the Italian and French situations, and concluded with an exhortation, which was not only an attack on socialism and mercenary capitalism, but also had the ring of a prophecy:

> We say to our middle classes: Organize yourselves, defend yourselves, know that with your energy, with your will, your perseverance, you can ensure and enforce your rights; in particular your right to the freedom of labour, against the enemies of all social order, your right to bread and to a life against the usurious businesses of the merchants.[59]

Shortly thereafter, Magaldi subscribed to fascism. His contemporaries were quick to notice that it was the “middle classes” that would provide the mainstay of Italian fascism from its outset in the period between 1919 and 1922. In the 1930s, the regime addressed this sector of the population especially, beguiling them with rhetoric, protecting them by endowing them with the richest rewards of its social status, organizing them into unions and, ultimately, condensing them socially as a

[57] *Rassegna della Previdenza sociale*, n°7, July 1921, pp.1–40.

[58] The speech was on 26 May 1926.

[59] All quotations are in Magaldi: Il problema delle classi medie, *Rassegna della previdenza sociale*, pp. 37, 39–40.

loyal element within Italian society (Germani 1975; Salvati 1992b). At that point the Fascist political taxonomy based on a model of three parts – fascism *versus* communism and capitalism – overlapped symbolically with the three-part social taxonomy that had been in circulation, as seen earlier, from the end of the nineteenth century: the middle class *versus* the proletariat and profiteers. It marked the triumph of the "third party", fueled by the reflection and the debate on corporatism (Gagliardi 2014: 75).

Of course, this was anything but a natural process. While the impact of war on society created the objective conditions for its success, by changing the relationship between agents that actually existed, its success was yet the resistible outcome of the work of identification, classification and grouping woven by figures such as Magaldi. In this regard, it seems worth underling that the corporate doctrines of the 1930s spread rapidly in the countries where the International Institute for the middle classes had its roots: Belgium, France, Italy, Germany and Spain (Pasetti 2016). The effectiveness of such figures as Magaldi was then multiplied by the powerful symbolic legitimation of the Rava Commission.

2.6 Creating Target Publics

The analysis of publications bearing the words "ceto medio", "ceti medi", "classe media" and "classi medie" in the title between 1860 and 1939 showed the prevalence of the lemma "classi medie" in the first 15 years of the twentieth century, within a corpus comparable in size – predictably – to that of the fascist period. This result thus indicates the emergence of a discourse on the middle classes well before the First World War and the period immediately following. The qualitative study of the texts made it possible to highlight some basic features, summarized in seven items.

Self-representation: the discourse on the middle classes predominantly refers to members of social groups who are represented as suffering from a malaise and will, it is hoped, organize. Members that in some cases have also the power to influence State intervention in their favour. It is thus important, when considering this discourse, to bear mind the trajectories of the authors and the social context to which they belonged and hence the special interests and strategies that derived from these factors.

Elasticity: the use of the label "classi medie" (middle classes) in the plural reflects (also) the difficulty in identifying a unique criterion for designating the composition of this social actor. The shifts in identification of this group remained unresolved both in Italy and in the European scenario, as evidenced by the congresses of the Institut International des classes moyennes. This elasticity makes the label extremely flexible and open to many uses.

Reduction: at the dawn of the twentieth century, the variation in the definitions was matched by a plurality of approaches and a variation in the political orientation of the authors. The activities of socialist authors is also noteworthy. While the latter

denied any trend towards the disappearance of the middle classes, they did propose this social group as willing to reposition itself with the interests of the lower classes. This plurality disappeared over time with the most blatantly anti-socialist stances coming to dominate the discourse and the aim being to mobilize the middle classes against the labour movement.

From the stigma to the model: while at the end of the nineteenth century the label “classe media” (middle class) could imply a certain stigma, by the early years of the twentieth century a growing number of contributions aimed to endow the term with an ethically positive aura that was also politically reassuring to the social order thanks to the very fact that this group “occupied the middle ground”.

“Issue”, “problem” and “declassing”: at the end of the nineteenth century, the middle class was included within a broad definition – or rather counter-definition – of the “social question”. This issue then became a “problem” and later a “crisis”, with the tone becoming increasingly convulsive as the First World War approached. Subsequently, the content of the crisis tended to coincide with a declassing or fear of declassing.

In State care: initially, responsibility was entrusted to mutual aid. However, as the Great War approached there did remain frequent references to cooperation, but the demand for protection and support from the State became overwhelming.

Organization: the theme of the political and/or economic organization advanced both at a domestic and international level with mixed results. In this case too, the Great War acted as an accelerator. Its consequences increased the trend to a greater public presence of the middle classes and the demand for a greater effectiveness of their own actions (Tacchi 1994: 55).

The discourse on the middle classes clearly performed more than one function. Indeed, the definition of what the middle classes actually were also served to strengthen their existence, to shape them and to create certain conditions suited to their mobilization. Thus, the “Commissione Rava” would have been unthinkable if the middle classes had not been previously “invented” through the accumulated effects of representations, propagandists and organizations such as the International Institute for the Study of the middle classes (Crossick 1996). This subtle and barely visible work on the categories of perception of reality - and hence on reality itself - reveals the the inherently political nature of both the discourse on the middle classes and of the Commission, that was far removed from being a purely technical body (Bourdieu 1984). Fascism, therefore, found much of the groundwork had already been completed, with a part of the population that was prepared and ready to be “mobilized” as the middle class after the First World War. Fascism, indeed, was to recover more than one of the themes analyzed here in relation to the period under consideration, using them in a new context and exploiting them in line with its political project, namely the centrality of producers, paternalism and the “third way” in the framework of the corporate state.

Of course, this is not to deny the social existence of intermediate figures between the proletariat and the élites or to exaggerate the performative power of language to the extent of suggesting that the middle classes are merely a projection of the discourse. Without the transformation of the economic and State structures that dis-

course would never have emerged, and then there were the men and women (few) who brought it to life. In conclusion, the sources invite us to de-essentialize the middle classes (Bourdieu 1987). We could sum up by saying that the middle classes existed, as such, as an effect of the practices and discourses of those reformers, intellectuals and politicians committed to providing uniformity, positivity, legitimacy and a coherent political will to figures that did in reality exist, but were not unified.

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Chapter 3
How Central Is the Middle? Middle Class Discourses and Social Policy Design in Germany

Marlon Barbehön and Michael Haus

Abstract When it comes to assessing the status of the welfare state or the necessity of political reforms, in many countries the middle class serves as a major point of reference. In such debates, the middle class and the welfare state typically constitute an ambivalent relationship as the middle class is both financing and benefiting from the systems of social security. The middle class is therefore a particularly important target group to secure the functioning of social policies and the long-term stability of welfare institutions. At the same time, however, the socio-structural boundaries, the interests and the normative meaning of "the middle class" are not objectively given but find their way into political discourses and decisions through specific ways of perception and interpretation. As regards the design of social policies, "the middle class" can therefore be expected to serve as a major landmark for political orientation while at the same time it is open to a variety of meanings. Starting from here, the chapter investigates for the case of Germany how, firstly, "the middle class" becomes a meaningful discursive category in public debates and, secondly, how these discourses leave their marks in the design of social policies. By building on newspaper articles, we aim at identifying the discursive practices of constructing "the middle class" which then function as a major yardstick in political processes, both as an explicit target of welfare policies and as an implicit point of reference for negotiating "appropriate" policy designs.

Keywords Middle class · Social security · Discourses · Media · Policy design

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3.1 Introduction

In early May 2016, the *German Institute for Economic Research* (*Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung*, DIW) published a study with the latest insights into the development of the middle income bracket in Germany and the US (DIW 2016). One of the main findings was the continuing shrinking of the German and American middle classes, defined as those adults whose income falls between 67 and 200% of the median. The study states that both countries show a decline of this social stratum of about 6% since 1991, so that in Germany the share of middle-class individuals in the total population sank to 61%. Immediately following the study's publication, German media jumped on the bandwagon and spoke of "the disappearance"[1] or even "the slow death of the middle class",[2] thus interpreting the latest numbers as a major problem for German society as a whole. Only a little later, though, the DIW issued another press release and admitted a miscalculation in the course of comparing the heterogeneous data from Germany and the US, with the corrected figures showing (amongst other things) only a decline of the middle classes of around 5%.[3] Again, the media proved to be highly responsive and exhibited a mixture of relief and accusation, stating that the initially "sensational" results of the DIW were actually due to an "embarrassing mistake"[4] and that the corrected numbers were, instead of proofing the destruction of society, in fact showing "how well we are doing".[5]

It is not the aim here to highlight the methodological pitfalls of quantitative social structure analysis, to criticize the sensationalism of current media landscape or to judge whether 5% are "less dramatic" than 6%. Rather, we want to argue that this anecdote is paradigmatic for a deep-seated cultural pattern that is characteristic for Western societies in general (Wahrman 1995) and Germany in particular (Münkler 2014): a view on the middle class *as an indicator* for the situation of society as such and, following from that, a widespread concern for middle class status and dynamics, for its interests, hopes and desires. Particularly important in this respect is the *welfare state* which is regularly discussed in terms of its inability to absorb, or even its own contributions to, current threats to the middle class' well-being. Behind this discourse lies the basic notion that the collapse of the middle class is an inevitable sign for the degeneration of social and political structures, whereas its stability and flourishing is indicating society's health. As such, the

[1] http://www.wiwo.de/my/politik/deutschland/wohlstand-das-schwinden-der-mittelschicht/13540392.html (accessed on 2 June 2016). All quotations from German sources are the author's translations.

[2] http://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article155110496/Der-schleichende-Tod-der-deutschen-Mittelschicht.html (accessed on 2 June 2016).

[3] http://www.diw.de/sixcms/detail.php?id=diw_01.c.533695.de (accessed on 2 June 2016).

[4] http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/arm-und-reich/diw-korrektur-die-mittelschicht-schrumpft-weniger-als-gedacht-14229984.html (accessed on 2 June 2016).

[5] http://www.focus.de/finanzen/karriere/nach-duesterer-diw-prognose-von-wegen-die-mittelschicht-stirbt-neue-auswertung-zeigt-so-gut-geht-es-uns-wirklich_id_5529959.html (accessed on 2 June 2016).

category of the middle class functions as a "cypher" (Groh-Samberg et al. 2014: 220) or "symbol" (Lessenich 2009: 260) for making sense of complex societal, economic and political dynamics within the welfare state.

Seen from this perspective, the anecdote above appears in a different light, namely as an indication for a society's practices of observing, ordering and evaluating itself. The category of the middle class is of great influence for such practices as it is, on the one hand, historically deeply rooted – see e.g. Aristotle's reflections on the middle class as an essential ethical compass and an anchor for social stability[6] – and, on the other hand, open to a wide range of different meanings. DIW's definition of the middle class as an income bracket is only one of many possible conceptualisations (see Sect. 3.2 below), what points to the fact that public talk of "the middle class" does not refer to a neatly demarcated social space with clear boundaries and meanings. Rather, "the middle class" can be seen as a discursive category (Barbehön and Haus 2015; Haus 2015; Barbehön and Geugjes 2018 for a historical account see Wahrman 1995) which can be mobilized in a variety of causal and normative arguments. It follows that the relationship between the middle class and the systems of social security is also of contingent character, pointing to the significance of argumentative practices in positioning "the middle class" within "the welfare state".

It is this relationship between the middle class as a discursive category and the logics of welfare policies and institutions this chapter wants to address by applying a discourse-analytical perspective informed by interpretive approaches to policy studies (*cf.* Hajer 1995; Howarth and Griggs 2012; for welfare state research see Schram 1993, 2012). We will theoretically conceptualise and empirically investigate the (as we assume) interrelatedness of the collective practices of imagining society as being centred around a middle on the one hand and the construction and legitimisation of particular social policy designs on the other. We will begin our endeavour by examining the theoretical place of the middle class within welfare state theory and how a discourse-analytical perspective fits in (Sect. 3.2). In the following Sect. (3.3), we will investigate for the case of Germany how the middle class is discursively constructed with specific meanings in current media debates. Afterwards, and building on and refining the approach of Schneider and Ingram (1993), we will turn to the logics of social policy design and how it relates to the construction of target groups. Again using the example of Germany, we will give some tentative hints on the interrelationship between middle class discourses and social policy design (Sect. 3.4). In the final Sect. (3.5), we will summarize our main arguments and findings.

[6] *Politics*, book IV. For a contemporary intellectual adaption of this Aristotelian argument in the German discourse see Münkler 2014, pp. 50–51.

3.2 Middle Class (Discourse) and Welfare State

As regards the significance of classes for the emergence and development of modern welfare states, it is particularly the working class which for a long time stood a centre stage of welfare state research as it was assumed that it is (particularly or solely) this social stratum which calls for systems of social security (Korpi 1983; Esping-Andersen 1985). Today, though, it is widely recognised that the welfare state is "not only for the poor" (Goodin and Le Grand 1987) but also advantageous for the middle class (Baldwin 1990). Seen from a larger perspective, the middle class may be seen as a product of the welfare state which provided, and still provides, the basis for the development of a stable societal middle within (post)industrial economies (Lessenich 2009; Hilpert 2012). With regard to the German case more specifically, Esping-Andersen (1990: 27) highlights that the class category played a decisive role for the formation of the conservative regime as the systems of social security were typically constructed in a way to safeguard status differentials, and thus rights were usually attached to class and status. In this process, the middle class is of particular importance as the consolidation of the modern welfare states in the post-war period depended "fundamentally on the political alliances of the new middle classes" (Esping-Andersen 1990: 31). This logic is still observable today, with a stable and flourishing societal middle typically seen as proof that the social market economy is fulfilling its main functions adequately (see our analysis in Sect. 3.3 below). Therefore, the middle class is typically seen as being in a complex and ambiguous relationship vis-à-vis the welfare state as it is both financing and benefiting from social security systems. As regards the long-term legitimacy and stability of welfare institutions, it is thus the middle class which plays a particular decisive role in establishing and maintaining a welfare state consensus (Rothstein 1998).

Note that until now we spoke of the middle class as a given and distinct social group. However, this assumption is problematic as "the middle class" is not simply out there but the product of a particular way of sorting a (increasingly) complex social space (Bourdieu 1985; Wacquant 1991; Wahrman 1995). First of all it is obvious that "the middle" is a relational category which only makes sense with regard to constitutive others, typically the "under-" and "upper-class". But where to draw the boundaries between above and below is highly contingent, with different criteria – like income, occupation, education, habitus or conduct of life – leading to quite different assessments of what and where the middle of society is (*cf.* Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Groh-Samberg et al. 2014; Hastings and Matthews 2015). While research typically tries to handle this fluidity by building on ever more elaborate indicators and data, the problem remains that every analytical distinction is in some way arbitrary as it also could have been made in another fashion. Therefore, the definition of the middle class is a delicate practice of boundary-drawing rather than a neutral act of boundary-identification.

We thus want to propose a discourse-theoretical perspective which looks at the middle class *as a discursive category* (Barbehön and Haus 2015; Haus 2015; Barbehön and Geugjes 2018). Thinking in class structures is not ontologically given

but a particular way of sorting a complex and ambiguous world, and this practice does not only point to but rather constitute the very object it speaks of. Moreover, the "status" of the middle class and what "factors" influence it are again constituted by practices of articulating experiences, constructing causalities and representing knowledge. It is this kind of experience and knowledge that is (re)produced through collectively available storylines (Hajer 1995) about plausible ways of imagining and talking about the middle class. In this chapter, we therefore deliberately refrain from defining what the middle class "really is" (and whether it is "really" shrinking) and instead aim at reconstructing how the category of the middle class is collectively applied in current argumentative practices.

Starting from here, we propose to conceptualise the abovementioned *relationship between middle class and welfare state* in a discourse-theoretical way as well: Whereas (due to our post-positivist perspective which emphasizes contingency as regards social reality) we cannot assume any linear and mechanically determined causality between welfare state development and the formation of the middle class, nevertheless we argue that the development of the modern welfare state creates a social group that stands in an ambivalent relationship vis-à-vis the systems of social security. This group may then be imagined as occupying a "middle ground" – as compared to those "below" who are first and foremost benefiting from and those "above" who are mainly financing welfare state arrangements. Seen from this perspective, the need to establish and maintain a welfare state consensus is not only a question of distributing financial benefits and burdens. It is also to be seen as the discursive endeavour to construct and communicate a position for the middle class within the welfare state which argumentatively balances (perceived) benefits and burdens and which relates in a plausible way to the individual and collective perceptions in society (Haus 2015). Conceptualised in this way, it becomes understandable why public and academic discourse about the middle class does regularly not only relate to middle class members as such but also to the implications of their status for the well-being of society and the welfare state in general.

In sum, this conceptualisation calls for a discourse-analytical and interpretive perspective which does not strive for judging the position of the middle class within the welfare state from an "objective" point of view but which aims at reconstructing the discursive practices of imagining and positioning "the middle class" within "the welfare state". In the following, we will engage in such an analytical attempt by using the example of Germany.

3.3 The Middle Class As Discursive Category in Current German Media Debates

The following empirical analysis is extracted from a larger research project which investigates how "the middle" of society and politics becomes meaningful for collective perspectives on the welfare state in different contexts, i.e. in Germany,

Sweden and the United Kingdom. In this chapter we present, firstly, preliminary findings on the discursive practices of constructing "the middle class" (as a particular variant of the "social middle") in Germany, and, secondly, elaborate on the relevance of these practices for constructing and legitimising welfare state reforms and social policies. A major source for our analysis of middle class discourses is the national media which can be seen as a central space for constructing and communicating collective identities (Fairclough 1995). For the sake of the German case study, we resort to the daily newspapers *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) which are among the highest-circulation papers in Germany and which represent different poles as regards political orientation. To generate our data, we screened both newspaper archives for the year 2015 and transferred all articles with an explicit reference to *mid** (*Mitt**) to our corpus, leading to 748 articles for FAZ and 493 articles for SZ. Therefore, our corpus does not only contain articles which mention the "middle class" but also articles which refer to the "middle of society", the "political middle", "mid-sized companies" etc. The qualitative analysis of this vast amount of data is driven by the aim to identify recurring patterns in approaching the middle class, with a particular focus lying on how the middle class is defined as a social group and equipped with specific attributes, how the category of the middle class is used for diagnostic assessments about the status of society in general and the welfare state in particular, and how it is entangled in political arguments and claims (Hajer 1995; Keller 2011). In the following paragraphs, we will present a sample of our tentative findings by focussing on those attributions and arguments which seem particularly relevant for investigating the interrelationship between middle class discourses and social policy design (as presented in Sect. 3.4).

In the majority of instances, the German press identifies the middle class by referring to a set of shared values, norms and orientations. In this regard, the middle class is regularly associated with the *ability to act* and an *inclination towards self-determination*. The middle of society is specified as "the middle of the acting people" (FAZ, 13 November 2015) who are "autonomous" and orientate their conduct of life on questions of individual "performance" (FAZ, 25 January 2015). It is said that these people are "self-confident" and "want to take decisions" (FAZ, 22 March 2015), thus constituting the active and self-reliant core of society. As regards professional careers, we read that in the middle class the occupational position is typically chosen in relation to the question "what one really wants to do" (FAZ, 15 March 2015). Whereas in lower classes occupation is (implicitly) portrayed as being determined by existential considerations, in the middle class it appears as an act of self-fulfilment. As regards individual paths of life, middle class members "look confidently ahead" and perceive the unknown future first and foremost as a range of possibilities and options (SZ, 29 August 2015). Although it is regularly said that status security is increasingly endangered by economic and political transformations, still the middle class is associated with the ability to "plan" individual courses of life (SZ, 24 December 2015).

Typically, it is said that the basis for these abilities and attitudes is *education*. The middle class is imagined as a group of people "interested in culture and education"

(FAZ, 4 January 2015), with "educational attainment" being a "value of the middle class ever since" (FAZ, 25 January 2015). Middle class members are said to share a specific conduct of life which is organised around common "cultural codes" like taking "piano lessons and ballet classes" (FAZ, 25 January 2015). As compared to earlier times, it is "not only the head physician but also middle class members who are greedy for Abitur [the German university-entrance diploma] for their children" (SZ, 16 February 2015). At the same time, this strive for the highest school leaving certificate results in the tendency that also "the disadvantaged" increasingly pile into secondary school "as they recognise that education is the key issue within the middle class which they want to become part of" (FAZ, 25 January 2015). In sum, the very existence of the middle class is understood as proof "for the promise to every citizen that those who really make an effort during schooling and professional education will make their way" (SZ, 28 August 2015).

In addition to these imaginations of the middle class as a social group, newspaper articles regularly depict the "middle of society" as a distinct social space. The middle is portrayed as the incarnation of *rationality*, as a socio-political space characterised by the absence of emotional (and irrational) attitudes like "fear" (SZ, 29 August 2015) or "anger" (SZ, 12 December 2015). For the well-being of society in general, it is said that a culture "to talk without fear" is needed, and such a culture is first of all to be found "in the middle of our society" (FAZ, 28 September 2015). Accordingly, as regards political orientations the middle is understood as a "non-ideological" space (SZ, 8 April 2015). These attributions can be related to the abovementioned values of education and self-determination which form the very possibility for middle class members to engage in a rational project of sorting and evaluating complex social phenomena and to arrive at an unbiased conclusion. Moreover, the societal middle is frequently associated with *balance and compromise*, condensing in the formula "Mitte und Maß"[7] (inter alia FAZ, 28 November 2015; SZ, 12 December 2015) or "the golden middle ground" (SZ, 12 October 2015).[8] The middle of society is occupied by those "people who say 'yes, but' or 'on the one hand, on the other hand'" (SZ, 12 December 2015). Accordingly, it appears as particularly alarming when "reservations towards refugees" or "xenophobia" spread "even into the middle of society" (FAZ, 7 March 2015; SZ, 24 October 2015) or when "the democratic institutions and the welfare state" are criticised not only from the margins but "from the middle of society" (FAZ, 16 January 2015).

This preoccupation with the current middle class' status is closely linked to the way in which the social, political and economic development of the German post-war era is narrated retrospectively. In these instances, "a broad middle class" is

[7] "Mitte und Maß" is a popular saying which translates as "the doctrine of the mean" and thus identifies the middle ground as the moderate (cf. Münkler 2014).

[8] In a similar vein and on a more abstract level, Stone (2012, p. 191) argues that middles and averages often become norms in politics by conveying notions of normality, decency and acceptability. From the perspective of hegemonic theory, the idea of a middle ground (as exemplified e.g. in third way discourses) could also be read as a hegemonic arrangement that implies an overcoming of assumedly antiquated left-right-ideologies and thus turns political conflicts into mere technical problems (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, pp. xiv–xv; see also Bastow and Martin 2003).

depicted as "a major factor in the success of Germany's social market economy" (SZ, 27 August 2015) and associated with "the country's stability during the last decades" (SZ, 29 August 2015). The label *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* is associated with the promise that climbing up the social ladder to reach the middle class is possible as long as one "makes an effort during education and occupation": "The *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* is not only *sozial* because it assists the most vulnerable but also because it helps the majority of people to achieve wealth" (SZ, 12 December 2015).[9] From this perspective, the diagnosis of a shrinking middle class appears not only as a problem for those individuals confronted with social relegation but also as a profound problem which "threatens the core of the German model" (SZ, 12 December 2015). In these instances, we typically encounter a story of decline which contrasts (idealised) former times with the problematic status quo: "There are fundamental uncertainties, fears of job losses and worries about social decline. Everything that has been at the core of the middle class since the 19th century – education, property, assets – is endangered today. The job for a lifetime has disappeared almost entirely. The trust in the pension system, in the value of the home and in the financial investments has broken to pieces due to real estate crashes and economic crises. Everything is perishable, everything may collapse. That is the dominant attitude towards life of the middle class" (FAZ, 25 January 2015).

Against the background of these constructions, it becomes understandable why the well-being of the middle class is framed not only as a concern for middle class members themselves but as a central collective, i.e. political issue. The fact that "fear increasingly spreads into the middle class" is seen as proof that "politics have failed" (SZ, 29 August 2015) as politics should be "about the middle of society" (FAZ, 26 January 2015). In order to deal with this increase of uncertainty (in this case: in the context of the current "refugee crisis"), we read that an "involvement of the middle of society" is needed in order to enable the people to "work on their fears", for example by taking part in integration projects (SZ, 12 December 2015). The middle is thus addressed as a rational body that is able to settle its irrational fears on the basis of practical experience and good arguments. It is here where the abovementioned practice of constructing the middle class as the educated and rational core of society comes to light again, making a certain way of politically addressing its members to appear as effective and legitimate.

3.4 Middle Class Discourses and Social Policy Design

The empirical part above has shown how "the middle class" is discursively constructed with a specific meaning within current media debates in Germany. The middle class regularly functions as a stand-in for assessing the status of society as a whole, turning the interests, needs and desires of this stratum into a major political

[9] For an analysis of the concept of "Soziale Marktwirtschaft" in the hegemonic discourse in postwar Germany see Nonhoff (2006).

concern. We can thus expect that these discourses also leave their marks in the architecture and legitimisation of public policies. As argued in Sect. 3.2 above, the institutions, procedures and regulations of the welfare state seem particularly relevant as regards the interrelationship of discourses and public policies as the status of the middle class is typically related to the collective systems of social security. In the following two sections, we thus want to dig deeper into this relationship.

3.4.1 Conceptualising the Interrelationship Between Target Groups and Policy Design

The relevance of target groups as regards their interests and ways of behaviour has been at the heart of policy analysis for several decades. The concept of target group relevance is routed in the policy design literature and directs attention to the relationship between politically defined problems, desired ends and those people whose behaviour and expectations are linked to the difference between *is* and *ought*. From this perspective, for a policy to achieve its goals the targeted group needs to change its way of acting, e.g. by abandoning a behaviour a policy forbids or by taking an opportunity a policy offers (Sabatier and Mazmanian 1979). Whereas realist approaches to policy studies have conceptualised target populations as given social groups which need to be addressed in a particular way in order to secure the success of a policy-making initiative, in the wake of the post-positivist or interpretive turn several authors have suggested to look at target groups as variable products of social categorizations (Schneider and Ingram 1993; Yanow 2003). More or less explicitly building on arguments and insights from sociological theory on the role of the state in the genesis of social groups (e.g. Bourdieu 1985), these approaches share the idea that political and administrative practices do not only react to boundaries, interests, norms and identities of an ontologically given group but help to constitute, reproduce and transform these very features. From this perspective, the choice for and justification of a particular policy design is not to be conceived as a linear deduction from the target group's interests and desires. Rather, it is the product of a complex practice of ordering and interpreting an ambivalent social space, a practice which simultaneously responds to and constitutes the target group at hand.

As regards more specifically the interrelationship between target groups and policy design, the work of Schneider and Ingram (1993, 2005; Schneider et al. 2014) is particularly relevant. At the heart of their approach is the argument that the answer to the classical question of "who gets what, when and how?" does not lie in a target group's naturally given properties but in the way the group is socially constructed. Under the heading of "social construction" Schneider and Ingram (1993: 335) refer to "(1) the recognition of the shared characteristics that distinguish a target population as socially meaningful, and (2) the attribution of specific, valence-oriented values, symbols, and images to the characteristics". Their classic example – which has been extensively discussed during the last decades (see the literature review from Pierce et al. 2014) – is the categorization of a group as

"deserving" or "undeserving", leading to opposing conclusions with regard to who is seen as a legitimate recipient of welfare benefits and who is blamed for being in a self-inflicted dependency. Schneider and Ingram argue that it is first and foremost the political conceptualisation and evaluation of a target group which informs, on the one hand, the allocation of benefits and burdens and, on the other hand, the choice for a particular policy design option.

As regards the latter, Schneider and Ingram more specifically speak of *policy tools* or *policy rationales* in order to grasp the underlying ideas, stocks of knowledge and interpretive patterns which form the basis of a particular architecture of regulation (1993: 338–340). Policy rationales can be seen as a condensed form of knowledge of how to "legitimately" speak to a target group and how to "effectively" change its behaviour. Analytically speaking, as compared to the allocation of benefits and burdens, a policy rationale is thus located at a more basic or abstract level. As an *underlying* principle, it is not (always) apparent at the surface of a particular decision; moreover, one can expect a policy rationale to inform a variety of different policies within a certain field of political intervention. At the same time, however, a policy rationale is not to be seen as a substance which is stable across time and space as it is based (amongst other things) on the collective perception of the target group which has nothing definitive about it. Based on these considerations, one can build a bridge from Schneider and Ingram's reflections towards the *discourse-theoretical* strand within policy analysis. As far as a discourse is seen as "an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations" (Hajer 1995: 44) that regulates which and how objects are constituted as meaningful entities, a policy rationale can be conceptualised as a particular variant of a "discursive ensemble" that comprises a collective understanding of (in this case) the boundaries and characteristics of a target group and how to address it "effectively" and "legitimately". These discourses may then become "institutionalized" (Hajer 1995: 61) in the form of specific policy decisions, design choices and administrative apparatus.

How do these considerations relate to *middle class discourses* more specifically? As compared to the perspective of Schneider and Ingram (and others building on their line of thought), we need further theoretical efforts as regards the significance of this particular target group discourse. As has been shown in the reconstruction of the German discourse in Sect. 3.3 above, "the middle class" does not always appear as an entity that is explicitly addressed as a target group of particular social policies. The middle class is rather used as a basic point of reference to order and interpret social, economic or political phenomena. It regularly appears as a stand-in for the common good, as the seemingly self-evident core of society that deserves public and political attention. The middle class is the personified proof that a capitalist society is not necessarily a society divided in a small class of profiteers and a large class of exploited. It is the anchor of the idea that social mobility according to effort and merit is possible. Thus, one can expect "the middle class" to play a decisive role for social policy design even when it is not explicitly addressed as the target group of the policy at hand. At some points of political history, we can recognise manifestations of the middle class as an otherwise hidden target group, when e.g. entire reform agendas are linked to the imagination of a certain middle class, like "the new middle"

in former chancellor Gerhard Schröder's formulation of third way ideas in Germany.[10] This poses the analytical challenge to investigate the interrelationship between middle class discourses and social policy design even in those instances where there is no explicitly articulated relationship whatsoever. Furthermore, we have to be sensitive for social constructions that address certain facets of the broad category of "the middle class" or "the middle of society" – e.g. references to "the educated middle class", "the self-conscious middle class", "the new middle class" etc.

To handle this challenge, we propose a further analytical differentiation to the classical target group perspective of Schneider and Ingram. We can imagine constellations where (1) the middle class functions as a target group of policy decisions or reform programmes. This constellation may come in two variants, with the middle class being either (1a) the explicitly addressed target group (what parallels Schneider and Ingram's perspective) or (1b) the hidden and therefore not explicitly mentioned addressee of a policy intervention. The second variant (1b) can be identified when expectations, perceptions and values are referred to in the justification of policies which are widely believed to be characteristic for the middle class in a society – take for example the reference to "autonomy" as a central concern of "educated" men and women in policy designs that promise to overcome "bureaucracy" or "paternalism".[11] As Rothstein argues, this logic has been at the heart of the universal welfare state in order to establish and maintain a broad consensus about its redistributive measures (1998: 197–198). By guaranteeing citizens the right to choose between different service options, the welfare state tries to secure the general support of the decisive middle class for the collective financing of these services – without necessarily naming the middle class as the particular target group. More specifically, this technique of not explicitly naming or even deliberately masking the middle class as the "real" target group is also imaginable e.g. in a discursive environment where the middle class is publicly debated as a disproportionately privileged group that is accused of capturing welfare services (Barbehön and Haus 2015: 479; Haus 2015: 163–165) and where, thus, the strategy of explicitly legitimising a policy by referring to middle class expectations does not appear as politically opportune. To be sure, these examples are not exhaustive and there are certainly more variants to think of, what ultimately points to the need of careful empirical investigation of argumentative practices.

Alongside these constellations where the middle class functions as an explicit or implicit target group, we need to consider constellations where (2) social policies are geared towards other social groups (e.g. "the poor" or "the under-class") but

[10] During the 1990s, the Social Democratic Party of Germany discovered "the new middle" (Die Neue Mitte) as their basic political orientation and strategic label. The idea was heavily influenced by the third way discourse of New Labour in the United Kingdom which claimed a middle ground between a neoliberal market economy and an encompassing welfare state as promoted by "classic" social democracy. In 1998, the social democrats under the leadership of Gerhard Schröder emerged victorious from the general elections and replaced the liberal-conservative government by forming a coalition with the Green Party (Braunthal 1999).

[11] See Haus and Lamping (2010) and their reference to exit, voice and choice as design principles connected to widely shared perceptions of middle class orientations.

where the middle class nevertheless serves as a functional or normative point of reference. This may be the case e.g. when (the public legitimisation of) a policy portrays the middle class as an individual conduct of life that those "below" should align to and preferably join in sooner or later, or when the political treatment of certain social groups simultaneously conveys a message to the middle class (Schneider and Ingram 1993: 335) – take for example the tightening of sanctions for "the self-inflicted unemployed" which may deliver the message that the middle class' solidarity and financial contributions will not be overstretched. This logic can be identified for example in the German labour market reforms of the early 2000s which highlighted individual responsibilities of the unemployed and, thus, sent out the message that individuals who are reluctant to work cannot rely on the solidarity of the "hard-working middle class" which is basically financing the systems of social security – or in the words of former chancellor Gerhard Schröder: "there is no right to laziness" (Kaufmann 2013: 123 and passim). As is the case with variant (1) described above, this role of "the middle class" can also either be (2a) explicitly articulated or (2b) implicitly conveyed. To give an example for the latter, a welfare policy may speak to "the (un)deserving poor" as a group that needs "activation" in order to be able to participate in the labour market and to care for itself – a capability that is typically ascribed to middle class members (see Sect. 3.4.2 below). In any case, the middle class is not the target group whose behaviour is to be changed by the policy intervention but rather the desired target mark for the behaviour of others. The following matrix summarizes these different constellations.

It is obvious that to empirically analyse these constellations we need an interpretive perspective which refrains from positivist methodologies as the discursive structuration of underlying policy rationales is nothing we can measure in a "positive" sense, particularly as regards variant (1b) and (2b). Moreover, to hypothesize an interrelationship between discourses and policy design is not to say that the former causally leads to the latter (or the other way around) in a linear and determinist fashion; rather, the aim is to reconstruct the reciprocal relationship between practices of ordering political problems, social groups and the rationales of policy decisions. In the following, we will give some examples for the German case to illustrate how such an interpretive investigation into middle class discourses and policy design may look like (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Variants of relationships between middle class discourses and social policy design

		The middle class as …	
		… target group	… reference point (in the course of targeting others)
The reference to the middle class made …	… explicit	(1a) policy design that e.g. decisively speaks to (assumed) middle class interests	(2a) policy design that e.g. decisively aims at enabling social upward mobility into the middle class
	… implicit	(1b) policy design that e.g. provides choice options and increases autonomy	(2b) policy design that e.g. aims at activating the inactive

Source: The author's own compilation.

3.4.2 *Tracing Middle Class Discourses in Welfare Policies in Germany*

The transformation of European welfare states during the last decades has been described extensively and from a variety of conceptual angles (for many see Pierson 2001; Bonoli and Natali 2012). Research regularly points to both paradigmatic shifts in the organisation of well-established areas of social security like labour market policies, old-age security or educational policy, and to the emergence and political regulation of "new social risks" (Taylor-Gooby 2004) related to changes in demography or family structures. Research suggests that these transformations are not adequately captured with the notion of welfare state retrenchment; rather, they have to be seen as a much more complex and multifaceted process of reconfiguration. The German case is no exception in this regard. The "traditional meaning of social policy as preventing risks", as Blum and Kuhlmann (2016: 145) summarize, "has continually been replaced by new arrangements that rather foresee a mixture between preventing risks and opening up opportunities". As concerns labour market policies, which will form the primary source of empirical examples in the following paragraph, one can observe an increasing orientation towards the marketization of services and means-tested benefits (Seeleib-Kaiser 2002), accompanied by a set of specific policy rationales like activation, autonomy or employability.

How can these (new) principles be related to the middle class discourse as described in Sect. 3.3 above? To begin with, the notion of *activation* is typically described as a major component of recent labour market reforms (see several contributions in Bothfeld et al. 2012). Basically, the concept builds on the presupposition that the addressee of an activating intervention possesses to some extent both an interest and the capacity to participate in the shaping of its individual social situation. In turn, this assigns to the welfare state the task to lift these resources and abilities through an adequate practice of initiation (Ullrich 2004: 145–148). Moreover, as activating practices are geared towards specific social strata, a frontier becomes visible which more or less explicitly distinguishes between those "in need of activation" and those "already activated" or "active on their own". For the aim of activating the inactive to make sense at all, it is a precondition to construct a group of people as already being active and to identify those people as the normative ideal in society. And as the reconstruction of the German discourse above has shown, it is particularly the middle class which is regularly constructed as a group of autonomous and self-reliant beings that is said to constitute the active core of society.

To speak with the differentiation introduced above, we can thus interpret the principle of activation as a policy rationale which is not (primarily) addressing the middle class as such but which nevertheless is entangled with the collective imagination of the middle class as the active and self-reliant part of society those "below" should follow suit (Lessenich 2009: 268; Schram 2012: 242). At the same time, however, the principle of activation and the accompanying individualisation of responsibilities can also be seen to undermine the traditional idea of status security. This in turn is reflected in the regularly articulated diagnosis that uncertainty has

spread even within the middle class due to labour market changes (Gronbach 2012: 53–54). It is also reflected in the political rhetoric of a "new" middle class that is obviously more responsible, innovative and risk-taking than the "old", saturated and immobile middle class (which might not be explicitly mentioned, though). The rationale of activation can thus be interpreted to constitute an ambivalent relationship with middle class discourses: on the one hand, it serves as point of orientation for addressing those "below/behind" and those "above/ahead"; on the other hand, it is the argumentative source for problematizing a growing uncertainty within the middle class itself.

Related to (but not congruent with) the principle of activation is the notion of *autonomy* and the accompanying provision of *choice options*. Welfare state reforms are regularly described as being characterised by the intention to abandon (what is perceived to be) uniform and patronising social security systems in favour of providing a variety of services the individual is asked to choose from (Ullrich 2004; for Sweden see Blomqvist 2004). A paradigmatic example from German labour market policies is the introduction of a training voucher system for jobseekers (Bruttel 2005). Whereas the provision of vocational training has been contracted out to private providers for decades in Germany, the voucher system introduces a new component in that it is no longer the public purchaser who selects suitable services but the individual jobseeker who chooses among a variety of (officially accredited) service providers. Thus, and as is the case with activation, the idea of choice options constructs and speaks to a particular subjectivity: The traditional "welfare recipient" is transformed into an "economic subject" (Lessenich 2012: 46) that is requested to collect information, to calculate costs and benefits and to choose the alternative which suites her/him best. The individual is asked to work on its *employability* in a complex arrangement of individual autonomy, public support and administrative oversight in order to guard against the insecurities of the labour market (Crouch and Keune 2012: 56–57).

It is here where we can find a point of contact with the German middle class discourse which depicts the middle of society as a group of people who exhibit both the ability and the personal motivation to conduct a practice of self-optimisation and who are thus explicitly demanding suitable individual solutions. Therefore, and as compared to the notion of activation, autonomy and choice options constitute a different relationship with middle class discourses as the latter rationales are geared more directly towards (what is perceived to be) the interests of the middle class itself. The middle class functions as a target group rather than being a point of reference when addressing others. Accordingly, research into the effects of the vouching system shows that it is the more highly qualified jobseekers who are better able to articulate their training needs and to take an active role in the search for suitable providers (Bruttel 2005: 398). From this perspective, the rationale to individualise the responsibility for finding and organising welfare services is not only about retrenching public responsibilities. It is also a way to speak to the perceived expectations of the middle class which is said to call for flexible arrangements that increase individual autonomy – a strategy that may even serve to legitimise welfare cuts (Gronbach 2012: 45).

3.5 Conclusions

In this chapter we have chosen an interpretive approach to the question in how far the middle class serves as a point of reference in welfare state (reform) discourses. We have pointed both to the deep historical roots of the middle class in Western political thinking in general and in the German culture in particular, and to the prominence of references to the middle class in current German public discourse.

On a theoretical level we have argued that there is a general problem to be solved by welfare states, namely to establish robust relationships with those that are neither clear beneficiaries nor sheer financiers of the welfare state, and that this general problem materializes in and is mediated through discourses that position and problematize the middle class in the welfare state. The middle is not just an existing target group of (social) policies – it is a group that is constructed by welfare state discourse in the search for an answer to the question why those who are not poor and not necessarily dependent on state action still shall give support to the welfare state. Seen in this light, middle class discourses order individual and collective experiences, generate patterns of attention and (de)legitimise particular welfare state reforms, even where there is no direct and explicit reference to the middle class as a target group of a certain policy. Consequently, we have developed four different categories for estimating the relevance of the middle class (understood in a discursive way) for legitimising policies, including implicit and indirect forms. We have then discussed the reference to activity and autonomy as part of discursive practices that appeal to a horizon of middle class meanings without necessarily naming the middle class itself. We can also see that a reference to the middle class does not necessarily mean that the middle class is the clear beneficiary of policies. It might even become, as indicated by the example of activation policies, the victim of its own hegemonic position.

The approach developed here needs further elaboration and, obviously, empirical research. Conceptually, the relationship between middle class and welfare discourses on the one hand, and the design of policies on the other, is of special interest. As we have argued, the middle class is not only a group whose support is needed for welfare policies, but it is also shaped by the provision of social services and occupational opportunities within the welfare system itself. It may, therefore, well be the case that the German preoccupation, if not obsession with the middle class cannot be found in other countries, because the general problem of integrating the middle class in the welfare state has been worked upon in a different way (as our first insights into the Swedish case indicate; see Barbehön et al. 2016; Barbehön and Geugjes 2018). If policies are understood as narratives and ideas transformed into decisions and institutionalised in organisational structures and rules, i.e. as "sedimented systems of discourse" (Howarth and Griggs 2012: 307) and as "condensed form of knowledge" (Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007: 3), they structure the discursive space for following communication. Different welfare policies might thus be historically related to different kinds of framing middle class concerns. Our assumption, however, is that in some way these concerns will always play a role in constructing welfare state policies.

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Part II
Sketching the Outlines of Target Groups

Chapter 4
Frame, Funnel, Deter: The Mechanisms of Behavioral Targeting

Elisa Chelle

Abstract Conditioning welfare on behavior is now seen by most experts as a fair and efficient set of tools to tackle long-term poverty. Inspired from behavioral economics and social experiments, behavioral targeting has a solid scientific and moralistic background. How can this cognitive dimension impact efficiency? How do policymakers determine who qualifies as the deserving poor? How does eligibility evolve depending on popular conceptions of the "legitimate recipient" at a given time and place? What is the cost of (a) narrow targeting?

Based on field research and semi-structured interviews about two contemporary conditional cash transfers in the U.S. and in France, this chapter contributes to these debates by theorizing how a moral agenda is made. Picking the right incentives is thought by experts to be conducive to socially desirable outcomes. A more thorough analysis reveals that exposing behaviors of the poor to public scrutiny provides the grist for moral government.

The task of alleviating poverty thus appears less a matter of bettering living conditions than reassessing core social values that structure social stratification. By assigning economic value to moral worth, this kind of anti-poverty program primarily targets the middle class, broadly understood. This gap between policy targets and policy audience compels us to reconsider the notion of efficacy in social policy.

Keywords Comparison · Poverty · Conditionality · Incentives · Moral values

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4.1 Introduction

Retrenchment and devolution are two defining features of contemporary anti-poverty policy.[1] They bring about new meaning to the centuries-old notion of deservingness. Helping the poor has long involved beliefs, power relations and public display of compassion. In the US, organized philanthropy was the first significant effort to rationalize poor relief according to management principles over the second half of the nineteenth century. Economics growing as the main source of evidence for designing public policy after WW2 provided new tools to take this rationalization further. From the end of the 1980s on, the question became how to "target economic transfers".

Selecting targets for a given social program entails justifications and allocation criteria. This chapter analyzes behavioral conditionality at the scheme level as well as at the administrative level in a cross-national comparative perspective.[2] Conditionality, as defined by Spicker et al. (2007: 37–38) is a combination of means-testing, targeting (differential treatment by subcategories) and political as well as moral justification (to "avoid moral hazard"). American and French anti-poverty argumentative strategies (Forester and Fischer 1993; Gasper 1996) rely on both scientific and moral arguments, what could also be called "crafted arguments" (Stone 2012), a mix of evidence and persuasion (Majone 1989), or of cognitivist and normative justifications (König 2015).

How Opportunity NYC differed from previous initiatives? The Americans chose to divide the universe of the poor into small components. They did not only target certain categories of the poor, but specific behaviors at the individual level, both adults and children. About 20 "incentives" were singled out to encourage "targets" getting out of poverty (for instance, signing up for a library card encourages reading, which in the program is worth $30). The research part, evaluating the program with a randomized-controlled experiment, was nothing new in the US. But it was in France, where the Constitution had to be modified to allow this innovation to take

[1] I am indebted to Alix Meyer and Jean-Baptiste Velut for their valuable and helpful comments on the initial draft of this chapter.

[2] It relies on field research and results from a political science doctoral dissertation defended in 2011 at Sciences Po Grenoble, France. My dissertation looked at the circulation and translation of an experimental conditional cash transfer from the US (Opportunity NYC) to France (*Revenu de Solidarité Active*). It put forth the politics and networks at works in a social agenda-setting. 81 semi-structured interviews with elected officials and top managers were conducted in New York and Paris. The point was not to compare the French and US welfare states, *à la* Esping-Andersen, but to document the growing role of conditionality in social policy. The New York case offered a quite refined version of conditionality, in a context where welfare reform and economics are prominent. The French attempted to emulate the model, in an ambivalent setting of traditional resistance to individualization of social benefits and of promotion of incentives to cut welfare budgets. Despite being most different cases, behavioral conditionality happened to produce considerable administrative costs, thus switching the major costs of social programs from benefits to operating agencies. That appeared more acceptable to the public, yet not achieving the promise of a more efficient anti-poverty strategy.

place (because of the differential treatment the experiment would induce between the *départements*). The French only upheld the work factor as an incentive to get out of poverty. In both cases, behavioral conditionality worked as a magnified version of targeting cash assistance.

Social experiments are temporary small-scale programs used to measure efficiency. Randomized-controlled trials (RCTs) are known as the "gold standard" to identify causal relationships. They are the main tool to generate evidence supporting a policy, or to justify reorientation. A rationalist fallacy underlies the promotion of incentives to target the deserving poor. In the cases studied, the approach is an attempt to overcome the shortcomings of mere economism (Wolff and Haubrich 2009: 750). This raises the issue of what happens when theoretical components are coded into public policy mechanism. What can be observed with the case of Opportunity NYC is that economics is not the sole discipline at stake. The whole background of behavior modification derives from a jigsaw of disciplinary subfields that tend to undermine sociological and contextual factors. Psychology and economics corner the production of arguments of authority when it comes to determining "what works."

The New York program will receive particular attention in this chapter for it has been the "source" of the behavioral approach to targeting the poor. I consider it a "model", not in the sense that it would be an exemplary template, but as a script replicated in other contexts. Mayor Bloomberg claimed to have been inspired by a Mexican program (*Oportunidades*) and he stated from the outset that Opportunity NYC should be scaled up at the national level (Smith et al. 2014). New York has been standing as an "urban laboratory" for new policy formula well before Opportunity NYC (Berg 2007: 269; Chelle 2013). France, on the contrary, has been reluctant to conduct small-scale experiments. With a centralized, legalistic, public-funded administrative apparatus, the French could have been the least likely to adopt a self-reliance and market-type mechanism blueprint for tackling poverty. Yet, the conjunction of personal networks, the aura of the "American way", and contraction of the scope of the State led French officials to attempt a (somewhat) new kind of reform.

The rapprochement of Opportunity NYC and the RSA is not a figment of the political scientist's imagination. A French sociologist published in 2009 a book about Martin Hirsch's endeavor in the Fillon administration (then Prime minister of Nicolas Sarkozy). In a laudatory tone, she relates a conversation between the Secretary and one of his communication advisors. Martin Hirsch said: "I remember him [Nicolas Sarkozy] looking surprised. I just told him that I spoke with Bloomberg about the RSA [...] during a whole night, that this reform greatly interested him. And that Bloomberg was blown away." (Dagnaud 2009: 22). This account is more than interesting reading. In 2010, Martin Hirsch released a book in which he claims to have "learned about the experimental method [...] thanks to one of [his] cousins, Judy Gueron, who was the head of a New York-based foundation entirely devoted to social experimentation" (Hirsch 2010: 323–324). The "foundation" was actually

a nonprofit research institute focused on social policy evaluation, MDRC.[3] Despite slight overstatements, the anecdote reveals more than mere self-promotion.

On November, 23 of 2007, Gordon Berlin, the current president of the MDRC (the successor of Judy Gueron), was invited to Grenoble, a midsize city southeast of France. That was a few months after Martin Hirsch joined the Fillon administration. The context was the opening conference of a nationwide event called the "*Grenelle de l'insertion*".[4] Berlin gave a speech about "Experimentation and social welfare policymaking in the United States", in which he laid out an overview of MDRC's mission and presented the Opportunity NYC experiment as "a new pilot project with a rigorous evaluation component", whose goal "is to reduce family poverty in the short run, to help families obtain self-sufficiency through increased work and training over the intermediate term, and to reduce intergenerational transfer of poverty over the long run".[5]

The idea of a conditional cash transfer assorted with an experimental evaluation design was on its way. From one side of the Atlantic to the other, a number of features that make the US "data-driven" culture so distinctive got lost in the ocean. Yet, behavioral conditionality made it to France. And it did so by using a science-based approach to legitimize a narrow version of social benefits targeting.

The argument presented in this chapter is threefold. "Framing the legitimate" sheds light on the politics of behavioral targeting. Allocating money to the poor requires legitimating the expense to the larger contributing segment of the population, the middle-class. The campaign hits a broader audience than the program itself, which influences the targeting of benefits itself. In "funneling the eligible", I examine the geographical and administrative criteria used to narrow down the target population. "Deterring the non-compliant" means that being enlisted in an anti-poverty program does not automatically lead to receiving cash assistance. The poor have to behave a certain way, and to prove that they did by submitting appropriate proofs. Social workers operate within a grey zone intended to "nudge" the needy and willing poor.

4.2 Framing the Legitimate

Policy discourses are not just words intended to manipulate the public. They are used to reorder reality according to the dominant values within a society. What is the justification for an anti-poverty initiative? When elected officials and their staff

[3] Formerly known by its full name, Manpower Development Research Corporation production of evidence has played a significant role in welfare reform, sustaining the idea that "the poor would be actually better off without welfare" (Somers and Block 2005: 280).

[4] "Grenelle" refers to *rue de Grenelle*, where government officials, trade unions, nonprofit and forprofit leaders met in May 1968 to come to an agreement to tackle social issues.

[5] "Experimentation and social welfare policymaking in the United States", November 2007, MDRC. http://www.mdrc.org/publication/experimentation-and-social-welfare-policymaking-united-states. Last retrieved on Nov. 15, 2016.

undertake a new project, they pursue an internal strategy as well as they address a wider public. It has been argued that downsizing the scope of the welfare state diminished its support base, since fewer people could claim benefits (Goodin and Le Grand 1987; De Donder and Hindriks 1998). More targeted benefits can thus become less assistance for the poor themselves (Andries 1996: 210). If the poor are to be helped, it has to happen in the public eye. The real public is not so much the poor themselves, but the median portion of society, holding views, votes and values.

This subpart compares the communication strategies deployed by the American and French teams. The point here is not to develop a discourse analysis. Rather, our aim is to take into consideration policy rationales, as "important elements of policy design because they serve legitimate policy goals, the choice of target populations and policy tools." (Schneider and Ingram 1993: 339). They draw from common-sense assumptions about the poor: living on welfare is preferable to working, poverty is caused by bad choices, dependency should not be encouraged by any social program whatsoever (Rein 2001: 214). In a context of budget cuts and greater emphasis on personal responsibility, it became even less socially acceptable not to be self-sufficient. For those needing "a hand up" (and "not a handout", as the political motto says), the program promises to be more selective within the poorest segments of the population. Nevertheless, in the case of the New York program, "tax payer money" was not involved at any point of the process. The funds entirely came from outside sources, all foundations.[6]

Relying on public monies is commonly condemned by voters, in a country traditionally hostile to government intervention (Blank 2010: 178–179). Though social programs tend to be more numerous and get more support in New York. Philanthropic dollars allowed Bloomberg to circumvent other governing instances[7] (the City Council or the State of New York, held and led by Democrats) while giving his detached elite persona a little bit of a softer touch. The somehow unusual format of the program put up stiff opposition from both Republicans and Democrats, which comforted his posturing as an independent politician. Last but not least, the availability of private money allowed the Bloomberg team to ignore the public budgetary calendar, and the kind of accountability attached to it. A manager of the Rockefeller Foundation reflects this attitude:

> "The mayor and the CEO were clear at the outset that this is highly experimental and so the feeling was that it would be inappropriate to use tax payer money to fund this given that we didn't know if it would be effective or even it were somewhat effective, what the total cost-benefit would look like. It seemed really appropriate to use philanthropic money which almost by definition has a higher risk appetite. So Rockefeller put in some significant funding and then helped the CEO identify additional funders." (Interview, Oct. 12, 2009, The Rockefeller Foundation, New York)

[6] Mainly the Bloomberg Family Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, followed by AIG Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Broad Foundation, The MacArthur Foundation, New York Community Trust, The Open Society Institute, The Robin Hood Foundation and the Starr Foundation.

[7] When targeting is operated within a legal framework, it is open to litigation (Parsons 1991; Zatz 2012).

Changing the culture and behavior of the poor is a common theme in philanthropic action (O'Connor 1999: 174). "Welfare behaviorism" has been qualified as a conservative "attempt to reprogram the behavior of the poor" (Stoesz 1997: 68). Yet, the idea entered the routine of neighborhood organizations (Camou 2005: 205). Opportunity NYC strove for such a "behavior modification" by making financial aid[8] a condition of "good choices", as M. Bloomberg laid out in 2007:

> "This policy is called 'conditional cash transfers', and it is designed to address the simple fact that the stress of poverty often causes people to make decisions – to skip a doctor's appointment, or to neglect other basic tasks – that often only worsen their long-term prospects. Conditional cash transfers give them an incentive to make sound decisions instead."[9]

The motto for Opportunity NYC was "Do the right thing". It was used by the Mayor in public appearances and by "street-level bureaucrats". The poor were assumed to be beckoned by the monetary incentives first, and then to make a habit of those common-sense behaviors. Such a narrative (Roe 1994; Miller 2012) was also a way to show the general public that money was not going down the "undeserving drain" (Katz 1989; Schram 2012). Poverty treatment put a moral economy at stake. It can be seen as: "political theaters for a performance of American values." (Epstein 2002: 15). The targeting choices are consistent with that moral landscape: "As for target groups, especially in the USA, various studies have provided evidence that normative images of categories of poor people play an important role in the support for welfare and social security schemes" (Van Oorschot 2008: 270). The United States and France notably differ in this area.

As opposed to the conception of personal responsibility prevailing in the U.S., poverty tends to be perceived as a non-voluntary condition in Europe (Alesina and Glaeser 2004: 183). In France especially, the State is the entity expected to protect its "vulnerable" citizens. Yet, over the last three decades, the activation trend keeps affecting how poverty is tackled (Béland and Hansen 2000; Barbier 2009). This resulted in several substantial changes in the way social policy reforms are defended and implemented (Gilbert 2013; Dubois 2016). "Unconditional" or "universal" approaches should "be replaced by measures designed to stimulate movement into the paid labour force" (Gilbert 2005: 9).

The case made for "Not a dime for idleness" was a prominent feature of the right-wing government rhetoric in passing the RSA.[10] Martin Hirsch, "Secretary of Active Solidarity" (an *ad hoc* title) used that phrase during parliamentary debates to advocate for the reform he was in charge of. As a top civil servant accustomed to left-wing and Christian nonprofits networks, now serving in a right-wing administration, the framing came out as quite narrow and moralistic. Communicating on deservingness was in compliance with the presidential "moral agenda" (Fellowes and Rowe 2004: 363) and campaign platform: "work more to earn more". Work, not

[8] Opportunity NYC supplemented the existing relief system.

[9] Speech: "Mayor Bloomberg Announces the Recommendations of the Mayor's Commission for Economic Opportunity", Sept. 18, 2006 [www.nyc.gov/html/om/html/2006b/speech_091806.html]. Last retrieved on Nov. 15, 2016.

[10] Further information on Nicolas Sarkozy's platform in Knapp 2013.

just looking for work, was henceforth held as a requirement for assistance. Incentives appeared as a tool to reinforce that norm (Anne and L'Horty 2012; Vlandas 2013) and to sustain income maintenance. The spirit was in line with "ending welfare as we knew it", Bill Clinton's motto for the 1996 welfare reform. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act ended welfare as an entitlement and turned it into a time-limited cash assistance (Temporary Aid to Needy Families). Such positions come down to the classic Lasswell question – who gets what, when and how? –, that can be reformulated as "strategic targeting" in the realm of social policy.[11]

The work conditionality became so self-evident that the left-wing opposition leveled only weak criticism against it. Since it was virtually impossible for the French socialist party to be against any anti-poverty measure, the opposition faltered. The RSA initiative was merely blamed for not committing enough funds to prove itself effective. How can we account for this absence of structured opposition? Deservingness is one component of the moral foundations of the welfare State, that social assistance puts into the limelight.[12] Work remains the main way to accomplish success, morally superior to birth and wealth.[13] This value-configuration calls for an emulative demonstration of (willingness to) work within society.[14] That is the reason why the widely spread political slogan "work more to earn more" rallied large segments of support.

The RSA has also been justified on the basis of the complexity of the then-current administrative system. That is the second set of arguments. This technocratic justification came from what is called in France "central administration", meaning State departments located in the capital. Their historical role is to provide advice to ministers when a reform is contemplated or undertaken. French social benefits are fragmented in a number of subsidies targeting different subcategories of the population: the handicapped, the unemployed not entitled to unemployment benefits, single mothers with dependent children, work-conditioned refundable tax credit… Similar divisions exist in the US (Skocpol 1991). Thus, the argument used by French reformers was to make a single benefit out of five existing allowances. This strategy failed but was prominent at a certain point of the public debate, before the law was passed.

"Do the right thing" and "not a dime for idleness" are social policy leitmotivs emanating from right-wing administrations. They create division respectively within democratic and socialist camps and arouse support from the general public.

[11] "Strategic targeting is about the ideological and political question of who gets what and why." (Van Oorschot 2001:241).

[12] "Social assistance provides us with a 'litmus test' regarding the moral foundations of the welfare state" (Sachweh et al. 2007:123).

[13] If work has became a religion in and of itself, this political rhetoric certainly pertains to the category of "secular prayers" (Burke 1945:393).

[14] This debate emerged with the industrial society. Thorstein Veblen (1898:190) mentions this conception of an "industrial" or "economic merit", embedded in his dichotomy between "instinct of workmanship" and "irksomeness of labor".

Framing the legitimate uses the middle class as a proxy to advance a political strategy. But what are middle-class values? "The middle class" is an ambiguous *discursive category* (or an empty signifier in the sense of Laclau and Mouffe) that is applied to negotiate the self-understanding of society" (Barbehön and Haus 2015: 476). The literature shows that middle-class values are not even confined to middle-class people. The poor themselves may share some misconceptions about poverty (Williamson 1974). Behavioral conditionality does not stop at defining who is legitimate to receive assistance. It is added to other policy mechanisms, such as the administrative process of funneling the eligible.

4.3 Funneling the Eligible

The first level, framing the legitimate, relates to public discourse and general policy purpose. The second step of the process is what I would call "funneling the eligible". Within those who are considered deserving support, an administrative procedure determines eligibility criteria. This means-testing part assesses the extent of need (Handler and Hollingsworth 1971: 75), but is not merely technical. Bachrach and Baratz (1970) showed how the values of the dominant group were entangled to administrative procedures within anti-poverty policy.

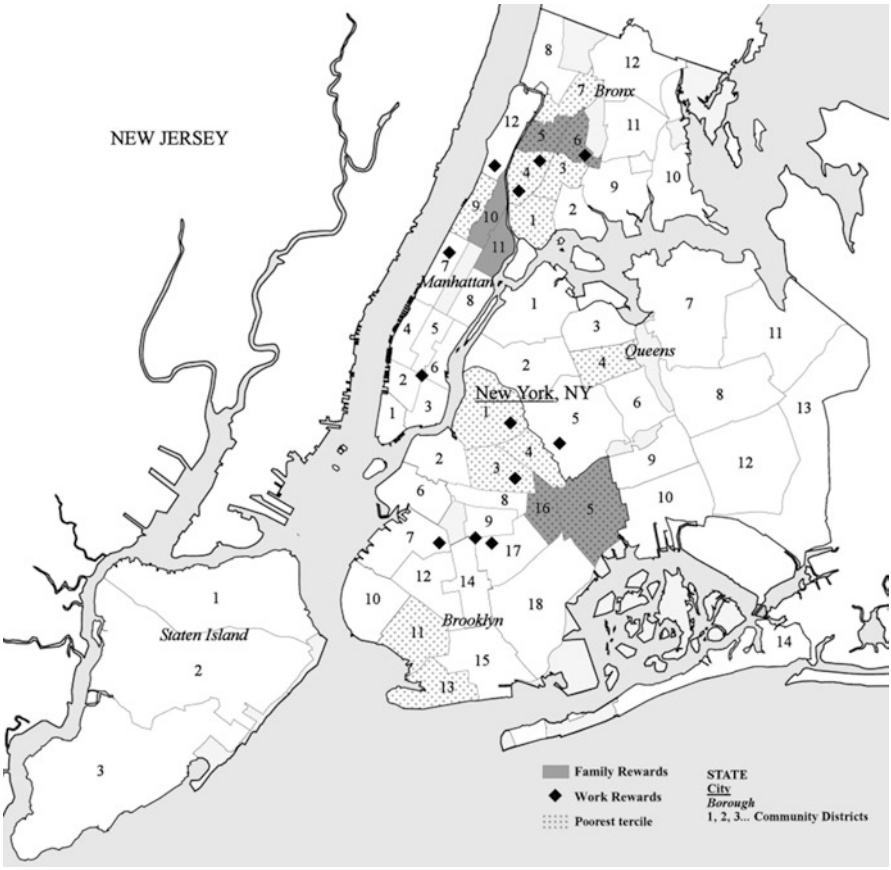
Targeting involves a host of operations and agencies. In the United States, these operations are typically subcontracted to nonprofits (Hacker 2002: 7). Social programs are operated within a fragmented system. To open the black box of targeting, one has to consider how these players are connected to each other.

The initial impulse for a conditional cash transfer was given by the Mayor's cabinet. The Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, validated and communicated around the project. His interest was influenced by the nonprofit sector, traditionally held by Democrats. In 2006, the Bloomberg cabinet gathered a "Commission for Economic Opportunity". This commission was composed of approximately 50 members (mostly representing the nonprofit sector: community-based organizations, foundations, and a few scholars), officially expected to bring in "innovative ideas".

In parallel, the Bloomberg people operated within a recently created "Center for Economic Opportunity". Their mandate was "to reduce the number of people living in poverty in New York City through the implementation of innovative, results-driven initiatives".[15] Opportunity NYC was one of them. Thirteen staff were employed in this Center, working alongside three additional associate researchers. The team was in charge of program design and evaluation, as well as research. What matters here is that they laid out a new poverty measure, tailored for New York City.[16] Opportunity NYC targeted the poorest neighborhoods according to that indicator (Map 4.1).

[15] The New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, Strategy and Implementation Report, Report to Mayor
Michael R. Bloomberg, Dec. 2007, p. 1.

[16] One has to bear in mind that the official poverty measure, the Federal Poverty Level, has been long questioned by poverty experts throughout the country since the 1960s (Orshansky 1965).



Map 4.1 Neighborhoods targeted by Opportunity NYC

New York stands as one the most unequal cities in the US (Mollenkopf and Castells 1992). Administratively, its five boroughs (Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island) are subdivided into community districts. Opportunity NYC targets either a whole community district (Family Rewards) or sites within a community district (Work Rewards).[17] This type of targeting is consistent with a local approach, taking into consideration the "neighborhood effects" (Osterman 1991; Wilson 1997: 51; Gould-Ellen and Austin-Turner 2003; Sanbonmatsu et al. 2006; Kling et al. 2007).[18]

[17] Opportunity NYC consists in three subprograms: Family Rewards (set of incentives in health, education and work), Work Rewards (work incentives only), and Spark (actually a pre-existing education incentives program run by the economist Roland Fryer, formally integrated with no significant follow-up).

[18] The frontiers traced to identify and qualify neighborhoods have been criticized for being somehow artificial. Gould-Ellen and Austin-Turner (2003)) argue that administrative maps hardly fit street-level reality.

The Center for Economic Opportunity developed a new poverty measure, then used by MDRC to design the program and its evaluation. One of the MDRC staff explains the targeting choice as follows: "These six areas were chosen because they are among New York's most persistently disadvantaged communities. Indeed, they have suffered from high rates of poverty and unemployment even when economic conditions in the city as a whole were good." (Riccio et al. 2010: 6). Among these six districts, two are located in the Bronx, two in Brooklyn and two in Manhattan. While Manhattan is known for its inhabitants' high standards of living, the area north of Central Park (CD 9, 10, 11, 12) stands out with endemic poverty. Staten Island, a middle-class area, does not have high-density poverty neighborhoods. The Bronx is poorer than Queens. The part of Brooklyn closest to Manhattan is richer than the rest of the borough.

According to 2000 Census data, over a third of the inhabitants in the selected communities received public relief (Temporary Aid to Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid…). These neighborhoods are overwhelmingly African-American and Latino, with a high rate of non-proficiency in English where a greater share of the population is Hispanic. The racial bias of social programs has long been discussed in the literature (e.g., Soss et al. 2011). In Opportunity NYC, there seems to have been no particular emphasis on the race factor in the targeting process. The demographic structure of poverty in New York City is divided along race lines, as it is true in other major US cities.

Within these geographical units, families are targeted using administrative data, as shown by the excerpt from this report followed by a quote from an interview conducted on site:

> "Eligible families were identified from DOE [Department of Education] records. DOE sent MDRC a file of all children living in the selected community districts who were set to enter either the fourth, seventh, or ninth grade for the 2007-08 school year and who, in the prior year, were either enrolled in the federal free school lunch program (which is available for families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty line) or attended a universal feeding school (where most of the children are from low-income families). Contact information from these centralized school records, supplemented by other information, was then used for recruiting families." (Miller et al. 2009: 3–4)

"In the outreach process, families have to meet a set of criteria: living below 130% of the federal poverty line, having a kid entering 4th, 7th or 9th grade on the fall of 2007, living in one of the six pre-established community districts (Family Rewards). Work Rewards recipients have to be [housing] vouchers holders, be 18 or older, not participate in Family Rewards. We have lists of people meeting these criteria and we draw people to outreach from them. [Who makes these lists?] The Department of Education and MDRC have been reviewing these lists on a regular basis." (Interview, Oct. 1st, 2009, intermediary organization, New York).

These "street-level bureaucrats", delivering frontline services, did not work for MDRC, which does not operate the program.[19] Operating nonprofits were hired

[19] It can happen that a research institute also provides services, as it is the case for Community Service Society of New York. CSSNY does not participate to Opportunity NYC. Although, the Center for Economic Opportunity hired one of their senior staff.

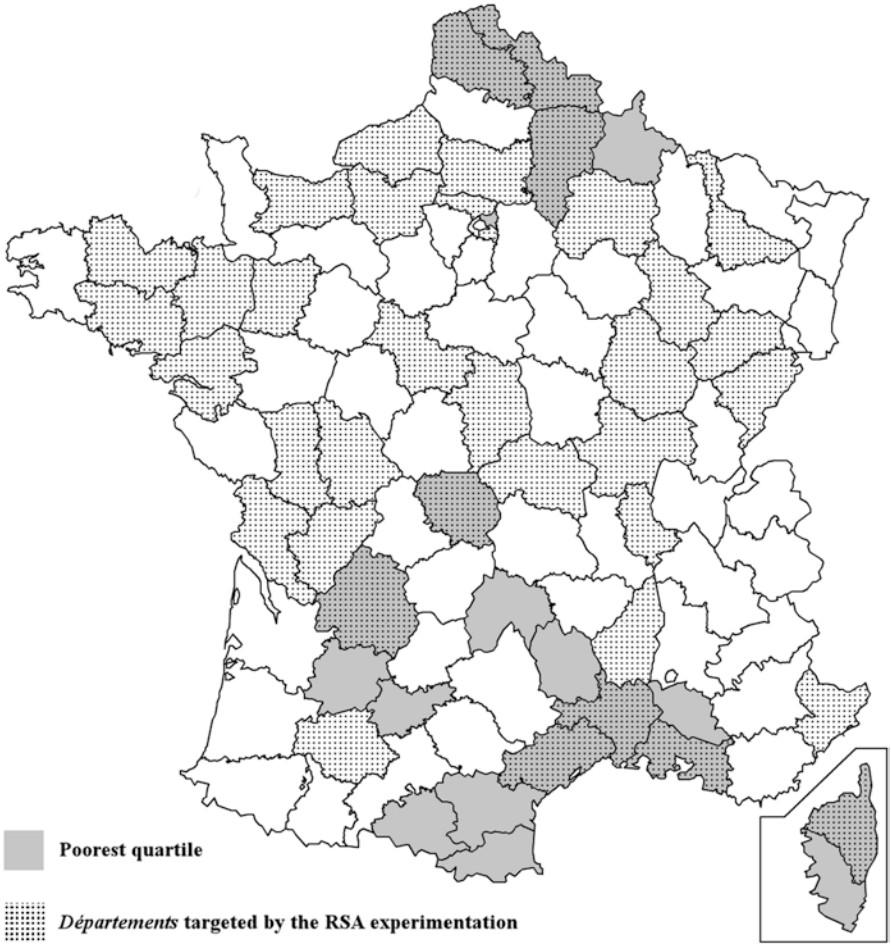
through Seedco, another nonprofit subcontracting with MDRC. This narrow targeting was not necessarily in line with community-based organizations' conception of social work. Nonetheless, a new program means additional funding for these "neighborhoods partners organizations", mostly understaffed and underfunded. Lipsky shed light on strings attached to grants to neighborhoods groups. The lack of an independent financial base reduced the scope of their advocacy. Yet, the need to maintain vital community services led to resources allocation in patronage fashion from cities and contracting agencies' part (Lipsky 1984: 19–20). On the other hand, City Hall did not have enough capabilities to deliver the services on its own. Some municipal departments participated in the implementation of this program on a contractual basis, like other nonprofits.

Funneling the eligible involves narrowing the recipients down by geographical, administrative and experimental criteria. How does this funneling pattern vary across the Atlantic? The French case provides a contrasted situation in terms of players. If the concerns are pretty much the same (making an anti-poverty program as legitimate and politically sound as possible), the institutional architecture causes, as expected, some significant variations. We shall bear in mind that French officials looked abroad for models to emulate. A policy "model" was transferred from New York to Paris. The crux of the matter for a country as centralized as France is how to implement a form of unequal treatment before the law for the sake of experimentation.

Opportunity NYC was an experiment from the outset. In the US, it is customary that innovations are brought about by states (Walker 1969), sometimes cities, and that a pilot program may be scaled up at the national level. In France, the principle of "legislative experiment" was used before the final adoption of the law legalizing abortion in the 1970s. Yet, overall, there is no such thing as a sunset legislation in France. Laws can fail to be enforced, but the notion of a temporary program remains unusual. Thus, the French Constitution had to be amended to allow the RSA experiment to take place.

The decree of October 5, 2007 marked the beginning of the experiment. Administratively speaking, RSA "targets" would be former recipients or either welfare subsidy (*revenu minimum d'insertion*, RMI) or single parent allowance (*allocation de parent isolé*, API). Politics came into play when the matter of deciding the experimental design arose. As far as Opportunity NYC was concerned, randomization was performed on an individual basis. The French wouldn't randomize people but territories within *départements* (the intermediate level of subnational government, above municipalities and below regions). Map 4.2 shows the *départements* targeted by the experiment. The selection partly matches the poorest *départements* (INSEE data), which indicates that income criteria were taken into consideration.

What drove the implementation of a randomized-controlled trial? Discussions between the Secretary of Active Solidarity and the *Association des départements de France* took place. A member of the evaluation committee relates that "the local authorities were opposed to randomization. They didn't want neighborhoods to be randomly chosen within their *départements*. There were long discussions on group selection. Profiles integrating demographic and economic indicators, unemployment



Map 4.2 *Départements* targeted by the experiment

rate, number of people on welfare, etc., were created. So the selection was made in a reasoned manner" (Interview with a RSA evaluator, Apr. 9, 2010, France). Emphasis on "reason" balances the "rational" method imported from the United States. When the Americans associate "lottery" with "fairness", the French won't leave the process to chance, even pondered with a scientific method. Another interviewee provides an interesting account of the elected officials' relationship to science-driven targeting:

> "It is virtually impossible for any elected official to justify to their constituency that some people will benefit from a new measure and some other will not, based on a random draw. (…) Because, if the idea was presented as intrinsically good, everybody should be included. If it's not, nobody should. The gray zone is a murky area, very difficult to communicate on. We are used to public officials putting forward firm convictions, leaving no room to doubt. And there is this 'all citizens should be treated equally before the law' thing. It's an illusion

> 90% of the time, yet an unavoidable illusion. So, from the outset the RSA experiment was biased by the fact that *départements* decided themselves to join in." (Interview with a public operating agency manager, Apr. 10, 2010, France)

Départements find themselves in a similar position as community-based organizations when it comes to doing something in line with their own conceptions or not: "Most elected officials don't know the tricks or the politics of it. When they have a Ministry on the phone telling them "your dough is tied to this evaluation protocol", they all cave in." (Interview with a public operating agency manager, Apr. 10, 2010, France). In a context of resource scarcity, national officials have a preponderant say in the design considerations. The only option for local officials was opting out. Experts had little leeway over controlling the course of the experiment:

> "We didn't agree on what constituted a valid experimental unit. Some *départements* had some very small experimental groups. In some others, for instance the Bouches-du-Rhône, the treatment group was the whole city of Marseilles. How can you find a zone that is comparable to Marseilles in the same *département*? Because treatment and control groups had to belong to the same *département*. Of course it's impossible. We faced that sort of challenges. That lessened the robustness the experts were looking for." (Interview with a RSA evaluator, Jun. 7, 2010, France)

Hence, for political reasons, the experimentation was drawn closer to what constitutes, in the scientific terminology, a natural experiment. Meaning that the research protocol was by and large tailored to political necessities. That applies to the period going from 2007 to 2008, when the national RSA bill was passed into a law (Law of December 1, 2008). Once the program was expanded nationwide ("generalized"), geographical targeting became outdated.

Within a specific geographical area, administrative criteria, experimental design and political considerations take resources further away from they are needed. Funneling the eligible is the second step of a conditional social policy. Once they are funneled into the program a person can be enrolled but not helped because another set of conditions applies. The next subpart puts under scrutiny what happens once people are enrolled.

4.4 Deterring the Non-compliant

In the targeting triptych – "deserving", "eligible" and "receiving" – (Roosma et al. 2014: 491), this subpart examines how the allocation of benefits is conditioned on behavior. At that point, political decisions have been made (frame). The first set of administrative criteria (means-testing, geographical units) has been established (funnel). The last leg of behavioral targeting is enrolling potential recipients (called "participants" in the New York program) and setting up a verification procedure for payments.

The challenge for operating agencies consists of registering people for the program. Here lies a paradox of narrow-targeted social benefits. They cannot provide too much, for reasons documented above. At the same time, they cannot help no

one. They have to redistribute resources to some segments of the population, otherwise the whole program would be pointless. The communication effort is thus rooted in a narrow eligibility basis. The tone is different from the "framing stage". Once the program has been asserted as selective, it has to look appealing.

As they had to reach a nationwide audience, French officials opted for mass-media communication. In May 2009, 2 weeks ahead of the law enactment, a multichannel strategy was deployed. With TV and radio ads, flyers, a hotline and a dedicated website, the government sought to reach out to a much wider audience than the former RMI and API recipients, and even wider than the working poor. The campaign had for a slogan "That's what the RSA is made for". It was devised by the official information bureau and the ad agency Euro RSCG. The two TV ads were broadcasted on national television. They showed a man and a woman playing the role of the worthy poor in a life-like setting, in other words impersonating the targets, saying the following lines:

> Woman care assistant: "My name is Sylviane, I'm 50 years old. I live alone, my children are grown-ups. I work three afternoons per week. Before, my whole income was deducted from my benefits. Working or not, it was all the same. Now, I've switched to the RSA, and it will come on top of my income. Of course I'll be better off."
>
> Man forklift driver: "My name is Marc. It took me a while to find this job. I don't want to lose it. I live on the minimum wage, and I have a family of four: me, my wife and our two children. So, that's not easy. The RSA is just made for this, when one works and can't make ends meet. It's gonna help us a lot, that for sure."

Both clips end with an off-voice saying: "That's what the RSA is made for", and then giving contact information for enrollment. The official website included a calculator to estimate eligibility and level of benefits. Martin Hirsch's political team insisted that the characters were not fictional: "The biggest thing was the TV part, displaying RSA recipients. There was a forklift driver… [Marc] Marc, exactly… He was a forklift driver for real. Some controversy came out in *Le Canard Enchaîné,*[20] but he really was a forklift driver. They were potential recipients given their work activity. They were not professional comedians." (Interview with a government official, Apr. 30, 2010, France).

Invoking the authenticity of TV ads characters is a striking exemplification of policymakers' values and representations about poverty. Mimicking the poor to entice them, refuting the commercial technique to plead for an infomercial, showing sleek faces to make the poor look good and deserving to the general public: the communication strategy sharply contrasts with the administrative reality of the program. The French version of behavioral conditionality is quite simple in the sense that there is only one behavior that is being "rewarded:" getting back to work.[21] This is in line with an economic approach assuming that the work requirement reduces the disincentive effect of targeted transfers (Atkinson 1995: 63; Blank 2010: 176),

[20] A weekly satirical newspaper, well-known in France for its investigative journalism. The interviewee is referring to the Jun. 10, 2009 issue.

[21] Even though it has been decided that a portion of the RSA recipients would not have a work requirement ("basic RSA", as opposed to the "activity RSA").

screens the poor "truly" in need and discourages them from making "the wrong decisions", supposed to be the main reason for their poverty (Besley and Coate 1992: 249–250). A government official explains the nuts and bolts of the program:

> With a benefit based on a sliding rate, they keep interest in working more because each time they earn one more euro, they do not lose one euro. They lose less than one euro, they lose 38 cents in the predefined benefits sliding scale. The gains are maximal at this point. Those can get even bigger, superior to one euro, net. The subsidy does not swiftly end, of course. Otherwise, that would be a disincentive to work. (Interview with a government official, Apr. 30, 2010, France)

The "38%" determines an "optimal" threshold. It is intended to serve as the "active principle" of this anti-poverty policy. Below it, cash assistance does not undermine the incentive to work. Above it, the working poor earn enough money through work without being "tempted" to go back to welfare. That's for the front office argument. In the back office, the sliding rate is crucial for other reasons. The looser the targeting, the larger the budget. The power relations within the administration have to be taken into consideration here. The Secretary of Active Solidarity is smaller than a Ministry. It was created only as a launching platform for the RSA. Its position in the hierarchy is low. The "all-seeing eye" of the Ministry of Treasury monitors the budget of the whole administration. Thus, the scope of targeting is chiefly the result of what the Ministry of Treasury yields on to the Secretary of Active Solidarity, ruling the overall cost of the program. The behaviors of the poor, and whether the 38% means "optimal activation" or not, are not of immediate concern here.

The main deterring factors for recipients are to be found elsewhere. The RSA requires filling out a 6-page questionnaire (closed questions, national standard), another questionnaire specific to each *département* (basically a "contract of reciprocal obligations", composed of open-ended questions) and a quarterly declaration of earnings (mandatory nationwide, in the previous system, the means-test was conducted annually). An interviewee lays out the specifics of that second questionnaire:

> With the RSA, if you look at the questionnaire, the items require appreciation from the administrative agent. This is not something arithmetic like 'your earning level is too high', or 'the apartment you're renting is too big for your family so we cannot allow you a housing voucher'. With the RSA, we're in a whole different logic. Different from standard administrative tools determining pension benefits or child allowance. These are very rational. Whereas the RSA brings in a mass of information that is way bigger and way more complex. The agent has to ask questions, they have to make sure that the person has answered every single item. The system is based on declarations. Proofs may be requested. A significant higher amount of time will be necessary to deal with each case. (Interview with an operating agency manager, Apr. 29, 2010, France)

In the French setting, the rationale shifts from income maintenance to a single individual behavioral incentive.[22] Attached to it are costly verification procedures,

[22] Martin Hirsch declared before the National Assembly: "This bill ends the unbalance between rights and obligations. And when we speak of rights and obligations, that means rights and obligations for all: for recipients, of course, who will now have an individual, not household, contract to abide to, and that will have to be systematic; but also rights and obligations for public and private agencies managing all of the cases of people concerned by the RSA." (Sept. 25, 2008, author's translation from official transcript)

that can either discourage potential recipients or impede cash assistance once enrolled. Behavioral targeting thus costs more, but gives less, as the money does not flow in subsidies. Compliance is highly demanding. It came as no surprise that the authorities lamented a drop-by-drop enrollment. The evaluation of the experimentation showed meager results: the return to work rates oscillated between 1.5% and 4.5% in the test groups and between 1.5% and 4.3% in the control groups. That did not represent an obstacle for scaling the program nationwide.

The US context involves a completely different starting point. Under a decentralized and fragmented system, the reach-out strategy began at the neighborhood level. Postcards, phone calls, door-to-door, events (barbecues, pool…), gifts (MetroCards, Mets tickets…): in the US, customers, voters and clients were prospected with similar social marketing techniques. The goal was to recruit as many participants as fast as possible. The strategy was in part community-targeted. For instance, postcards were edited in English (picturing a Black woman), in Spanish (picturing a Latino man) and in Chinese (picturing an Asian woman). The telephone outreach script was slightly tailored according to each of these three communities. Home visits and events were personalized. A discussion between the social worker and the potential recipient was intended to entice the person into the program. The gifts were used as incentives for people to come in to the local agency and finalize the application process.

Once in the agency, a randomization software, designed by MDRC, served as the interface between the "street-level bureaucrat" and the client. Computing personal data, it determined whether the person goes into the test group (thus can claim cash rewards) or in the control group (will not earn any money in the process, yet provides data for efficiency assessment). The information brochures present the targeting-but-no-earning induced by the experimental design this way: "Only 2,500 families can participate. Eligible families will be selected by lottery: everyone has an equal chance".

Being enrolled is only one step of the process. Cash assistance is provided through incentives. These are related to three main areas of life: health, work and education. Each behavior gets associated with a reward ranging from $20 to $600. The design considerations for behavioral targeting are formulated by the nonprofit research institute MDRC (see Box 4.1).

The reasons given by the experts encompass axiological, administrative and political arguments. Document 4.1 provides the details of the incentives and rewards per behavior. The left column shows the 23 incentives formerly implemented, and the right column provides a revised version of the list, after approximately 18 months (over a three-year total period). For each of them, the participant had to submit a proof (a form signed by the doctor for a medical visit, pays stubs…) to a verification center that would validate or invalidate the corresponding payment within two months. The social workers were asked not to complete the procedure for them, but

Box 4.1: Design Considerations

Within each domain, the conditions for incentives payments should be achievable with a reasonable level of effort. Incentives should not be tied to services that are not generally available or reasonably accessible to the program group.

Within each domain, more money should generally be attached to conditions expected to be more challenging to meet.

The behaviors that draw payments must be verifiable in ways that are practical, timely, and resistant to fraud.

Incentives for children's school performance should avoid putting undue pressure on students or put them at risk of abuse if their family loses out on extra money because of their poor performance.

The amounts for any given activity should be substantial enough to appeal to families and encourage them to adopt and/or sustain the specified behaviors.

The amounts for any given activity, and overall, must not be so high as to be viewed as "unreasonable" by policymakers and the public, and, hence, politically unsustainable.

Full adoption of conditions for all family members across all domains should yield a total cash transfer that would amount to a substantial contribution to a participating family's budget (approximately 25%–30% of family income).

Recognizing that the greater the cost of the program per family, the fewer families that a replicated version of the program might be able to enroll, the total cash transfer per family should be at a level that is considered politically acceptable.

Because they are time-limited, the incentives should promote behaviors and achievements (i.e., build forms of human capital) that can become habits or that can be sustained or built upon after the cash transfers end. (MDRC and Seedco 2008: 23).

to help them find the information by themselves.[23] This nudge stance goes beyond mere incentives positing that individuals are motivated by utility maximization alone (Schneider and Ingram 1990: 515; Teles 1996: 70–71).

The participating households could earn up to twice the threshold offered by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program,[24] but three times less than the

[23] In application of the "nudge" theory that was an important part of the cognitive background of Opportunity NYC. Likewise but without invoking "nudges", the French official terminology would refer to "*accompagnement*" (support), not case work, when qualifying the relationship between the RSA recipients and the operating agencies.

[24] According to the data of the National Center for Children in Poverty and the official evaluation report of Opportunity NYC, the maximum annual TANF amount for a family of three was $6924 [http://www.nccp.org/profiles/NY_profile_36.html/], while the highest reward earned through Opportunity NYC was $13,235 (Riccio et al. 2010:98).

Current Incentives	
EDUCATION INCENTIVES	
Activity	**Amount**
Test Scores	$600 High School
	$350 Middle School
	$300 Elementary School
PSAT (High School)	$50
Credit Accumulation (High School)	$600
Graduation (High School)	$400
Parent-Teacher Conferences	$25 All Grades
Attendance (95% of the time)	$50 High School
	$25 Middle School
	$25 Elementary School
Discussing Annual Tests	$25 Elem/Middle School
Library Card	$50 All Grades, once
HEALTH INCENTIVES	
Activity	**Amount**
Preventive Dental Care	$100
Preventive Health Care (Screenings)	$200 yearly screening
	$200 early intervention
	$100 follow-up
Maintaining Public Health Insurance	$20 (adults) $20 (children)
Maintaining Private Health Insurance	$50 (adults) $50 (children)
WORKFORCE INCENTIVES	
Activity	**Amount**
Sustained Full Employment	$150
Education & Training While Employed	$300 to $600
FAMILY REWARDS BANKING INCENTIVE	
Activity	**Amount**
Using or Opening a Bank Account	$50

Year 3 Scenario	
EDUCATION INCENTIVES	
Activity	**Amount**
Test Scores	$600 High School
	$350 Middle School
	$300 Elementary School
PSAT (High School)	$50
Credit Accumulation (High School)	$600
Graduation (High School)	$400
Parent-Teacher Conferences	$25 All Grades
Attendance (95% of the time)	$50 High School
□□ **Discontinued**	
□□ **Discontinued**	
□□ **Discontinued**	
□□ **Discontinued/Complete**	
HEALTH INCENTIVES	
Activity	**Amount**
Preventive Dental Care	$100
Preventive Health Care (Screenings)	$200 yearly screening
	$200 early intervention
□□ **Discontinued**	
□□ **Discontinued**	
□□ **Discontinued**	
WORKFORCE INCENTIVES	
Activity	**Amount**
Sustained Full Employment	$150
Education & Training While Employed	$300 to $600
FAMILY REWARDS BANKING INCENTIVE	
Activity	**Amount**
Using or Opening a Bank Account	$50

Document 4.1 Reproduction of an original internal document (year 2)

Earned Income Tax Credit.[25] Participating families received an average $6000 per annum, which represented a $7,500,000 "reward" budget (Riccio et al. 2010: 81) and an annual budget of $26,000,000 (Center for Economic Opportunity 2007:

[25] With a threshold of $48,362 for a married couple with children [www.nyc.gov].

16). Annually, approximately $17,500,000 therefore went towards paying different intermediaries and social services providers. The most recent MDRC (Riccio and Miller 2016) reports mentions an average earning of $8700 over a three year periods, that would add up to a $21,750,000 over a total budget of $78,000,000 (or 27,88% going to rewards). These figures provide an estimate of the administrative costs of a program using fine-grained targeting.

The evaluation of the program produced noisy data, as it is mostly the case for such programs (Heckman et al. 1997). Most importantly, when the impact was positive, it was only marginal. A 2010 *New York Times*' article[26] chronicled the end of the three-year pilot project in accommodating terms. Mayor Bloomberg declared: "I don't know that this is a failure. I think it is, some things worked, and some things didn't, and some things the jury's still out on. And anything new you're going to have that diversity of results." Linda Gibbs, his chief of staff and alleged to be the brain behind the idea of a CCT in the first place, stated that Opportunity NYC was "too complicated." An associate director from the Rockefeller Foundation, one of the two main funders (the other one being Bloomberg himself), described it as "confusing" for the participants as it "sounded too good to be true". The final words of the column are devoted to Bloomberg pondering the difficulty of fighting against poverty.

The storyline hardly subverts the fact that the program had, overall, failed to raise participants out of poverty, for its sophisticated rationale and high administrative induced costs. That is not to say that the initiative was a complete failure, as policy efficiency is never the only judging factor (Edelman 1977). The virtues of innovation, pragmatism and accountability were reaffirmed in a humble, strategic leadership style. Not to mention the benefits for the nonprofits funded through this program. Behavioral targeting does not seem to make a more efficient or fair anti-poverty strategy. Its efficacy is real, but is to be observed at the political, not policy, level.

4.5 Conclusion

The behavior modification proves limited. The administrative costs of targeting the "deserving" poor, especially with an evaluation going on at the same time, outweighs the relieving costs. Targeting on such a narrow basis makes it difficult to consider it as a conditional social right (Paz-Fuchs 2008). Opening the black box reveals that if conditioning anti-poverty programs has gained favorable public attention, that is only because costs have been switched from assistance to red tape (invisible to the public). Conditional social policy thus costs more and more, and gives less and less.

Perpetuating the lingering debate on deservingness (Levine and Turab-Rizvi 2005: 38), behavioral targeting relies on a mixed rationale of science and common-

[26] Julie Bosman, "City Will Stop Paying the Poor for Good Behavior", *The New York Times*, 30 March 2010.

sense. Designating the appropriate public derives from a clinical model. That is what the American case brings on to this problematic. One crucial component of a moral agenda is the assumption that poverty derives from an individual failure. Each should therefore be "nudged," more than coerced, to behave by self-reliance standards (Bellah 1991: 90; Handler and Hasenfeld 1991: 18; Schwartz 2000: 19; Soss et al. 2011: 22). Rooted in behavioralism, Protestant work ethic and the neoliberal value of personal responsibility (Bellah 2008: 16), this set of suppositions, if not suspicions, has permeated the French world of welfare (Lamont and Duvoux 2014: 63; Dubois 2016). Even in a setting that could have been hostile to finding individualized "targets" of social benefits, there is little resistance among the "elites" to proceed to the transfer of such an alien "model".

Policy leitmotivs impulse a social dynamic constructing an autonomous middle class and a dependent underclass that should be "activated" (Barbehön and Haus 2015: 480). Adopting a critical stance, one can argue that "conditions beget conditions" (Standing 2011: 28). In that sense, achieving policy goals can justify an ever more narrow application of conditionality. The cases presented in this paper draw attention to the multiplicity of such objectives. What makes government effective in pursuing an anti-poverty policy agenda? Actual relief and bettering living conditions of the economically destitute are the most prominent feature of these programs. They do play an important social function. Their efficacy that could be more diffuse than precluding violence from the working class (Piven and Cloward 1971).

The nudge approach knits a specific link between the governing and the governed. It claims to reconcile excellence and consent within a democracy. The behavioral targeting social policy demands more from would-be recipients. We are not in a mandatory setting, in which the rule of law prevails, but in a normative one. Our societies are becoming more and more normative. Conditioning benefits on behaviors does not dwindle the costs.[27] In a Durkheimian perspective, norms violations and their sanctions have to do with norm reinforcement. Gans writes that "By violating, or being imagined as violating, a number of mainstream behavioral patterns and values, the undeserving poor help to reaffirm and reinforce the virtues of these patterns – and to do so visibly, since the violations by the undeserving are highly publicized." (Gans 1994: 275). Making the deserving/undeserving dichotomy public through social programs reactualizes the values of hard-work and determination. Yet, since reasons for action are rooted deeper than behaviors, targeting only turns outsiders into scapegoats bearing the resentment created by the social equality myth in once sisters Republics.

[27] Conditional cash transfers do not fall under the neoclassical economics category, that ties benefits only on income level and family size, not individual characteristics (Moffitt 2015:746).

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Chapter 5
Targeting by Numbers. The Uses of Statistics for Monitoring French Welfare Benefit Recipients

Vincent Dubois, Morgane Paris, and Pierre-Edouard Weill

Abstract The targeting of welfare recipients in order to control their situation and their entitlement has increased from the beginning of the 2000s onwards. Data mining has recently been included in the set of techniques used for this purpose, in addition to traditional bureaucratic checks of documents, home inspection visits, and to data crossing. Imported from the private sector, this statistical tool is part and parcel of a "risk management" policy of the family branch of French social security. It has been promoted as the cornerstone of recipients' monitoring since 2010. Analyzing the use of this method enables us to show the new relationships between statistical instruments, legal norms, and performance indicators which define the administration of the Poor in the neomanagerial era. Thanks to statistical correlations, this tool identifies welfare recipients' features significantly associated with the highest level of risks of irregularities. Then, scoring algorithms enable local managers to target high-risk populations over which in-depth checks are performed. This has led to positive financial results, but also to an increasing focus of surveillance on the most disadvantaged households. Based on interviews with executives of the National Family Benefits Fund (Caisse nationale des allocations familiales - CNAF) and with local managers, ethnographic observation of street-level bureaucrats' daily work and quantitative analysis of national and local data, our contribution is twofold: on the use of statistical modeling in welfare policies implementation; on the compounding of control in the contemporary government of the poor.

Keywords Statistics · Data mining · Welfare benefits · Lower class · Social control

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5.1 Introduction

In France, until the mid-nineties, monitoring welfare benefit recipients and combatting fraud were issues that seldom arose in public debate and were not part of the strategic direction for social policies. However, they became key issues in the subsequent period, in France as in most European countries, and were ubiquitous both in the media and the political arena, from heads of departmental councils asserting the need for tighter controls of welfare benefit (e. g. *Revenu de solidarité active (RSA)*),[1] to the highest government levels (a particularly striking example being President Sarkozy's speech in Bordeaux on 15 November 2011[2]). At the same time, welfare institutions adopted an increasingly systematic monitoring policy with stronger organization, greater legal/human resources and new technical tools.

This article focuses on data mining, which has become a key tool in the implementation of this monitoring policy. The generic term "data mining" refers to a set of statistical methods used to process large volumes of data and to develop models that, in turn, make it possible to systematize observations on the same type of data. Unlike other methods based on hypothetico-deductive reasoning (a hypothesis that is tested empirically then validated or discarded), data mining proceeds by induction: it starts from the exploratory observation of data, identifies regularities and correlations between variables, then develops predictive models that will be used to process large-scale data. For the case in point, the system is used to process information from the files of some 12.8 million recipients of the Departemental Family Benefits Funds (*Caisses d'allocations familiales – CAF*).

That a welfare institution uses this technology for monitoring purposes is indicative of three current trends in public policies. First, it is an example of technology transfer from the private to the public sector where data mining is used to model consumer behaviour, improve marketing-related targeting, reach potential donors in fund-raising campaigns, and in particular manage customer-related risks, such as actuarial calculations of rates in the baking and insurance sector and the identification of prospective defaulters in service activities such as mobile telephony (Lazarus 2012). Data mining is increasingly used in the public sector, particularly in the United States (Federal Agency Data Mining Reporting Act of 2007). It is used to identify criminals, tax and customs fraudsters and other potential offenders. In France, data mining has especially been promoted as an instrument to improve targeting in the fight against fraud by the National Family Benefit Fund (*Caisse natio-*

[1] *Revenu de solidarité active (RSA)* is a French welfare benefit designed to give recipients a basic income, whether or not they are capable of work. In 2016 there were 2.5 million recipients. Claimants must look for employment or define and undertake a vocational project that will improve their financial situation to remain eligible. See Wacquant (2010) on the relationship between "activation" policies and controls of underprivileged populations in France, from an international comparison perspective.

[2] Online video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXPhEPRTyBs

Methodology
This research, following up on a CNAF-funded study on the same subject in the early 2000s (Dubois 2003), was carried out at three levels:

1. national: the domestic political and institutional sphere in which monitoring policies are either directly developed or indirectly influenced (the CNAF, relevant government ministries, the National Anti-Fraud Unit (*Direction nationale de lute contre la fraude – DNLF*), the National Court of Auditors (*Cour des comptes*), etc.). This was examined on the basis of interviews conducted within the institutions involved (n = 13) and the collection of internal documents.
2. local: the implementation of monitoring policies at this level was examined on the basis of local studies conducted in two CAF centres: one in a highly disadvantaged urban area and the other in a more favourable socio-economic environment, with a city centre of over 100,000 inhabitants, several mid-sized towns, and rural areas. In both instances, interviews were conducted with staff members (n = 22: inspectors, accountants, legal department staff, senior managers); additional interviews with other institutions (general councils (*Conseils généraux*)); observations of home inspection visits, fraud commission meetings, and other meetings related to our study object; collection of internal documents and statistics.
3. the population under study was observed during spot checks and studied through local and national statistical data, respectively supplied by the two CAF centres and the CNAF statistics directorate (*Direction des statistiques, des études et de la recherche - DSER*).
4. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods, our investigation started by considering CNAF statistical analyses and re-processing secondary data produced by the same institution. This multi-level perspective enabled us to study the targeting practices used from the highest levels of government down to the "street-level bureaucrats" (Lipsky 1980), which in this case are the inspectors in direct contact with the welfare beneficiaries.

nale des allocations familiales – CNAF)[3] since 2010, customs services and the National Employment Agency (*Pôle Emploi*) since 2013, and the tax authorities since 2014. The use of data mining also shows a second trend in public policies: the implementation of risk management by predictive modelling. The rise of predictive policing in the United States is a good example of this trend. Its objective is to

[3] The National Family Allowance Fund (*Caisse nationale des allocations familiales – CNAF*) manage the family branch of the French social security system and supervises Departemental Family Benefit Funds (*Caisse des allocations familiales – CAF*).

anticipate crimes before they are committed by estimating the likelihood of re-offending on the basis of past actions. It is also used as a decision-making tool for setting bail or prison sentences according to the risk of reoffending (Harcourt 2005). With regard to welfare benefit recipient monitoring, the aim of data mining is to predict the risk of irregularity – a prediction which then triggers an investigation into the recipient's situation. In this context, data mining is in line with the much wider trend of the growing use of big data in public policy since it relies on the collection and processing of large amounts of data that can be used by public or private organizations in their quest for information on individuals (Harcourt 2014; Ollion 2015). The family branch of the French social security system holds a lot of detailed information on nearly 13 million beneficiary households, which equates to nearly 30 million individuals (including spouses and children). A substantial amount of data is held for each person, not only on benefits received, but also on marital and professional status, income, age and schooling of child/children, housing situation, etc. Finally, and we place a particular focus on this point, data mining is being used for a targeting policy that should allow public policies to be more systematically and efficiently adjusted to the diversity of situations, in this case through the identification of regularity risks in welfare beneficiary files.

This article will examine these three major trends via a case study on the uses of data mining in the monitoring policies of the French social security system's family branch: (i) technology transfer from the private to the public sector, (ii) risk management using predictive models based on handling large volumes of data and (iii) the implementation of monitoring through targeting population. Its objective is to show how the risk control management model helps to bring closer a policy direction that supports tighter recipient controls and a statistical tool that enhances efficiency but inevitably leads to the targeting of the most vulnerable population groups.

To find out why data mining is used to detect irregularities in files, one must look at how it was transferred from the private to the public sector by the welfare institutions, in this case the CNAF. Data mining was promoted from 2010 onwards as the key element of a systematized and rationalized risk management policy using increased beneficiary monitoring (1). The refocusing of this control policy on data mining was accompanied by changes in the relationship between institutional stakeholders at the national and local level, and also helped to change monitoring practices and increase their effectiveness (2). These changes had an impact on the everyday lives of people on welfare benefits recipients, particularly for those who rely on benefits the most and are subject to stepped-up control (3).

5.2 A New Statistical Tool for Monitoring

A statistical technique can be said to be successful when "it coincides with new ways of perceiving and organizing social relationships" and "a network of innovators finds a sufficient number of allies to circulate it" (Desrosières 2014: 81). For instance, although the family branch of the CNAF was the forerunner in this matter

and had been using data mining for the large-scale processing of beneficiary files since 2011, it was the growing requirement to ensure accurate benefit payments and reduce unjustified spending that led to the concurrent intellectual, institutional and technical creation of a new global risk management strategy. The conditions in which this tool was transferred meant that, in its early phases at least, it was preferentially defined and used to monitor social benefit recipients, in particular for the detection of undue payments and fraud. Undue payments are due to lateness, (in) voluntary errors/omissions in beneficiary declarations or faulty data processing by the institution. Benefit fraud is committed by people who deliberately make a false declaration in order to receive money for which they are not entitled.

5.2.1 A Risk Management Tool

The use of data mining fits into a broader context of the emergence of social fraud, and to a larger extent of welfare benefit monitoring in open debate and government policies. In this respect, it is a technical solution to a political problem. Initially, this drive to combat social fraud stemmed from more or less directly injunctions on the CNAF, formulated by successive governments and various institutions. The government was able to become more directly involved in the organization and accounts of the social security system following the 1996 reform that mainly gave rise to the signing of Target and Management Agreements or COGs (*Conventions d'objectifs et de gestion*). These agreements laid down multi-annual commitments for institutions, in particular regarding anti-fraud tools and techniques. The 2001–2004 COG provided for the establishment of a general risk database that would include beneficiary declarations, and also recommended the analysis of risks and their securitization procedures to establish control standards. Likewise, there was a specific action plan covering prevention and improvements in undue payment recovery that was based on analyses identifying the causes and prospects of recovery. This more analytical approach integrated the new emphasis on targeting by reducing random or concern-based checks and using statistical analysis to better define targets and increase efficiency. The subsequent agreements reflected the constant incentive to use new technical tools that would identify undue payments and to monitor their outcomes. These external incentives to reinforce monitoring tools also came, more indirectly, from the National Anti-Fraud Unit (*Délégation nationale de lutte contre la fraude – DNLF*) – an inter-ministerial structure created in 2008 that helps to promote the use of technology such as data mining and to make the results visible. The Court of Auditors (*Cour des comptes*) has played a very direct role in this process, occasionally in its annual or thematic reports and continuously in its role of accounts certification since 2006. Monitoring effectiveness became a criterion in account validation and the auditors of the Court made recommendations notably for risk management, which played a decisive role in the efforts made in this domain and was a direct incentive for the use of data mining.

External criticisms of the supposed lack of fraud detection and prevention activities meant that the family branch was pressured into reorganizing and reinforcing their activities in this respect. The old divide between internal and external monitoring (monitoring of staff operations and that of incoming beneficiary data, respectively) was replaced by the notion of risk management, mainly through the creation of the Risks Management department in 2005. This reorganization and new outlook tended to cause an increase in beneficiary monitoring in the institution, with more and more CAF employees participating in this external risk management from a financial and accounting perspective. Accounts officers who were previously unfamiliar with this type of monitoring became major operators. At the same time, the generic term of risk management, that as such concerns all risk management staff, is virtually synonymous with welfare beneficiary monitoring, as its activity is essentially focused on external risks that are defined by the reliability of incoming data, i.e. information provided by the beneficiaries. Initially a relatively low-level sectorial expertise linked to welfare benefits, recipient monitoring became a cross-cutting concern which plays a large part in the institution's new management modes.

There is a direct affinity between organizational thinking in terms of risk management and a probabilistic and predictive tool such as data mining. Unlike coherence checks (a comparison of information from various sources), this tool is not designed to identify anomalies, but to assess the probability (risk level) of an anomaly occurring. This predictive statistic – upstream from but still supporting the administrative logic of compliance checks – serves as a management logic primarily geared towards financial rigour.

This tool does not, however, determine its potential uses by itself. It is a technological tool that on the face of it seems to be neutral in that it can be used for a variety of equally important operations and purposes. Targets of data mining models can be files with a financial risk, but also people who eligible for benefits. It is imaginable that the *Caisse nationale* could inversely use the data mining tool to identify potential recipients. In this way, data mining would not only help to combat fraud but also to diminish the non-claiming of benefits by eligible claimants – these two uses are not mutually exclusive. However, in the same way as risk management policy is widely confused with beneficiary monitoring, data mining was primarily designed to detect undue – including fraud-related – payments.

5.2.2 The Institutional Appropriation of Data Mining

The second condition for success identified by Alain Desrosières is the tool's perimeter of use which in this case is a factor that has also oriented its uses towards the detection of undue payments and fraud. The National Employment Agency (*Pôle emploi*) and the sickness branch of social security also use the tool in the same way, which gives the supposedly "neutral" technique of data mining the profile of a welfare state monitoring tool.

To some extent, this direction was determined by the origins of the use of data mining. Prior to being promoted as the national tool for monitoring policies, data mining was first piloted at the local level. This was done through the initiative of an accounting officer who researched new methods because even though the anti-fraud tools at his disposal were limited he could be liable in cases of undetected fraud. And this is how he discovered data mining, which the Gironde Family Benefits Fund (*CAF*) had been testing since 2004 in conjunction with the national risk management policy. The first step was to build up a national database of 3000 fraudulent applications as a benchmark used to draw up the first models tested by the Gironde CAF. This profiling was refined in 2006–2007 when the database was expanded. From 2009, data collection based on the random sampling of beneficiary files was rolled out nationwide. Each year the system selects 10,500 beneficiary files that are systematically checked by certified monitoring officers using both desk and home monitoring.

In keeping with what had been carried out at the local level then extended to several departments, this specific operation called *Cible 021*, "was like a survey data investigation on risks and their changes" (Collinet 2013: 130), making it possible to develop then adapt models based on correlations between the most statistically predictive variables of undue payment. These various models, which will be discussed in more detail later, make it possible to give a risk score to beneficiary files, and on this basis to select the cases to be monitored. It is therefore a pre-monitoring instrument that can identify the files with a risk level justifying an actual investigation. The low cost of implementation improves the efficiency of monitoring operations. In 2010, some CAF centres voluntarily piloted the instrument to trigger monitoring, and it was rolled out across the entire network in 2011. In addition, a smaller sample of 7000 beneficiaries was used to calculate the financial risks not covered by the monitoring system (Residual Risk Indicators).

The way in which data mining has been used by the *Caisse nationale*, *Pole Emploi* and other social security branches, is in line with the changing functions that have been assigned to and demanded by social security institutions. These institutions have highly integrated management logics against a background of diminishing resources. Data and statistical instruments are no longer used solely for the socialization of risks to which individuals are exposed (sickness, ageing, unemployment, accidents, family events) in what François Ewald (1986) referred to as the "insurance society" logic. Nor is it a question of identifying high-risk populations who, because of their situation or potentially dangerous behaviour that puts either themselves or society at risk, generate prevention actions from specialized institutions, as analysed by Robert Castel (1981). The risks data mining assesses in its risk management mode, are those that missing, incomplete or false beneficiary data – much of which comes from the recipients themselves – present to the smooth legal and financial running of the paying institution. In both cases, statistics are indeed a "tool for governing" (Desrosières 2014); they primarily support a form of risk management synonymous with expenditure control.

5.3 A Control Mechanism Realigned Around Data Mining

Validated by conclusive financial results, data mining now appears as the new cornerstone of monitoring in a context of increased sharing of computerized data and the targeting of home monitoring for so-called "high-risk" welfare beneficiaries, who are often also the most vulnerable. The use of data mining is a part of "social work's electronic turn" in Western Europe since the beginning of the 2000s, promoting, among other things, the nationwide collection of local data for government at a distance (Parton 2008). The major role it now plays in the family branch monitoring policy has given more power to the central level, which in turn has limited flexibility and initiative of the departmental management team and their field officers.

5.3.1 A New Cornerstone of Monitoring

Data mining has become an essential element of national monitoring and anti-fraud policies because it was piloted beforehand and since has been presented as a reason for the constant progression in the detection of undue payments – and to a lesser extent non-payment and underpayments – since the late 2000s. CNAF progress reports highlight increasing returns on targeted home checks since the use of data mining was generalized. The proportion of spot checks that have resulted in accruals has considerably increased from 17% undue payments and 14% non-payment and underpayment in 2009 to 44% and 30%, respectively, in 2015. There is also a significant change in the amounts detected, from 122 to 225 million euros in undue payments, and 40 to 59 million euros in non-payment and underpayments over this period. This positive correlation is thought to be due to the ability of the statistical model to identify risk factors of irregularities with a high financial impact, even where the predictive models for the amounts of undue payments/non-payment and underpayments are not yet developed. This being true, the use of models to target the type of situations presenting the greatest financial risks can only become more prevalent.

If data mining is seen as the new cornerstone of monitoring policies it is also because its programmed development, justified by its financial results, is connected to two other notable evolutions in this policy. First, increased monitoring effectiveness cannot be separated from a constant increase and improvement in the quality of incoming data. This is based on a range of innovations in the storage, consultation and sharing of personal data between social security branches, tax authorities and private partners, notably in the banking sector. The exchange of computerized data and, more broadly, of on-file verifications, has been boosted by the implementation of a full range of identifiers, files, and cross-checking between files, enabling wide-scale monitoring from a distance that is low-cost in terms of staff resources. Legally authorized since 1998 but only in use since 2008, a national database (*Référentiel*

national des bénéficiaires) identifies each social benefit recipient by a single register number (*Numéro d'identification au repertoire - NIR*) and groups all CAF files together, thus making it possible to identify multiple entries and to link information from other databases. A national directory (*Répertoire national commun de la protection sociale - RNCPS*) makes it easier to access personal data held by other welfare institutions. Set up in 2009, it is accessed through a common computer portal called *Espace des organismes partenaires de la protection sociale (EOPPS)* used by social welfare partner organizations. The sharing of this type of computer interface helps to strengthen pre-existing institutional links (Baudot 2011).

At the same time, the number of home checks has decreased. However, this does not mean that these processes are any less important to the monitoring process, but rather that they are now focused on the riskiest, and therefore most complex, files identified by the data mining algorithms – the primary means of triggering a monitoring process. The identification of a potential, undefined risk reinforces the need for home checks, but these increase the workload for certified officers, whether for upstream investigations or reporting purposes. It goes without saying that the significant and continuous decrease of spot checks, from 280,000 in 2009 to 166,000 in 2015, is because more home checks are being triggered by data mining. Several trends overlap: the increased use of data mining for triggering home checks, specialization in difficult cases, longer assessment time for more targeted and exhaustive investigations, and improved performance in detecting irregularities.

5.3.2 More Centralized Supervision in Localized Targeting

Geared towards the improvement of monitoring effectiveness and an increase in the detection of undue payments and fraud, data mining has helped to limit the autonomy of local CAF centres and lessen the differences that used to exist between their practices. Information requests focused on individual social welfare beneficiaries, based on knowledge gained from local benefit management, was previously one of the only options that local CAF centres had for shaping their control policies. Data mining has progressively become the primary tool in selecting files to be monitored. In the beginning, some departments were chosen to participate in the wide-scale pilot scheme (such as Seine-Saint-Denis) before it was rolled-out nationally in 2011. Prior to this date, less than a quarter of spot checks were decided at the national level; in 2016, nearly two thirds of spot checks were triggered through a nationwide data mining-based targeting process. This increase in the proportion of data mining-related controls – which seem however to have reached a peak and evened out since 2015 – coincides with a drastic drop in the number of controls triggered by advisory staff (only 20% in 2016 compared to 51% in 2011), and less significantly, with a drop in the number of local targets or activity/resource checks (RACs).

Breakdown of spot checks concluded in year N according to the monitoring target

	2011 (%)	2012 (%)	2013 (%)	2014 (%)	2015 (%)	2016 (%)
Data mining	23	40	53	60	63	63
Local targets	8	5	3	5	6	6
Advisory staff	51	42	30	24	20	20
External flagging	3	3	3	3	4	4
Activity/resource checks	4	3	3	1	1	1
Other	11	7	8	7	6	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

This evolution is in keeping with the national monitoring plans, which recommend always giving data mining priority over other means of triggering checks, including monitoring requests made by advisory staff, that are now limited in number. The introduction of data mining not only reduces the number of targets identified by CAF centre directors, but also field officer initiatives. These officers still play a part in combatting fraud, but they are now expected to turn their attention to the identification of residual cases that are not detected by the statistical tool. The technical solution does not replace officers' skills and know-how but it regulates their action and directs it toward the most complex cases.

The rising power of an automated risk-detection system has altered the nature of spot checks. Data mining and risk scores have given comptrollers a sort of black box device that is shrouded in mystery and that has some undesirable effects such as repeated checks performed year after year on the same welfare beneficiary, whose profile has been flagged, often wrongly, by the statistical tool. The objective of spot checks has been redefined, and the role of officer as councillor is being phased out in favour of officer as monitor. Through training sessions and also more indirectly through the generalization of fraud objectives assigned to them (that are also determined through data mining), comptrollers are encouraged to base their meeting with the social welfare beneficiary around the verification of benefits to which they are entitled and even on the detection of a deliberate anomaly, i.e. fraud. Since the cases verified are those with the highest score on the risk scale, and since the data mining targeting mode is designed to detect fraud, the comptrollers tend to presume the files they are auditing are fraudulent and to conduct their investigation accordingly.

CNAF usefully reinforces its guidance of local targeting practices by monitoring the integrated data used to provide beneficiary scores. The selection of files and situations to be monitored is updated every month through a more efficient survey of changes in beneficiary situations. This is made possible through the development of data sharing with the above-mentioned partner institutions. National network administrators also use the statistical models when they set local goals for CAF centres in terms of monitoring and fraud objectives, with a view to harmonizing the coverage of risk management nationwide. Therefore, the local CAF centre directors have limited flexibility, in principle, for the monthly adjustment of the amount of checks to be performed in accordance with the annual goals set at the national level.

These objectives are always difficult to obtain, especially in high-risk departments. More specifically, the objective is to align local CAF centres practices with those promoted at the national level. To achieve this, the 2013–2017 COG assigned a central role to the data mining process that had been implemented over previous years. At the organizational level, the goal is to limit local disparities and align practices nationwide, as evidenced by the development of indicators to track differences between CAF centres in terms of the return on monitoring, warnings and financial penalties. The indicator policy previously implemented was further strengthened, notably by the tracking of detected frauds showing the proportion of repeat offences, and especially the residual risks indicator which could be said to close the cycle of risk management logic.

Data mining has become the key instrument in the family branch's monitoring policy through the reconfiguration of roles within its central administration. The skillset of accounting officers has become broader and the data mining tool has made it possible to gear the verification of incoming data to the detection of fraud. This shows that the use of data mining has an effect on the economy of the monitoring policy.

5.4 Towards Increased Monitoring of the Most Vulnerable Populations

The application of data mining is, in theory, based on identifying the risk factors of undue welfare payments and not of at-risk populations. Furthermore, risk prediction models focus on the characteristics of the beneficiary's situation rather than on benefits received or how their files are managed. However, the multiplication of certain risk factors for vulnerable or isolated households results in them being mechanically flagged as prime monitoring targets. In this way, the progressive generalization of data mining in this domain leads to the underprivileged being overexposed to checks.

5.4.1 Risk-Prediction Models that Correspond to Welfare Beneficiary Characteristics

The identification and assessment of risks of undue payment studied here follows a well-defined protocol. This section will provide an overview of the statistical techniques and empirical material used by the CNAF statistics department to better understand, without revealing confidential data, the various forms of predictive risk modelling on which recipient scores are based. This will show how the models take into account certain distinctive situational characteristics of welfare recipient households.

The first challenge for statisticians was in choosing the characteristics or behaviours that presented a particular risk from the profusion of data available on welfare beneficiaries and their households. Two methods of statistical modelling were available: decision trees and logistic regression. The *de facto* use of the second method seems relatively common in the field of risk prediction (Peretti-Watel 2005). Moreover, it was in keeping with the initial experiment conducted by the Bordeaux CAF and it provided CNAF statisticians with much more empirical material. It is important to point out that all data on welfare beneficiaries surveyed was accessed on a single reference date – April 2009 – which made it easier to create a homogeneous database but led to observations based on attributes and behaviours situated at a given point in time, but which can evolve over time. However, exploiting this database made it possible to measure (until the database is renewed) the risks of undue payments made over a period of more than 6 months among more than 1500 possible variables – which represents a great diversity. These variables are infinitely multipliable due to the recoding carried out. For instance the "contact" variable is based on a subtraction of the number of beneficiary calls and visits to the CAF centre.

Various logistic regression models were then designed to identify the risks of undue payments. These are possible variations on the risks associated with recipients and their households based on their personal/social situations rather than the benefits they receive, even if these benefits are considered, *a posteriori*, to be relevant to the targeting process for future controls. There are five regression models. The first four models correspond to four types of risks linked to household resources (1); household composition according to civil status (2); housing status (3); professional status of adults in the household (4). The fifth model, called the "global" model, gather the characteristics most significantly associated with undue payments. Each model has its own specificities, beginning with the larger or smaller proportion of the sample they make it possible to define. In the model related to professional status, for instance, the jobless status of the spouse is particularly associated with a risk of undue payment. In the model taking into account the various household situations listed, the risk is twice as high when the recipient is single or a single parent than when the spouse has a regular income. Risk is also greatly increased when children over 18 years old live at home. As for the housing situation, for the few recipients who declare a spouse who is either a student or a pensioner, increase by 2.6 the risk of undue payment (particularly for housing-related benefits), compared to beneficiaries who declare no spouse. As for the resources-related risk modelling, these are shown to be higher when beneficiary income is low, particularly when the housing affordability ratio is over 35%. Finally, once again, the global model flags situations of unemployment, dependent child/children over 18 and low incomes. Added to these beneficiary household characteristics are file management variables (for instance a non-certification via the NIR), or variables related to ways in which welfare beneficiary-CAF contact (the difference between the number of calls and trips to the reception desk) and other form of payment than by bank transfer. Although the global model

processes the greater part of the sample, risk-type modelling applies to smaller groups. This implies a more rapid drop in the significance of the correlations made when explanatory factors are given for undue payments. This is why these factors are found in smaller numbers than in the global model, which tends to reinforce the specific nature of the results. A new version of the global model is currently being developed for wider use from 2016. It is necessary to briefly set out the uses of these models that were developed from a sample of welfare beneficiaries to assign an undue payment risk score to all beneficiaries of the reference population. In fact, the creation of a teaching database on the data mining models made it possible to model the risk of undue payment flagged by a change of information related to housing, family situation, income or job status. The global model is also used. The results of three successive local experimental campaigns led the statistics department to focus on a specific way of combining previous logistic regression models to assign scores to all welfare beneficiaries nationwide. The score variable is generated from a set of five scores calculated by modelling per risk type: it is equal to the maximum reached by the scores in each risk subtype, or by the score within the so-called global model. *In fine*, a beneficiary with a score of 0.3 would have a 30% risk of being found to have received undue payment when monitored, which justifies the beneficiary's appearance on the comptrollers' priority list.

The steps of the process have now been identified: from theoretical models developed nationwide to beneficiary-targeting modes on the ground, and from the generalized attribution of a score to the local selection of beneficiaries to be controlled. In spite of some difficulties in appropriating data mining, and some local resistance to the generalization of this statistical tool, the process lead to increased targeting of the most vulnerable populations.

5.4.2 The Most Vulnerable Are Overexposed to Monitoring

From the identification of internal errors and fraudulent activity associated with certain benefits based on field officers' experience, we have arrived at a generalized method of risk prediction associated to the situational characteristics of some welfare beneficiaries. We are thus led to postulate a possible shift from a risk management policy to a form of at-risk population management. This is not a deliberate focus on the most vulnerable populations, who are also the most dependent on social benefits (Dubois 2010), but it would seem that the shift in the control-triggering logic is leading, *de facto*, to the most vulnerable beneficiaries being overexposed to monitoring – a trend that is increasing gradually. This over-verification can be defined as a greater probability, compared to the sum total of beneficiaries, of being targeted for a check. This gap grows in proportion to the intensity of economic and social hardships, particularly the frequent changes of situation that are characteristic of vulnerable populations (*INSEE* 2017).

In keeping with the diachronic perspective of our study, it is possible to show that this trend of targeting the most disadvantaged populations has increased during the course of the period under study, especially as regards welfare beneficiary home checks. The data collected enable us to compare the characteristics of the study population for the years 2006, 2010, 2013 and 2014. Although the trend toward increased targeting of the most vulnerable welfare beneficiaries can be seen in the requests for data sharing or document-based controls, it is most clearly shown in home checks. This appears to be in line with the goals of national monitoring plans, inasmuch as the productivity gains related to the generalized use of data mining were most expected with this type of check (see above). Staff involved in monitoring and anti-fraud were already focusing their efforts on the most vulnerable beneficiaries in the early 2000s (Dubois 2003). Nevertheless, the data collected enables us to show how this trend has grown and toward which beneficiaries specifically. These are seen to be targeted according to household composition, their age and the age of their child/children, and their income.

Regarding the welfare beneficiary household composition, it is clearly shown that single-parent families (essentially single mothers) tend to be increasingly over-monitored: there is a 29.2 gap in percentage between the proportion of single-parent families monitored at home over the year 2004 and the population of welfare beneficiaries as a whole, compared to only 16.4 in 2006. The age of beneficiaries and that of their child/children also appears as a determining factor, but the increase in spot checks is most striking in households with children aged 18–25 – in other words old enough to work but who have been flagged as liable to do not declare their income (only 2.2 percentage points with other beneficiaries compared to 24.4 in 2013 and 23.7 in 2014). Significant differences in the probability of home checks can also be observed according to professional status. Unemployed beneficiaries, or beneficiaries not in active employment, tend to be controlled more often, while the trend is reversed for people in employment. The same evolution can be noted for income-related checks. A major divide exists between beneficiaries with a monthly income under €500 per household consumption unit – which places them as earning below half of the poverty threshold at 60%[4] – and the others. The poorest were already over-monitored in the mid-2000s, but this trend has seen a sharp increase, notably in the case of home checks; the difference with the sum total of beneficiaries going from 25.1 percentage points in 2006 to 33.6 in 2014. (** Shift in 2015 over-monitoring of household between 500 and 1000).

[4] In 2015, the poverty threshold was 60% of the median standard of living, i.e. €987 per month. A growing number of households, however, are dropping away from this threshold, their income per consumer unit falling below 30% of the median standard of living (Fontaine and Sicsic 2015).

Distribution of home checks in 2006, 2010, 2013 and 2014 (in percentage points)

	2006	2010	2013	2014
Family situation				
Single and childless	9	5.4	−9	−11.6
Childless couple	1.2	0.4	−0.6	−0.9
Couple with children	−28.9	−27.1	−17	−17.9
Single-parent family	16.4	18.1	25.2	29.2
Age of head of household				
Under 30	5.6	3.9	−6.6	−3.7
30–39	−4.2	−2.5	−3	−2.6
40–59	0.6	0	8	7
60 and over	−4.9	−4.8	−5.1	−6.6
Age of child/children				
0–13	−13.2	−10.6	0.7	3.7
14–17	−5.1	−3.7	7.3	7.4
18–25	2.2	1.6	24.4	23.7
Professional status of head of household				
Employed	−21.9	−19.4	−21	−22.7
Self-employed	−0.6	0.2	1.7	1
Extended sick leave	−0.9	−0.1	1.2	1.2
Pensioner	−4.7	−4.8	−5	−6.5
Student	−3.3	−3.8	−5.5	−5.8
Unemployed	11.1	7.3	9	8.2
No status	18.6	18.7	20.7	26.1
Monthly income per consumer unit (in euros)				
0–500	25.1	21.6	31.1	33.6
500 and over	−29.3	−22.6	−30.8	−32.2

Source: CNAF – ALLNAT monthly files
N.B. *The proportion of single and childless beneficiaries within the audited population is 9.9 percentage points higher than that found in the total population of beneficiaries*
Field: *the entire population of beneficiaries in 2006, 2010, 2013, 2014*

Certainly, there are still checks following suspicious behaviour during a CAF centre visit, the doubts of an advisory officer, flags by partner administrations or private reports of benefit fraud. Arguably, this checking is more frequent in the most disadvantaged populations as people living in more unstable conditions are more prone to mistakes and lateness when providing information. However, the generalization of data mining is the element that most systematically tends to orient a monitoring that is targeted at beneficiaries with the most acute social and economic hardships. The application of statistical instruments according to socio-demographic characteristics logically leads to a situation in which the beneficiaries most often monitored are those who receive resource-based welfare benefits and among these, the solidarity benefit recipients. This is not an *a priori* decision, as in the case of the localized targeting of RSA recipients – with the advent of data mining, these operations become all the more outdated and give a negative image – but because statistical models that are outwardly neutral and field-tested identify more risks factors in the populations concerned.

5.5 Conclusion

The use of data mining, and the risk management policy of which it is a key element, fits into a rationalization process that associates instrumental and value-rational action, as defined by Weber. The objective is twofold: to combat social fraud, the immorality of which is regularly denounced publically as the antithesis of a work ethic, and to develop new ways of limiting social spending. This rationalization process is profoundly political because of the highly political nature in which it was triggered, or at least accelerated. Indeed, there was the calling into question of the traditional forms of the welfare state criticized for being lax, and the corresponding accusations of welfare profiting. Though intrinsically political, this process appears to be technical. It combines (i) legal reasoning implying strict application of the rules to ensure the proper and rightful payment of benefits (Buchet 2013), (ii) management reasoning implying the correct allocation of resources, and (iii) statistical reasoning serving the first two and integrating the probabilistic approach into welfare institutions (Desrosières 1993).

This rationalization, of which data mining is both the product and vehicle, is conducted in the name of accuracy and efficiency and is not socially neutral. It leads to a situation that was created unintentionally, but not without reason, in which the underprivileged have become particular targets for monitoring that should not be confused with the fight against fraud and penalties, but that are a big part of it nonetheless. The current rationalization therefore goes hand in hand with coercive measures toward the most vulnerable. The increase in data mining is accompanied by an increase in the judicialization of fraud, a development that is part of a larger movement to judicialize social policies. The social impacts of this judicialization of social welfare benefits fraud must by analysed, all the more so since its target population increasingly seems to be predominantly composed of vulnerable welfare beneficiaries, and since it is extremely difficult for the underprivileged to access justice (Galanter 1974). As in tax matters, there are more stringent penalties and more resources put towards the surveillance and detection of fraudulent behaviours in low-income households than in high-income ones (Spire 2012).

As we have seen, a statistical instrument such as data mining does not determine by itself its uses, which are defined in its social and political implementation process. The conditions in which data mining was transferred into the French social welfare system have turned it into a technology geared towards risk management, one that is primarily defined by the imperative to control and to limit social spending. Nonetheless, there is nothing preventing it from being used to improve access to social rights, and to combat the non-claiming of social benefits by targeting potential beneficiaries through non-claiming predictive factors (Warin 2016). This is done in Great Britain and in the Netherlands (Zuurmond 2008) and it has its advocates in France,[5] but it would need to overcome the highly unfavourable social, political and financial conditions.

[5] See for example this recent parliamentary report: Gisèle Biémouret, Jean-Louis Costes, Rapport d'information sur l'évaluation des politiques publiques en faveur de l'accès aux droits sociaux, n°4158, Assemblée Nationale, Paris, 2016.

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Chapter 6
The Paradoxical Place of Psychiatry in the Administration of Disability: Dealing with the Reframing of Autism from a Psychiatric to an Educative Issue in the Concrete Making of a Target Public

Céline Borelle

Abstract Disability studies were founded on a transition from a « medical model », in which disability is mostly thought based on individual deficiencies, to a « social model », in which disability is conceived as a relational reality in a given environment. This chapter proposes to question the translation of that transition in the French administration of disability through the case of autism. Parents' organizations have contributed since the end of the 1980's to a reframing of autism, in redefining autistic disorders as being a behavioral instead of a psychological problem, and in claiming a right to an educative care as opposed to a psychiatric one. Parents use the existing "disabled child education allowance" to finance alternative care arrangements that resort to private health professionals and "ordinary" schooling. This reframing of autism has generated a malaise in the administration of disability regarding the allocation of this benefit to parents of children diagnosed with autism. This malaise is structured by two key issues: How should the relevance of an alternative care arrangement be assessed? How should the notion of education be delimited? The emerging right to an educative care for children diagnosed with autism questions both the definition terms and the boundaries of the target public. This chapter first explores the ways the administration deals with these uncertainties, especially in asking for psychiatric expertise. It also shows how parents' organizations make alliances with psychiatrists to secure the right to an educative care in an institutional setting characterized by medical assessment of deficiencies. Based on an ethnographic study of the administrative assessment of disability rights for children diagnosed with autism, this analysis allows underlining the paradoxical place of psychiatry in the definition of a public eligible to a non-psychiatric care, and more generally, the limits of the actual transition from a medical to a social model of disability.

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6.1 Introduction

Concrete production of rights within public administrations is a process which may be observed and analyzed at a variety of levels. Following pioneering research on street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky 1980), several French studies have endeavored to examine the practical modes of attribution of rights through the viewpoint of bureaucrats.[1] They focus primarily on front desk relationships (Dubois 1999; Siblot 2002; Spire 2008; Barrault-Stella 2011), or the routine of everyday administrative work (Weller 2008). An abundant literature also points to the centrality of references to public service users in administrative reforms (Warin 1997), and allows a better understanding of how the consideration of users by public services challenges the experience of their work as meaningful for administration employees (Weller 2010). The emerging notion of co-production of rights led to a new questioning of the modes of user participation in the concrete production of their rights. Such investigations are undertaken for instance by the Observatory on Non-Take Up of Social Rights and Public Services, (ODENORE 2012), aiming to analyze how users relate to available public resources, and therefore to better understand "non-take-ups". Other works elect to place their focus on organizations, rather than on user – administrative clerk relations: in the footsteps of Isabelle Sayn and Luc-Henry Choquet (2000), Jean-Marc Weller (2002) shows that the concrete production of rights is dependent upon the organization where the production takes place.

A new field of research on disabilities has recently emerged in France, concerned with the practices of evaluation of needs and attribution of rights within Departmental Houses for Individuals with Disabilities (*Maisons départementales des personnes handicapées*, or MDPH). Its branches distributed at the local scale of the *département*, this body is designed as a network of comprehensive resource desks for information, orientation and benefit attribution.[2] The process of attributing rights is characterized by a succession of steps: the application is first reviewed by a clerk, an interdisciplinary team then assesses the request, and the decision is made in committee by the Committee for the Rights and Autonomy of Individuals with Disabilities (*Commission des droits et de l'autonomie des personnes handicapées*, or CDAPH). Several studies have followed the workings of the CDAPH (Vidal-Naquet et al. 2010; Bureau and Rist 2011). Research by Louis Bertrand, Vincent Caradec and Jean-Sébastien Eideliman (2011) has also underlined the benefits of an approach combining the observation of evaluation committees with interviews with people

[1] I would like to thank the laboratory CERIES (Lille 3) for its financial support to translate this text.

[2] The organization was created by the law n°2005–102 "for equality of rights and opportunities, participation and civic rights of individuals with disabilities" passed on February 11, 2005 and implemented since January 1st, 2006.

seeking recognition of the handicapped worker status (*Reconnaissance de la qualité de Travailleur handicapé*, or RQTH). Lastly, several studies have insisted on how the organization of the MDPH shapes the processing of rights as well as relations with users (Baudot et al. 2013; Perrier 2013). In contrast with these works, our study aims to offer a new perspective on the concrete production of rights in the field of disability, by focusing our analysis on the institutional workings of the administration: this shift in perspective allows to question the relationships between handicap administrations and other institutional stakeholders.

This paper finds its basis in segments of a study conducted as part of a research on the diagnosis and case management of autistic children in France between 2008 and 2013 – primarily the observation of five meetings of the interdisciplinary team of one MDPH, during which meetings 55 request files were examined. Access to these meetings were made possible by Brigitte A, a child psychiatrist coordinating a diagnosis center specialized in autism (the Institute for Autism Diagnosis, *Institut du diagnostic de l'autisme* or IDA), itself the object of a six-month ethnographic stuty (March–August 2009). Another source for this study is the observation of a day-long meeting gathering child psychiatrists from the autism unit where the IDA is located and administrators of the medico-social evaluation service of the MDPH. Lastly, additional material for this research is provided by interviews (N = 19) conducted between 2009 and 2011 with various political representatives, non-profit administrators and health-care professionals, all involved in the management of autism at the local scale. The studied département can be characterized by an important, yet divided, presence of parents' associations, a political approach of autism in terms of "psychic disability", and a strong opposition between psychoanalytical or cognitive-behavioral perspectives that are personified by preeminent health professionals who are recognized at a national scale.

The issue of the place of medical knowledge in the administrative evaluation of the handicap has been raised since 1975 and the very creation of the local commissions for the administrative recognition of a handicapped status: the Departmental commissions for special education (*Commissions départementales de l'éducation spéciale*, or CDES) and Technical commissions for professional orientation and reclassification (*Commissions techniques d'orientation et de reclassement professionnel*, or COTOREP), both predecessors to the MPDH. Robert Castel (1983) shows how these committees initiate a new logic of medical action: diagnosis and case management are dissociated, and acts of treatment are turned into acts of expertise. While a significant number of psychiatrists opposed the law of June 30, 1975, the role of the physician remains essential within the committees, as "it is their expertise that seals the fate of the handicapped individual" (Castel 1983: 124). To what extent does medical expertise remain fundamental to the administrative evaluation of disabilities in MDPHs today? The question is raised with renewed insistence as the notion of "psychic disability" appears as a category of public policy in the law of February 11, 2005. For Nicolas Henkes (2012), this notion focuses the tensions between illness and disability, and between the medical and the social. What is the place of psychiatric expertise in the evaluation of handicap situations with mental, cognitive or psychic aspects? The case of autism is of particular

interest, insofar as its diagnosis crystallizes controversial links between the mental, the cognitive and the psychic.

This chapter addresses the constitution of a paradoxical space for public psychiatry in the administration of a right to a non-psychiatric management of autism. A mobilization of parents' associations critical of psychiatry led to the recognition of autism as a disability. Challenging the classification of autism as a psychiatric issue allowed the emergence of a new right to an educative care of children diagnosed with autism (Sect. 6.2). However, the implementation of this right causes a malaise within the administration of disability, and organizations call upon psychiatrists to assess situations on a case-by-case basis (Sect. 6.3). Parents' associations are then led to create unexpected strategic alliances with a number of child psychiatrists in order to guarantee the right to educative management (Sect. 6.4). The emerging right to an educative care for children diagnosed with autism questions the concrete making of a target public as an issue of power relationships between different institutional stakeholders, parents' associations, public child psychiatry and the handicap administration.

6.2 The Emergence of a Right to Educative Care for Autism: Parents' Associations *Versus* Psychiatry

In order for a right to come to existence, it first has to be conceivable. To the extent that a right may be seen as a response to a given problem (Gusfield 1981), reclassifying a problem seems a necessary step toward the emergence of a new right. In this instance, the right to educative care for autistic children became conceivable when parents' associations reclassified autistic disorders as neurological rather than psychic, challenging the assigning of the issue to psychiatry.

6.2.1 Reframing Autism as an Educative Issue

Brigitte Chamak (2008a, b, 2010), in her study of activism relating to autism, describes three generations of parents' associations. Associations of the first generation were founded in the 1960s with the aim of creating institutions that would compensate for the lack of dedicated public structures for mentally-impaired children. These associations collaborated with public psychiatry: the Association in the Service of Individuals with Personality Disorders (*Association au service des inadaptés ayant des troubles de la personnalité*, or ASITP) created in 1963 the first outpatient clinic for children, Hôpital Santos Dumont in Paris, while the National Union of Associations of Parents of Mentally Handicapped Individuals and their Friends (*Union nationale des associations de parents de personnes handicapées mentales et de leurs amis*, formerly *Union nationale des associations de parents*

d'enfants inadaptés, or UNAPEI) was created in 1960 in partnership with public authorities, and with support from the medical community. Here, the history of associations before autism connects with the history of activism related to special-needs or "*inadaptés*" children, until the general framework law of June 30, 1975 on individuals with disabilities (Barral et al. 2000).

A second generation of advocacy associations appeared in the mid-1980s, which goal was to create institutions with educational methods adapted to individuals with autism. In 1985, two groups affiliated with the UNAPEI, the Ile-de-France Association for the Development of Education and Research on Autism (*Association Ile de France pour le développement de l'éducation et de la recherche sur l'autisme*, or AIDERA) and Pro-Aid Autisme, created a school and an outpatient education center following the Treatment and Communication of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) program.[3] That same year, the ASITP became the Autism and Childhood Psychoses French Federation (*Fédération Française Autisme et Psychoses Infantiles*, or FFAPI). With this second generation, autism appeared as a specific cause, distinct from other forms of mental handicap and mental illness; it was then defined as an intermediate reality between disability and illness, potentially progressive, and different from mental disability understood as an irreversible intellectual deficiency.

In 1989, divisions within the FFAPI led it to change its name to "*Fédération française Sésame autisme*" (French Federation Sesame Autism) the following year. About 40 families decided to "lift up the leaden cloak of Bettelheimian[4] writings", in opposition to public child psychiatry (CMPs,[5] CATTPs,[6] outpatient hospitals), which was dominated by a psychoanalytical approach of autism. They challenged the classification of autism as a "psychosis" in the *Classification française des troubles mentaux de l'enfant et de l'adolescent* (CFTMEA, or French Classification of Children's and Teenagers' Mental Disorders), and favored the category of "pervasive developmental disorder" used in international classifications (such as the American Diagnostic Statistical Manual and the International Classification of Diseases used by the World Health Organization). The February 1989 appeal to "a movement toward the right to an educative, non-psychoanalytical care for autistic individuals" led to the creation of Autisme France, a third-generation advocacy group. With this generation came campaigns in favor of the use of American behaviorist and educative methods, of the integration of children into "mainstream"

[3] A diagnosis, treatment and education program for autistic children, the TEACCH also offers training for parents since its creation in North Carolina in the 1960s by psychologist Eric Schopler.

[4] In reference to American psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim (1903–1990), who contended that parental relations, in particular coldness from the mother, may partly explain autistic disorders. See Bettelheim 1967.

[5] The *Centres Médico-Psychologiques*, or Medical-Psychological Centers, are diagnostic and treatment centers offering consultations fully covered by Social Security.

[6] The *Centres d'Accueil Thérapeutique à Temps Partiel* or Part-time Therapy Centers, offer more intensive care than CMPs, but on a shorter-term basis than outpatient clinics.

schools, and of an organic conception of autism, understood as a neurobiological disorder. Intent on pulling autism outside of the field of mental illness and on challenging the authority of child psychiatrists, this generation also campaigned for the recognition of autism as a handicap; this recognition was enacted with the law of December 11, 1996.

The creation of new associations since the early 2000s suggests the emergence of a fourth generation, with a more radical criticism of psychiatry. Worth mentioning are *Léa pour Samy* (Lea for Samy), created in January 2001 and renamed *Vaincre l'autisme* (Defeating Autism) in 2009, as well as *Autistes sans frontières* (Autistics Without Borders) founded in January 2004. This fourth generation of associations makes extensive use of the media as a significant part of its repertory of action (Tilly 1984),[7] and aims for the classification of autism as a cognitive, rather than psychic, disability.

Madeleine Akrich, Cécile Méadel and Vololona Rabeharisoa (2009) highlighted, through the use of focus groups, the participation of *Autisme France* in the conception of research efforts on autism, raising issues beyond the psychiatric and psychoanalytical sphere. Third- and fourth-generation associations find support for their claims and demands in scientific knowledge, like autism activists in Canada and the United States (Orsini and Smith 2010). The political use of expert knowledge is especially important in the definition of autism as a public issue, since the scientific debate on autism is still not settled (Baker and Steuernagel 2009).

Claims for a right to educative care of autism falls within a movement of deinstitutionalization generally at play in the field of handicap in France since the 1970's (Stiker 2009). More broadly, the reclassification of autism promoted by third- and fourth-generation organizations finds its place in a "civil rights model" originating in the United States. This model is rooted in a concern for the rights of people with disabilities, as opposed to an earlier "social welfare model" based on separation and protection (Heyer 2005).

The claim for equal rights is closely linked to an alternative conception of disability. A "social model" (Oliver 1990) may be opposed to a "medical model" where disability is apprehended through the medical diagnosis of impairments. In this model, the definition of the handicap is rather situational and interactional: it is viewed as the consequence of an ill-adapted environment and discrimination from the community. Much as the civil rights movements critical of racial and gender inequalities were vitalized by both activism and a shift in knowledge regimes, the social focus of disability studies is dependent upon the interconnected politicization of disability and its understanding in terms of rights starting in the 1970s (Albrecht et al. 2001).

[7] For example, the media attention given to "packing" as a treatment option, or to the movie *Le Mur. La Psychanalyse à l'épreuve de l'autisme*. For an in-depth study of both cases, see Borelle 2016.

6.2.2 *Enacting the Right to Educative Treatment*

Once the right to educative care has become conceivable, it still has to be applicable, and applied; enacting this right meaning incorporating it into existing structures. In this regard, parents of children with autism rely on the Education Benefits for Children with Disabilities (*Allocation d'éducation de l'enfant handicapé*, or AEEH) attributed by decision of the CDAPH (Committee for the Rights and Autonomy of Individuals with Disabilities, *Commission des droits et de l'autonomie des personnes handicapées*) within the MDPHs. This financial assistance was designed to help cover the expenses, incurred in the care of a child with a disability, which other structures did not cover – in particular therapies not offered in existing structures, and/or outside of the primary health-care system. Parents of children with autism resort to the AEEH for the partial or full financing of their alternative care arrangements relying on private health-care practitioners (occupational, speech and psychomotility therapists, psychologists) as well as the inclusion of children in a "mainstream" school environment with a special needs assistant (*auxiliaire de vie scolaire* or AVS), and the occasional help of volunteers.

While emergent, this right has not necessarily found a permanent form – rather, its expression should be understood as one possible form within a given context, and as the context evolves, the form of the right may change: what we know today as the form of the right to educative care may be considered a temporary form. In a context of low penetration of educational components in the medico-social and psychiatric institutions, the right takes the form of AEEH financing of alternative treatments. Other forms may however be considered, if educational methods were to be more largely used in institutional settings; the right to educative care would then not find its expression in the rejection of institutional care.

Interdisciplinary team evaluation plays a central part in the process of attribution of rights by the MDPH: more often than not, their assessments are approved by the CDAPH without further case evaluation. While officially the prerogative of the commission, decision making is in practice delegated to the team.

> *Day-long meeting gathering the MDPH evaluation team and the child psychiatrists from the autism unit; November 8, 2010*
>
> Béatrice A., child psychiatrist, IDA coordinator: "Personally, I still have a hard time pointing where decisions are made in all this, I feel it is a problem… [to Brigitte D., MDPH instructor] you are making a decision when you make a note on the sheet during the technical meetings?"
>
> Sylvie G., MDPH medico-social evaluation service supervisor: "It's something that is proposed to the CDA[PH], which will decide; it has to be confirmed… The decision for most cases is made for the list, it's the whole list that is approved."
>
> Béatrice A.: "In general, it is systematically approved on the basis of the list?"
>
> Sylvie G.: "Yes, unless a member of the CDA asks for case review… The proposed assessment may possibly be changed when the file is presented at the CDA…"

The supervisor for the service of medico-social evaluation, Sylvie G., explains that the CDAPH meets twice a month, once for a plenary session and once for a "simplified" session. During the latter, decisions are approved for a list of cases without

committee review. She estimates that about "ten to twenty" files are proposed and effectively reviewed every month at the CDAPH – which amounts to a maximum of 0,6% of the 43,000 yearly applications.[8] The two types of cases for which members of the CDAPH ask a committee review are those that are "representative of those we deal with" and the files showing "issues that may be useful for other cases", in the words of Sylvie G. Requests for reviews are made in order to establish a type of jurisprudence on a number of issues, allowing for more established decision-making procedures.

From one *département* to the other, the evaluation teams work shows differences. Teams may specialize in children or adults, in certain types of disorders, or according to geographical locations. The make-up of the team may also vary: members may be nominated so that they do not participate in the care of reviewed cases, or on the contrary be chosen because of their knowledge of the case. In the location observed, knowledge of the case do not impact recruitment into the team, and specialized meetings are held on the basis of the typology of the cases (age and form of disability). In the MDPH studied, the cases of children diagnosed as autistic are filed as "including a psychological component", in the words of an instructor. That classification meets the definition of autism as a "psychic disability" in the discourse of local political actors, both the autism coordinator at the Regional Health Agency (*Agence Régionale de Santé*, or ARS) and the vice-president in charge of solidarity towards elders and disable people at the Département Council (*Conseil Général*). The teams reviewing these files generally include a child psychiatrist, an education adviser,[9] a social worker and an instructor[10]; a representative from the medico-social field and a school psychologist may also be present.

Complete files comprise a full application form, including "a life plan and objectives",[11] sometimes with a documentation of expenses attributed to the handicap; a medical certificate, which test results may accompany; a social information sheet filled out by a social worker; a psychological report and a school information report.[12] A specific request form for a special-needs assistant is added when needed.

[8] The figure of 43,000 is an estimate; more precise figures on MDPH activity could not be acquired, in spite of requests sent to the *Caisse nationale de solidarité pour l'autonomie* (National Solidarity Fund for Autonomy, or CNSA) and the MDPH itself.

[9] Tasked with the monitoring of handicapped children in mainstream schools within a given geographical area.

[10] The instructors are low skilled administrative agents and mostly women.

[11] A document where are expressed "the expectations and needs of the person concerned".

[12] It is not specified who fills out the psychological and school reports.

6.3 Administrating a Right to Educative Care for Autism: The Call for Psychiatric Expertise

The vulnerability of an emerging right, based on the reframing of an issue, resides in its implementation within an institutional network which preexists its emergence, and is still marked by the previous definitions of the issue. Contradictions may well arise when several classifications of an issue coexist within the same institution. Since it is rare that a consensus is reached for a reclassification, an emerging right is also vulnerable in its uncertain legitimacy. The controversy surrounding the diagnosis of autism, as well as an implementation within an administration where can still be felt the presence not only of the medical model of disability, but also of the classification of autism as a psychic disorder, contribute to the fragility of the right to educative care.

6.3.1 Appealing to Medical Expertise

The right to an educative care for autism, as part of a social model of disability, is first confronted to an administration where the influence of a medical model is still tangible. To be seen as pertinent, and be eligible for the financial support of the AEEH, adapted management must be justified by a medical certificate. During the day-long meeting with the MDPH evaluation team and the child psychiatrists of the autism unit, a reminder comes from Sylvie G. that "There should be for each case a medical certificate validating the access to care". One could see in this requirement the remains of a definition of handicap as individual deficiencies. It contradicts the reframing of autism as an educative issue which underpins the production of alternative care arrangements where health professionals are not necessarily needed. With this contradiction comes a paradoxical situation: adapted care relying on educative methods must be prescribed by physicians. Child psychiatrists then find themselves in the ambiguous position of having to validate care arrangements conceived by parents opposing child psychiatry. During the day-long meeting, one child psychiatrist in charge of a day clinic exclaimed: "Does my MDPH validate pure reeducation therapy? Because I don't!"

The requirement for the medical validation of care arrangements presented in the files turns medical knowledge into an expertise for handicap administration. With this requirement comes an intention to adapt medical verdicts to the necessities of administrative evaluation. During the day-long meeting with the MDPH evaluation team and the child psychiatrists of the autism unit, Sylvie G. encourages the physicians to favor, in the medical certificates attached to the application files, a "functional description" of the child's disorders, in terms of abilities and inabilities. This aims to facilitate the use of the evaluation charts,[13] designed to measure the "inability index" of a child. Child psychiatrists are also trained to use administrative assessment

[13] The *guide-barème* used for the assessment of the deficiencies and inabilities of individuals with disabilities, published in annex to the decree #2007–1574 of November 6, 2007.

tools. The interdisciplinary meeting offers the opportunity for collective thinking on the possible translation of symptoms into inabilities, on the transition from a medical evaluation of disorders to the administrative assessment of the handicap. Sylvie G. explains how the case of a child diagnosed with autism may be rated in the evaluation guide measuring eligibility to disability compensation benefits (*Prestation de compensation du handicap*, or PCH). While administrative evaluation is based on the authority of the medical, medical assessment is supervised in order to be compatible with the principles of administrative evaluation.

Moreover, there exists a hint of mistrust toward physicians. Béatrice A., child psychiatrist and IDA coordinator, notes that the rating scale used to evaluate autonomy on medical certificates is different from the scale used to assess PCH eligibility. Sylvie G. then explains that it was deliberate on the part of the MDPH, who wanted to "avoid obtaining only declarative results" – in other words, to avoid a situation where physicians, in possible alliances with their patients, abuse the rating system and push into eligibility individuals who may not otherwise receive benefits.

The relation between administrative evaluation and medical expertise can then be described as a forced and heavily monitored partnership. Administrative evaluation needs a validation, but can only resort to medical assessment under certain conditions: medical expertise must be subjected to the principles of administrative evaluation, while administrative evaluation must guard itself against the possible manipulation of medical expertise.

Appealing to Psychiatric Expertise

The reclassification of autism as a neurological issue, underpinning the emergence of a right to an educative care, is also confronted to the remains of the earlier classification of the disability as a psychic issue. In the very MDPH center observed, the files of diagnosed autistic children fall within the group of cases "including a psychological component", which points to the fact that autism is treated as a psychic rather than cognitive disability.

Moreover, the classification of autistic disorders, as well as the methods adapted to their care, are highly controversial: not only do parents' associations and professionals often contend with each other, but the controversy is also present among mental health professionals, opposing psychoanalysts to cognitive behavioral therapists. While it impacts all aspects of the concrete implementation of the right to an educative care for children with autism, the controversy is especially passionate when it comes to the pertinence of the care arrangements developed by parents. In this context, MDPH personnel voice their discontent with the continuous introduction of new methods of care (ABA,[14] 3I,[15] etc.) and the multiplication of private and non-

[14] Applied Behavioral Analysis aims to change the child's behavior through the use of a system of rewards and penalties; it was created in the 1960s in California by psychologist Ivar Lovaas.

[15] An *individual*, *intensive* and *interactive* method of stimulation based on game-playing. Drawing inspiration in the American "Son-Rise" program, it was initiated by the grand-parents of a child with autism, who created the association "Autisme espoir vers l'école" in October 2005 in Paris.

profit treatment and management options. Pascale V., head of the orientation and information service at the MDPH, explains during an interview: "Obviously we don't give our opinion on this or that type of therapy… But we're asked about some outright bizarre therapies, and I always find it disturbing. That or the methods… Gluten-free diets… The pro-ABAs, the anti-ABAs, TEACCH, essential oils… I find it very difficult…"

Sylvie G., supervisor of the medico-social evaluation service at the MDPH, expresses her choice to rely on psychiatric expertise when reviewing the cases of children diagnosed with autism. Pascale V. explains how Sylvie G. calls on the IDA (the Institute for Autism Diagnosis, *Institut du diagnostic de l'autisme*): "Financial aid from the AEEH can include educative therapy, this is why Sylvie G., who heads the interdisciplinary teams, she sometimes asks for an input from the IDA. And more and more, that's how it's going to be… That's the reason why she wants to put together an important collaboration with the IDA, so that they can validate, since here we don't have any autism specialist."

During the day-long interdisciplinary meeting, Sylvie G. asks the child psychiatrists to standardize their evaluations, so that a given profile would match a type of management: "It would be important that you could tell us what are the usual equivalences… Tell us: for a non-verbal autistic child of this age, you can expect this…" The request is met with a strong reluctance, and the child psychiatrists justify their eventual refusal by the lack of consensus among health-care professionals and the absolute singularity of each case.

Day-long meeting gathering the MDPH evaluation team and the child psychiatrists from the autism unit; November 8, 2010

Richard S., head of the child psychiatry unit: "You have to go into details… The project is so child-dependent, it's hard to protocolize. […] It wouldn't be realistic to offer a protocolized model of management that includes therapy and education, because all psychiatrists are not from the same school, psychoanalytical or otherwise…"

Irène M., child psychiatrist and supervisor of a day clinic: "We're not going to stand by some form of animal training[16]!"

Child psychiatrists refuse to offer a formalized expertise liable to be internalized into an administrative evaluation where their participation as experts would not be necessary. The practice of psychiatric expertise in an administrative context creates a tension between the two forms of expertise defined by Robert Castel (1985: 83–87): "instituting expertise" and "mandated expertise". In the latter model, expertise is used as "an external legitimacy, founded on a different capital", and does not interfere with "the definition or the functioning of the situation requiring evaluation". In the other form of expert intervention, "the expert does not only evaluate a situation through their own knowledge, but also constitutes it through the same knowledge". The "instituting" expert is "not as much the one carrying out a "neutral" evaluation of the situation, as the person constituting the situation from the inside".

[16] In reference to methods used in behavioral therapy.

The very example used by Robert Castel is that of the CDES, where medico-psychological expertise "constitutes" the handicap. According to the law of June 30, 1975, "will henceforth be recognized as handicapped all individuals recognized as such by the departmental commissions". At play in the opposition between the child psychiatrists of the autism unit and the head of medico-social evaluation at the MDPH, is the very resistance of child psychiatrists to their expertise becoming "mandated" in the evaluation of a psychic disability.

Given the variety of mental health professionals, one may wonder if the relation between administrative evaluation and psychiatric expertise depends on the position of the child psychiatrists, on their psychoanalytical or cognitive-behavioral perspective. Is one perspective identifiable as more amenable to administrative evaluation? The administrative classification of autism as a psychic issue would lead to consider psychoanalysis the most likely candidate; however, the tools of administrative evaluation are based on a functional model of disorders, more closely linked to cognitive-behavioral theories. While the child psychiatrists involved in the evaluation of autism as a handicap tend to take a cognitive-behavioral stance, this posture is not always without ambiguity: a child psychiatrist may have a functional take on a disorder, yet refuse to recommend a standardized treatment with the argument that the singularity of case and care – advocated by the psychoanalytical tradition – is more important. The cognitive-behavioral perspective seems more compatible with the administrative evaluation of handicaps, but child psychiatrists are rarely attached to it to the point of losing their position as experts.

6.4 Protecting the Right to an Educative Care of Autism: Unexpected Alliances Between Parents' Associations and Child Psychiatrists

The efficacy of an emerging right is not to be taken for granted; it requires the involvement of a number of stakeholders who must keep watch over a still uncertain and vulnerable right, and nurture it into a stronger, more ensured right. This watch can take several forms, and result in strange bedfellows: such is the case for the associations of parents of children with autism forging alliances with child psychiatrists – while carefully choosing who they negotiate with, in order to keep a hold on the attribution of rights.

6.4.1 Selecting Partners

At the local scale, parents' associations tend to choose specific contacts rather than indiscriminately block out the entire psychiatry. The history of the IDA (the Institute for Autism Diagnosis, *Institut du diagnostic de l'autisme*) offers precious insight into

the evolution of the relation between parents' groups and child psychiatry. Jérôme M., child psychiatrist and founder of the Institute for Autism Diagnosis, recalls the initial mistrust of parents' associations. It could be inferred that he refers specifically to EAI – an association functioning under the umbrella of *Autisme France*, better established than others in the *département*, and the most reluctant to a collaboration with psychiatrists – when he speaks of parents' associations in general: "Because the issue at first was that parents' associations wouldn't recognize the authority or expertise of child psychiatry. Child psychiatry was the devil. Child psychiatrists were stuck in a psychoanalytical perspective, didn't have the right attitude toward autism. So at first we were not really welcome into the creation of the units as technical platforms. They had a hard time recognizing us."

When he created the diagnostic center in 1998, Jérôme M. followed a psychoanalytical approach, yet endeavored to "bridge the gap" separating it from standardized diagnostic tools: "The idea when creating the IDA was to foster bridges between the various approaches. For example, one of my colleagues was a psychiatrist who worked with me as a physician at the IDA, her approach of autism was very analytical, very Kleinian[17]… There is no real work, no really worthy work without a bridge between these." When Jérôme M. passed the torch to Béatrice A. in 2005, the diagnostic center distanced itself from psychoanalysis.

For EAI vice-president Germaine L., Jérôme M. softened his psychoanalytical stance on autism as much as his generational background – that is to say the spirit of the times of his training days – allowed him to: "Mr. M., he rather belongs to an analytical stance… But he sensed a change in the wind, had the intelligence to sense it, very much to his credit… So he handed over the reins to Béatrice A. She, too, comes from a tradition of psychoanalysis, but she really moved past it. Him, he's of his generation, he won't evolve like she did, but he gave her a free hand, which is a lot already. We're very thankful to him. Professionally, he couldn't commit to our approach, he chose to step back. He acted very well, he really invested himself. He went very far, I think he went as far as he could …" Jérôme M., a self-declared "child of Misès",[18] comes indeed from a generation of child psychiatrists who discovered autism through Bruno Bettelheim's *The Empty Fortress*, translated into French in 1969, only 2 years after its original publication. Jérôme M. admits to a generational aspect of his stance. At the end of our interview, during which he resisted his position as an interviewee, he joked: "With the new generation of child psychiatrists, you'll be able to use your interview grid! Because *they* [stressed by interviewee] have a very structured mind. They are very methodical… [Interviewee laughs]".

[17] Inspired by the works of Austrian-British psychoanalyst Melanie Klein (1882–1960), who promoted analysis in for children and focused her practice on the "archaic" or "primary" aspects of the psyche.

[18] Robert Misès, who died in July of 2012, was a professor of child psychiatry and a member of the *Société psychanalytique de Paris*. He took part in the drafting of the *Classification française des troubles mentaux de l'enfant et de l'adolescent*.

The change in the spirits of the times, which Béatrice A. came to embody as much as accompany, led to an inversion in the terms of the gap bridging. Béatrice A. also attempts to reconcile the opposing approaches, but under her supervision, the IDA tries to keep including a psychoanalytical aspect within a cognitive-behavioral approach of autism. On the subject of a yearly symposium organized by the IDA, Germaine L. amusedly recalls: "You will see, Béatrice A., every year, she schedules an amazing program but she still includes a psychoanalyst… She has to, or else there wouldn't be a lot of professionals… Because the majority of professionals still follows an analytical viewpoint, especially in the CMPs [Medico-psychological centers], the day clinics… Most CMPs and day clinics are not in the same approach as the IDA. Well, the analyst is drowned in the middle of other papers. Last year we had Golse.[19] So it's a way for those people to hear something different… This year, we're attracting them because of Carel,[20] when Carel is a dreadful man, but that's alright! [Interviewee laughs]".

6.4.2 Building Alliances

Representatives of users' associations (individuals with disabilities, or their parents and family members) make up for a third of the membership of the CDAPH (Committee for the Rights and Autonomy of Individuals with Disabilities, *Commission des droits et de l'autonomie des personnes handicapées*), or five persons. Yet, some associations are not represented at the CDAPH; in the observed MDPH, it is the case of EAI. How do these groups, without the opportunity to influence directly and from within the decisions of the CDAPH, keep a hold on the process of attribution of rights? For these "outsider" associations, other strategies are available. One of these strategies consists in the creation of an alliance with a member of the interdisciplinary team. In the case of EAI, Germaine L. has built an alliance with Béatrice A, coordinator of the IDA – a precious alliance, since Béatrice A.'s expertise is widely recognized for cases of autism. Through this alliance, the association can gain access to the case file reviews of the team, and is able to influence the notifications before their validation by the CDAPH.

For instance, the vice-president of EAI explaines how she helped Beatrice A. to gain a better understanding of the situation of individuals diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome.[21] In this case, the alliance aims to curtail the adverse effects – and unintended consequences – of the reclassification of autistic disorders as

[19] Bernard Golse, child psychiatrist and chief of service at Hôpital Necker-Enfants malades in Paris, professor at University of Paris-Descartes and member of the *Association psychanalytique de France*.

[20] André Carel, psychoanalyst and psychiatrist at the *Institut de traitement des troubles de l'affectivité et de la cognition* (ITTAC) in Villeurbanne.

[21] At the high-functioning range of the autism spectrum, individuals with Asperger's syndrome do not display the typical delays in speech and cognitive development.

an educative issue in the context of a handicap assessment still bearing the mark of a "medical model". Children diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, or other forms of "high-functioning" autism (characterized by a lack of impairment) see their status as individuals with disabilities called into question by the MDPH.

The alliance also allowed Germaine L. to influence the orientation of diagnosed adults toward an inpatient medical home (*Foyer d'accueil médicalisé* or FAM) inaugurated on February 28th, 2011 by EAI. At the time of the creation of the home, the association finds itself in disagreement with Sylvie G., head of medico-social assessment at the MDPH, who would prefer to see "new orientees"[22] benefit from the facilities. While Germaine L.'s 27-year-old son can still leave the family home to enter the FAM, the restriction is intolerable for a number of parents in the association, who participated in the project in hope of seeing their child leave other structures. Germaine L. explains how Béatrice A. helped the reorientation of adults managed in other facilities (medico-social centers, psychiatric institutions), for members of EAI.

Excerpt from an interview with Germaine L.; September 29, 2010

Interviewer: "Because it was mostly reorientation?"

Germaine L.: "Yes, there were a lot of reorientations, a lot, not just that but a lot."

Interviewer: "So they would have wanted to have only new orientations for this home?"

Germaine L.: "Yes, they would… It's absurd, because when you take people away from other structures, you also create an opening, I mean. So it was a little complicated, we had a meeting with the technical team from the MDPH, with Sylvie G. and her team, I went there with the psychologist from the association, and we didn't really feel a desire to collaborate, so we were a little uneasy…"

Interviewer: "You were looking for a collaboration on…?"

Germaine L.: "They had a plan: you are in HP [psychiatric hospital], you stay in HP. You are in a MAS [Special-needs home, or *Maison d'accueil spécialisée*], you stay in the MAS… Well, for those who are at home, alright! Mine is at home for example, there are others… It really is an option… So we said: 'Listen, there is someone you could work with, someone who knows our kids, I will tell you why, it's Dr. Béatrice A.' So there was a first contact, and when we left we said – I took it down verbatim – 'there must be a new diagnosis for adults, because they've either not been diagnosed, or have been wrongly diagnosed, so there will be an assessment.' So Béatrice A. went along with it, she said: 'I will see all your candidates.' She saw all of them, filed a report on each one. Well, I have her report for my son, I have never had a report so thorough, so accurate, well really perfect. And she did it for all. So she works with the MDPH team on a regular basis, and one by one our files go through, and there we are, there are openings for us, well it's not over yet."

Interviewer: "So she supports your case files at the MDPH?"

Germaine L.: "Yes, it's not a 100% guarantee but it's going in the right direction, very well… By the way, right now, some kids are leaving the HP, some kids are getting out… So it's going well…"

These relations appear to be an interesting object of study – the relations between the inside and the outside of the "confined spaces" (Gilbert and Henry 2012) of case

[22] In the sense that the newly created FAM should primarily manage individuals who do not benefit from another care center: who live with their parents, or who are reaching the age limit (or are past it, as is allowed by the "amendment Créton" to the law of Jaunary 13, 1989) for children's institutions.

reviews in public administrations, such as the meetings of the interdisciplinary teams of the MDPH. Their analysis allows us to better understand how users' associations manage to weight in on the process of attribution of rights – and to see how their strategies sometimes make strange bedfellows.

6.5 Conclusion

The study of the institutional workings of public administrations, and specifically of their relationships with other institutional stakeholders, brings new light on the production of rights in general and on the concrete making of a target public in particular. In the studied case of the administrative assessment of disability rights for children diagnosed with autism, this perspective first draws attention to the relationships tied between handicap administration and public child psychiatry. It then highlights the importance of giving context to these relations, and especially including other institutional stakeholders such as parents' associations. This analysis allows underlining the paradoxical place of psychiatry in the definition of a public eligible to a non-psychiatric care, the paradoxical position of a call on psychiatric expertise, as experts review applications for the financing of alternatives to public psychiatric care, and more generally, the limits of the actual transition from a medical to a social model of disability. On a first level, the MDPH receives requests made as claims for a right to an educative management of autism, when this right is conceived in opposition to child psychiatry. On a second level, the handicap administration calling on psychiatric expertise results in unexpected pacts between parents' associations and given child psychiatrists.

This study offers an opportunity to consider the emergence of new rights founded on the reclassification of a public issue. It helps identify the chief characteristics of an emerging right: its hesitant legitimacy, when reclassifying an issue stirs controversy, and the frailty of its implementation, when preexisting processes still bear the mark of previous classifications. With this study is also underlined the variety of watchful strategies displayed in support of these emerging rights. In closing this chapter, the question of the singularity of emerging rights may be raised: how are they so different from non-emerging rights? How would non-emerging rights be described in contrast? Would that description present them as more ancient, more institutionalized, more consensual – as less likely to evolve, be challenged, lose efficacy? The idea of a right strongly established once and for all is far from self-evident. This problematic characterization of non-emerging rights may lead us to the idea that the study of emerging rights could provide new perspectives on the study of all rights. The hypothesis could even be advanced that emerging rights reveal the characteristics of rights in general: they are uncertain in their legitimacy, brittle in their efficacy, protean in their expression – and they require the full involvement of those watching over them.

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Part III
The Daily Bureaucratic Adjustment of Targeting

Chapter 7
Conforming Women Citizens in the Making. Targeting Migrants Through Gendered Immigrant Integration Policies in Helsinki and Paris

Linda Haapajärvi

Abstract Although contemporary immigrant integration policies are increasingly geared towards fashioning "good" citizens out of migrant women in France and Finland the institutional socialization process performing this work evolves differently and with different inequality related outcomes in the two countries. However, differential national conceptions of women's citizenship, as real as they may be, do not alone suffice to explain the observed differences. It is neither enough to explain the divergences by the attributes of individual street-level bureaucrats. A careful analysis the local institutional context and ordinary practices of integration is necessary for understanding why these policies (re)produce inequalities through different kind of boundary-work. The comparative case study shows that inequalities are produced more strongly along ethnic boundaries in France and through the contraction of the gender boundaries in Finland that participate in practice in defining the category of deserving citizens.

Keywords Gender · Immigration · Integration · Local policies · Comparison

7.1 Introduction

Immigration towards Finland and France has experienced great changes during the final decades of the twentieth century: the rise and diversification of immigration towards the Nordic country and a shift from work migration to family migration in the former colonial epicenter. These changes have impacted national immigrant

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integration policies in two ways. First of all, these policies have been consolidated as a permanent aspect of welfare policies. If integration policies initially adopted a pragmatic take to accommodation of foreign workers and refugees addressing issues related to social such as housing, health and social services, today they are increasingly geared towards the alignment of migrants with the dominant moral order. Unlike in the North American context where immigrant integration has traditionally been cast as a progressive, linear, self-directed, and group-driven process, the state intervention in France and Finland is hefty in not only the "structural" domain of integration, reaching to its "cultural" dimension, i.e. to actively aligning newcomers' beliefs and customs with those of the dominant population. In so far as the two countries have developed a judicial framework, institutions, and programmes that aim at regulating the target public's ways of thinking and acting it is safe to say that the contemporary immigrant integration policies intervene at the moral level of citizenship, at the level of "good" and "bad" conduct as citizens.

Secondly, following the settlement of an increasing number of women migrants on the respective national territories has amounted in the formulation of gender-specific integration policies. Due to their weaker position on the labour market, their precarious legal status, and heavy family responsibilities, migrant women appear as a particularly vulnerable group, as *in danger*, and therefore in need of protection by public authorities. On the other hand, conceived of as primary carriers of foreign traditions, they are also perceived as *a danger* for the preservation of the unity of the two national communities. In tune with the thesis on the "return of assimilation", assimilation being understood as a "normative and analytical concern with the nature and extent of emerging similarities in particular domains between populations of immigration origin and 'host' populations" (Brubaker 2001: 535), this article examines the integration policies targeting migrant women in an effort to understand how these policies create their target publics in practice, and by doing so participate in the (re)production of unequal citizenship.

The extensive gendered integration policies elaborated in France and Finland at the turn of the century make the two countries excellent laboratories for studying the categorization and socialization processes through which states fashion conforming citizens out of migrant women. An extensive literature has compared different national models of immigrant integration. France typically stands as a schoolbook example of an *assimilationnist* integration model fueled by the French Republican conception of citizenship bidding the principle of universalism against recognition of (ethnic) differences and individualism against collective forms of belonging (e.g. Brubaker 1998; Favell 1998). A newcomer among immigrant receiving nations, Finland has aspired to adopt a *multiculturalist* model of integration following the example countries like Sweden and Canada (Rastas et al. 2005) that recognize ethnic difference among citizens and accommodate them in the functioning of the public sphere and the welfare state (Borevi 2012; Saukkonen 2013). Although these differences are likely to impact the categorical definitions and the bureaucratic practices immigrant integration policies rely on they do not provided sufficient analytical premises for the study of the increasingly gendered integration policies. Feminist scholars have indeed demonstrated how women's status and

rights as citizens are cast differently from those of men within different national context (e.g. Lister et al. 2007; Siim 2000). Along with other Nordic countries Finland has been classified as a weak and France as a moderate male breadwinner state (Lewis 1992), the Nordic countries advancing gender equality more strongly than the French bearing the legacy of the post-revolutionary denial of individual social and political rights of women.

Taking stock of the two analytical lenses, scholars drawing to the intersectionnalist perspective (Crenshaw 1993; Yuval-Davis 2011), have analyzed how class, gender, ethnic and racial boundaries interact in the recognition of migrant women as citizens in France and Finland (e.g. Fassin 2006; Fernando 2013; Guénif-Souilamas and Macé 2004; Keskinen et al. 2009a, b; Rajas 2012; Keskinen et al. 2012). Although evidence gathered through the analysis of media and policy discourses points to the operation of robust intersectional inequalities, we are less knowledgeable on how the production of such inequalities operates in everyday life. Pioneering work has studied the bureaucratic practices of granting residence permits (Spire 2008), the organizing integration courses and projects (Hachimi Alaoui 2012; Manier 2010; Tuori 2009; Vuori and Hirsiaho 2012), and naturalization (Fassin and Mazouz 2009; Hajjat 2012). However, we still lack a systematic demonstration of how inequalities are produced at different levels of social action and how these levels are connected to each other.

The originality of the research resides in the comparative ethnographic study of the gendered and moral face of welfare policies targeting migrant women in Paris and Helsinki. It focuses on a particular form of "people-processing" (Goffman 1961), the process of *institutional socialization* defined as the public agents' practices of (re)socializing migrant women by replacing their ways of thinking, doing and being identified as inherited from the foreign context of socialization with their national, dominant equivalents. The research demonstrates how in France and Finland the local institutional contexts and practices participate in fashioning the category of "immigrant women" by differential mobilizations of motherhood and citizenship as its constituents in the context of different national traditions of immigrant integration. The research ultimately amounts in a discussion of the inequalities produced as a by-product of the institutional socialization process shaped equally at the national and local levels, or rather, in their interactions.

7.2 Comparative Ethnography of Institutional Socialization

The research data has been collected through qualitative fieldwork at a Neighbourhood House in a disadvantaged neighbourhood in Paris, between September 2011 and April 2012, and in Helsinki, between September 2013 and April 2014. In addition to the 9-month-periods of intensive fieldwork at each institution, I have regularly travelled between the research sites at the period spanning from September 2011 to December 2014. The comparative design and the permanent movement between the two sites have significantly contributed to my practice of fieldwork and theorization.

From site selection to data collection to interpreting differences in common processes, they have allowed for constantly and gradually "crosschecking" the research findings across the two sites as well as to examine the discovered enigmas in the light of theory in an "abductive" manner (Timmermans and Tavory 2012), in other words by defining gradually and comparatively what in the data's diversity and abundance constitutes novelty and is worth further development.

Although I attended different activities at the two institutions, Wednesdays quickly became the high point of my research as they were that for the local migrant women as well. The residents' café in Helsinki and the sociocultural workshop in Paris were organized on this day and drew in the largest regular public of migrant women. As a participant observer, I paid close attention to the physical and relational organization of the institutional setting and to the interactions between the social workers and the migrant participants to the institutional activities. My field notes account in particular for how different symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnar 2002) are mobilized in these encounters and through what practices the first seek to transform the conducts of the former. Observing, for example, where and with whom the clients interact and how the social workers moderate the interactions or govern the common activities provide examples of boundary-work in action. I here privilege the analysis of the ethnographic research data that notably allows for examining how the local institutional context explains variation in the process of institutional socialization. I therefore somewhat omit the analysis of the 10 recorded interviews with the Neighbourhood Houses' social workers and the Houses' directors, and consequentially the question of the individual social workers' or street-level bureaucrats' discretionary practices, personal background, and representations of the target public (Lipsky 2010; Dubois 2009). The ulterior development of this analytical strand would further enrich our understanding of the nuances of the process of institutional socialization.

Another limit of my research concerns the process of generalizing the empirical findings established at the local level, here at a single public institution in each capital city, towards the national context. In order to identify the local and the national explaining of the institutional socialization process's variation I have analyzed a corpus of key policy documents participating in the politicisation of immigrant integration by gender. Firstly, I have examined how the sociopolitical category of "immigrant women" is constructed in France and Finland in the presence of different cultural repertoires related to immigrant integration, female citizenship, and welfare. Secondly, I have observed how the category, defined at the macro level, is or is not adjusted in action at the local institutional context. As reasonable as it may seem to remain cautious about making strong claims pertaining to differences at the national level based on ethnographic data, the comparative research disposition yet allows for teasing out national particularities as well as for tracing regularities in the (unequal) process of institutional socialization of immigrants.

7.3 Practicing Institutional Socialization

The starting point of this research shares the basic insight of Michael Lipsky's (1980) seminal work on the practice of public policies: "Street-level bureaucrats are major recipients of public expenditure and represent a significant portion of public activity at the local level. Citizens directly experience government through them, and their actions are the policies provided by the government in many respects". Instead of studying immigrant integration policies at the level of different "philosophies of integration" (Favell 1998) or "cultural idioms" (Brubaker 1998) or yet of much criticized "national models" (see Duyvendak and Bertossi 2009), the focus here is on the everyday practice of national policies. In other words, this research turns to how the ideals and norms related to citizenship and integration are effectively put in practice and how these practices shape the very policies in question. The observation of the institutional socialization process at the local level in Paris and Helsinki reveals that the ways migrant women are *recruited* to the Neighbourhood House's activities, *mixed* across ethnic boundaries during the institutions' activities, and *educated* about acting as "good" citizens significantly influence the makeup of the target public.

7.3.1 Recruitment

When interviewed about the workshop's purpose and organization Samina[1] explains that it was initially destined to support local parents in building a bond with their children, not to perform immigrant integration per se but to work on parental education: "In 2007, the year when I started here, I remember it well, there was this Turkish woman. She explained to me that she had difficulty in establishing a relation with her daughter, although she was a very good mother and the child was doing well at preschool. Something was lacking. So, I wanted to work on this, parentality, the bond between the child and the parent".[2] However, at the time of my research, the workshop revolved around language and civic training in the form of a collective creative project, preparing a theater play interrogating women's and men's roles in the family and in French society and all but one attendant were foreign nationals. The regular public of the Parisian sociocultural workshop consist of a dozen women: two Algerian and two Moroccan migrants, a group of three to five Tamil migrants, and an Algerian-born French woman of Jewish confession.

A closer look at how the group came to be reveals the central role played in its assemblage by Samina, a former associative activist and a descendant of Algerian migrants, today in charge of preventive social work Neighbourhood House. When

[1] The names of the informants have been changed and the neighbourhoods anonymized for research ethical reasons.

[2] Interview with Samina, 30.3.2012.

not animating the sociocultural workshop for migrant women or the homework help group for school children, Samina meets local residents in precarious legal, residential, socioeconomic, and/or family situations in the confines of her office. Through her activities she therefore comes to a regular contact with local families and it is precisely through these encounters that she individually recruits women to participate in the Wednesday workshop. The two Algerian women, Sabba and Akila, and the Algerian-born Annie as well as one of the Moroccan women, Rahma, and two of the most loyal Tamil attendants, Suddha and Salima, have been recruited individually and separately by Samina. Rahma, Suddha and Salima have since invited their co-ethnic friends to join the activity. The Tamil group's tendency to grow larger and Samina's attempts to control its relative weight are revelatory of the boundary-work Samina as a gatekeeper performs. Having barred Suddha's neighbour from joining the group in December on the grounds of the collective project's already "advanced" state and her sisters joining because of her not living in the neighbourhood appear as easy excuses for Samina's urgent preoccupation with the maintaining a "representational balance" within the group: "It has happened to some associations at the neighbourhood that they go from open-to-everyone to exclusively the Chinese or the Sub-Saharian. That crowds out the others. I think it's important we have a balanced representation of different groups".[3] The recruitment practices point to the paradoxical nature of ethnic boundaries in the practice of welfare policies: firstly, ethnic identification is important not so much as a facilitator of individual and collective mobilization but rather as an element of a top-down management of "diversity" (Amiraux and Simon 2006). It hence appears as being tolerated as a tool of government participating in the perpetuation of the Republican model of integration – notorious for keeping the public sphere of life void of manifestations of ethno-racial forms of identification – rather than as an element of bottom-up ordinary social organization.

Secondly, the significance of ethnic boundaries is contested by deliberately insisting on gender boundaries. The workshop's first year, 2008–2009, witnessed the participation of two French-born women initially participated in the workshop, geared towards parental practices. Samina however accounts for the disengagement of the non migrant women in the following terms: "More mothers with no French skills turned up and I guess that made the "French" flee".[4] The absence of the "franco-French" that she regrets has subsequently led her to adjust the workshops contents to its de facto public: "I didn't really think about it, that it became more about the women [than children and parents]. But it's true. And so it also became more about the mothers' language skills and well-being, and, how to put it, about them, eh, as women".[5] Today, Samina identifies two key goals of the workshop. In line with classical goals of immigrant integration, she believes it to be her task to prepare the women for integration through linguistic and civic training. In accordance with the general tendency of psychologization of social problems and

[3] Interview with Samina, 30.3.2012.

[4] *Idem.*

[5] *Idem.*

politicies (Bresson 2006), supporting the public's "well-being as women" with help of "psycho-social" tools like discussing one's experiences and emotions within a peer group however appears as a novelty of this type of welfare policies. Migrant women are here recruited to the integrating activities not only in order to inform them about civic norms but also to establish links between their struggle to belong to the host society and the (dis)organization of their intimate experiences and practices of acting as mothers, spouses and citizens.

The deviation from the initial purpose and the multiplicity of its objectives allow for the heterogeneous makeup of the group. Namely, the goal of advancing women's well-being allows for taking aboard non migrants and non mothers: "I think we should take all women who need to learn French language better and who might be home alone. It's about the women really. [--] It's a retreat from heavy domestic responsibilities".[6] Sabba, a 70-year-old Algerian woman with no residence permit and few social contacts, and Annie, a French citizen of Algerian origin, in her fifties recovering from severe depression, divorced and without children exemplify this broadened scope of the target public. In terms of managing the ethnic and gender boundaries that define the target public Samina therefore proceeds by their *transvaluation* (Wimmer 2013): in so far as she insists on including in the group "all women", not only migrants or only mothers, she advocates for the primacy of the first over the former, in contrast with the Helsinki recruitment practices.

No particular activities have been designed for the migrant public at the Helsinki Neighbourhood House. The social workers of the House repeatedly explain that immigrant integration is best assured through the newcomers' welcoming in the House's "normal" everyday activities. The integrative agenda is hence at once recognized as a sociopolitical urgency and yet explained away by stressing "normalcy" as pathway to integration in keeping with the Finnish welfare policies universalist tradition. The institution's "normal" activities are currently heavily oriented to families. Every activities varying from music to crafts to outdoors play are offered to toddlers, accompanied by their mothers, and during the House's opening hours anyone is welcome to enter its premises and socialize with other attendants. However popular these activities might have been in the past, they now draw in a far smaller crowd than the Wednesday "residents' café" that attracts from 5–20 women with their children every week. The café's running principle is simple: each Wednesday one local resident cooks, others come in and buy the food, and engage in commensality that is thought to favour relations among neighbours and across ethnic boundaries. Unlike at the Paris institution, the very form of the activity hence does not rule out the participation of certain publics, like the non migrant women. Consequentially, at the Helsinki Neighbourhood House, the regular attendance consists almost exclusively of Finnish and Somali born women with their children. Men are a rare sight at the institution as well as women belonging to other ethnic minorities of which the Estonian, the Russian and the Turkish are yet well represented within the neighbourhood.

[6] *Idem*.

The public is a result of a recruitment strategy that differs from its Paris counterpart in two principal ways. First of all, it lacks the individual and authoritarian dimension of Samina's methods. As the Neighbourhood House is surrounded by a park and a playground that the local residents readily frequent with their children, the team of five social workers has the habit of systematically presenting the House's activities to any parent – or mother – making use of these premises. This practice is considered to be particularly important with regard to migrant parents as Leena, a newcomer in the team of social workers, explains:

> The immigrant mothers might have misconceptions. Like they might think that it costs to come inside. And no no! We have to explain that no, that actually it's good for them and us and the community that they come inside.[7]

The argument reveals a twofold recruitment agenda. Responding to the follow-up question on how the migrants' participation is good for *them*, Leena explains:

> Many immigrant women lack social contacts. Like they just live here but don't know anyone. And when you're just with your child all the time, and we don't know what the family and the husband is like, you can end up very isolated. This place is here to break with that.[8]

In contrast to the Paris case where Samina's stressing of gender in defining the target public, the Helsinki public agents rather perform a *contraction* (Wimmer 2013) of the gender boundary along the principle of motherhood. Due to the familialist nature of the institution non mothers are rarely met at the institution and the public of migrant women benefitting from the institution hence limited to that of migrant mothers.

On the community's good, Leena indeed adds: "Well, it's just that as we all live here we should all know who lives here. [pause] And given the multicultural nature of this neighbourhood it's very important that immigrants come here and are represented here".[9] The latter argument's importance is illustrated by the effort the House's longtime workers have made in bringing in the local Somali mothers, a large local minority and one of the most marginalized ethnic minorities in Finland. Pirkko who has worked at the House since its inauguration in the early 1990s, accounts for how the local Somali families were initially involved in the House:

> There's a whole story to that! It was not self-evident at all. When the first Somali refugees arrived in this neighbourhood, maybe in 1993, first they didn't come. We [social workers] tried to make contact with them but there was a language barrier and it was hard. First it was the Somali children that started to come. Through the kindergarten and the school we tried to invite the mothers too but they didn't come. We were quite frustrated. But then, one afternoon, there was a delegation of like four or five Somali men. One of them spoke quite good Finnish. We were surprised but asked them to come in. They came in and had coffee but we didn't talk much. Then they came back the following week, the same delegation. They had coffee again and we showed the premises and activities. There were a lot of children, Somali and Finnish everywhere and Finnish mums with their small kids. The men left and we shook hands. After 2 weeks, the first [Somali] mothers came and then more and

[7] Interview with Leena, 5.3.2014.

[8] *Idem.*

[9] *Idem*.

> more. We later understood that they had been suspicious about what we do, like maybe we teach religion or something else or that maybe there are men present. But they approved. Later sometimes they [the men] came to the park, but no more into the House, and since then we've always had a lot of Somali mothers here.[10]

Today, the workers encourage migrant mothers to invite their friends to come whether they are local residents or not which has contributed to a situation in which on a typical Wednesday half of the attendants are native-born Finns and the other half women of Somali origin. This points out a second significant difference in how the recruitment practices amount in shaping the target publics in Paris and Helsinki. Although ethnic boundary-work is important at both institutions, it is performed differently and amounts in drastically different publics. By i.e. forcibly maintaining a "representational balance" mainly through individual selection and gatekeeping and actively encouraging the mobilization of ethnic networks for recruitment of new attendees. In so far as the Helsinki social workers accord little thought to questions of "representational balance", they may have well produced the situation Samina deliberately tries to avoid, that of an "overrepresentation" of a single group and of maintaining "bright" ethnic boundaries rather than blurring them (Alba 2005). Furthermore, the Helsinki recruitment practices contrast with the Paris ones in that the individual and psychological agenda appears as less salient than one emphasizing individual and collective participation in local social life in line with the strong trend of active citizenship in the Nordic welfare states (Hvinden and Johansson 2007), also termed as "participatory solidarity" in the French context (Paugam 2011), that stresses the importance of justifying ones deservingness of social entitlements by actively participating in different sociopolitical schemes, here the local integration activities.

7.3.2 Mixing

The practice of institutional socialization of migrant women shows that in order to be considered a "good" and deserving citizen mere participation in the local public life, or at least in that of local public institutions, is not enough. Once the migrant women have entered the Neighbourhood Houses a crucial practice of institutional socialization is activated: the women are brought to interact with "different people". As migrant women are brought out to the public to participate in particular forms of all female sociability they are hardly invited to cross the gender boundary. The class difference is also only marginally present at the institutions albeit for different reasons. In Paris, Samina concludes on my question concerning the Neighbourhood House's task of advancing "mixity": "Mixity here has nothing much to do with class. They're all working class or poor anyway. So mixity is basically a polite way to say you want people of different "horizons" [laughs] or origins to meet.[11]" In

[10] Interview with Pirkko, 3.4.2014.

[11] Interview with Samina, 30.3.2012.

Helsinki, on the other hand, class difference is a taboo and its apparent invisibility even celebrated by the workers. Leena explains: "That's one of the great things about places like the Neighbourhood House. You just come in as a mother and you know each other as mothers. You don't even know each others' or each others' husbands professions or titles, or revenues, you don't know! You're there just as a mother.[12]" The research then shows that difference is, at both institutions, mainly understood in ethnicized terms.

The Paris institution's director, Pascal, proudly affirms that the House has an important role to play as a "multicultural meeting place in a neighbourhood with a strong communitarian organization".[13]

> At 2 pm on Wednesday afternoon, the nine of us sit around a table in an empty classroom at the Paris Neighbourhood House: eight women from the neighbourhood and me. The women are of Tamil and North African origin, sitting on opposite sides of the table. They are neighbours and already more or less know each other, at least by sight or reputation. It's the group's first meeting and we're uncertain of what is about to happen. To break the ice, Samina, the social worker managing the gathering, hands out French staple product biscuits from a supermarket plastic bag: Petit beurres, Oursons, Pepitos. We help ourselves to tea and coffee that she has prepared in the rudimentary kitchen corner. Except two, all women have come with children who are being entertained in the adjacent room by Paul, another social worker. Mothers make sure that the children also get some before sending them back to play. When the children leave us in peace, Samina goes to the white board and gives us the theme of the day's workshop: "What is it to be a woman?" We start to brainstorm, to fill the white board with roles, duties, and rights of the feminine folk.
>
> Halfway through the workshop, I accompany Samina outside for a cigarette break. Annoyed, she bursts out: It's driving me crazy! This communitarianism! I'm trying to make them mix, to make them sit not always in their small groups of Tamils or Moroccans or Algerians. But they always do it. It's adults so I can't tell them where to sit either. It's mad though, it's so strong!
>
> Samina nervously sucks on her cigarette which she quickly smokes out. Samina rolls her eyes and we re-enter the classroom. I resume my place among the women and my activity of writing in French about my insights into being a woman. Suddha, having difficulty writing in Latin letters, starts teaching Tamil syllables to me. As I slowly pronounce the syllables, Samina stops by, shakes her head and sighs "Useless!"[14]

The considerable effort Samina puts in encouraging – or forcing – the workshop's participants to interact across ethnic boundaries shows at once just how pervasive the Republican tradition of integration is and, at once, how shaky it is at the level of ordinary practices. Fluent in Arabic, Samina never uses the language at work systematically responding in French even when participant occasionally address her in Arabic. The group is indeed discouraged from using any other languages than French as this would be, according to Samina, "irrespective to the group". The institution's "French only" policy, intended to downplay ethnic boundaries and creating a neutral civic space, bears resemblance to the assimilationnist logic of the colonial era which used the language as a major tool for the diffusion of

[12] Interview with Leena, 5.3.2014.

[13] Interview with Pascal, 27.11.2013.

[14] Fieldnotes, 14.9.2011.

Republican ideas and for combating foreign influences (Hajjat 2012: 112–113). Although Samina submits herself to a significant pressure in trying to intervene at the level of sitting arrangements and language use, the public ends up mixing (broken) French with Tamil and to a smaller extent Arabic as well as to sit in small groups made of co-ethnics.

In Helsinki too, the workers identify creating conditions for interethnic sociability as a key task but undertake this quite differently from the Parisian *boundary-blurring mode* (Alba art. cit).

> On a foggy Wednesday morning, I make my way towards the bright lights of the little wooden house. At the entrance, I bump into one of the social workers, Pirkko. "*Welcome! How are you?*" She takes me in her arms and welcomes me to the house. I remove my shoes and outer garments, pick a pair of woolen socks from a basket by the door, and follow the smell of fresh bread to the kitchen. Habibo, an elderly Somali lady, also greets me with a hug. She is in charge of the café today, cooking with the help of her two daughters and two younger Somali women. They point towards a chair and invite me to join the cooking. I say hello to the three Finnish women sitting in the dining room with their babies and pick up a kitchen knife and carrots. The women's conversation regularly slips into Somali one of them translating bits and pieces so that I can follow the discussion: shopping, beauty products, travels. The social workers are curious to see what happens in the kitchen, pop their head in from time to time, and comment on the cooking process of traditional Somali food in anticipation of the "intense flavours".
>
> When it is time to have lunch Somali and Finnish women typically eat around separate tables, keep to their mother tongues, and it is rare to see members of the two groups entering private conversations beyond brief exchanges. Pirkko, watching the dining room from the doorsteps comments: "I think we've been quite successful in helping everyone live peacefully in parallel."[15]

Besides recruitment via ethnic networks, the ethnic difference penetrates the organization of integrating practices at the Helsinki institution quite differently from the Paris Neighbourhood House. In Paris, migrant women from different national origins are brought together to work on the theme of gender roles in an institutional context ripped of references to ethnic minorities. In Helsinki, on the contrary, ethnic differences are essential to organizing the Wednesday residents' café in so far as migrant women are not only encouraged by the social workers to prepare food typical to their country of origin but also enthusiastically congratulated about the exoticized "intense flavours" they offer for out-group participants. The workers of the Helsinki Neighbourhood House may well have been successful in mixing migrant – essentially Somali – women with Finnish-born ones in a public space resembling a "cosmopolitan canopy" (Anderson 2011), a place where diverse people come together in amicable, yet fairly superficial terms, and where references to particular minorities are incorporated in the public space (e.g. through use of minority languages, consuming "exotic" food). The line to draw between such practices of "institutional incorporation" of ethnic difference typical to Nordic welfare states (Borevi op. cit.) and "practical orientalism" (Haldrup et al. 2006) that actually fuels Othering process is however fine and may well contribute to establish ethnic essentialization as a price to pay for integration and as the very basis of the ordinary practice of mixing.

[15] Fieldnotes, 9.11.2013.

7.3.3 Educating

In addition, the practices of recruitment and mixing, the form and content of the education of migrants about being a "good" citizen participates in shaping the target public of immigrant integration policies. A few weeks after the Paris group's first meeting, Samina wants the group to focus on women's rights in France.

> Samina: Let's go to the question of voting. How many have voted?
> The women look at each other, some saying they have voted in their home countries, all except Annie lacking French citizenship. A silence follows.
> Fatma: It's not easy. How do you know whom to vote for?
> Suddha: [mischieviously] You ask your husband!
> Samina: [frowns, breathes out slowly]: "Hopeless!"
> The women laugh and Samina suggest we have tea and exits for a cigarette break leaving to women to resort to conversing about matters of everyday life.[16]

Throughout the year the women are expected to attend the workshop regularly and to prepare a collective creative project, a theatre play entitled "Femmes et hommes s'accordent[17]", staged at the Neighbourhood House on March 8, the International Women's Day. The educating practice hence takes a manifest form that conciliates the requirement of personal engagement with that of hierarchical relations between the group's members, namely Samina and the migrant women. The close observation of the workshop is indeed interesting in terms of both the form and the content of the education the migrant women receive at the institution. Despite the fact that Samina processes adult migrants whose attendance at the institution is not mandatory, the activity takes a school form implying a hierarchical organization that projects Samina to the role of the teacher and assigns the migrant women to that of pupils. Incarnating to a certain extent the figure of a "beurette" (Guénif Souilamas 2003), a young French woman with North African origins taking liberties in conciliating the demands of her origins and those of French society, Samina – mostly dressed in black, often in black leather pants and boots, unveiled and an avid smoker – deliberately makes a point of embracing feminism and of her love for the French language and cultural industry, and is careful not to talk about her family beyond allusions to a French-born partner and daughter as tokens of her distanciation from her origins. In the other hand, the ways she puts forth these characteristics that contrast with a number of the workshop attendants' more "traditional" features – most are married with a co-ethnic and have children, three wear a headscarf, and all contest to a certain extent the caricature of the sexually ad socially liberated French woman that the discussions oppose to the figure of the oppressed migrant women they are likened to – to such an extent that the very emancipating potential of the French civic citizenship that the women are educated about appears as rather caricatured.

The exchange over voting rights crystallizes a major aspect of the content of the education the workshop offers to migrant women, i.e. exposing them to an individual

[16] Fieldnotes, 28.9.2011.

[17] "Women and men reaching an agreement"

and political conception of citizenship as well as to gender equality as key determinants of French citizenship. Separating the private and from the public, the sphere of family from the sphere of citizens, individuals from their group attachments, and feminine autonomy from masculine oppression, Samina actively draws moral boundaries around the contours of female citizenship. In Samina's understanding, integration can be measured on a scale extending from communitarianism to participation in interethnic relations, and from confinement in the home sphere to participation in public life. To my question how the women attending the workshop differ from other local migrant women she answers: "They are more integrated and active. They participate in things and are interested in things beyond their homes and own groups."

The Parisian institution's emphasis on educating active citizens out of migrant women in classroom dynamics sharply contrast with the Helsinki approach characterized by the educating of migrant women about responsible motherhood in a home-like institutional environment. Leena describes the Helsinki House: "It's very important for us to create a home-like environment so the immigrants can see what it is like in a Finnish home, how things are done and work.[18]" Accordingly with the institutional setting simulating the domestic sphere, Leena describes her professional tasks:

> When you have new mothers, just arrived in Finland, you have to explain them all kinds of things. Like how much clothes to put on their kids and how to wear the winter overalls. They just don't know. But when you explain to them, they're so happy and then they see their kids running outdoors with the Finnish kids! Or you have to explain things about food. Like what you can give to your child to drink, milk, sour milk, cream. And if you can warm them in a micro wave oven! [laughs].[19]

These goals are supported by the institutional organization that operates along the principle of open access placing no requirements of regular attendance. On the contrary, its public is free to enter and exit any day during the opening hours and to make use of the House's premises and materials: get a cup of coffee from the kitchen, to sit down in the living room, read a magazine as watching over one's children's play, or to make use of the outside playground and the kitchen garden. Through these ordinary practices, migrant women are expected to internalize core elements of the "Finnish way of life". This type of institutional organization is further supported by the extensive use of emotional labour (Hochschild 1983; Graham 2002) by the social workers in the practice institutional socialization. Educating in Helsinki occurs in private discussions between agents and clients, resembling casual conversations. Distancing themselves from the public agent's role and aligning with that of a mother peer the workers put an emphasis on the domestic sphere of life as site of intervention. The female social workers routinely mobilize their professional competences and private experiences on motherhood as they casually sit next to the clients and make inquiries about their family life. Tilting their head towards the client, standing closer, speaking in a silent voice, and listening attentively, they make a conscious effort to give the interactions a horizontal and confidential quality.

[18] Interview with Leena 5.3.2014.

[19] *Ibidem.*

Engaging in horizontal relations with the target public is a distinct feature of the professional practice and conceived as a crucial condition, firstly, of detecting social problems at an early stage, and secondly, of reaching out to the migrant clients who social workers believe to be wary of public authorities.

The seemingly egalitarian moral order of the House is however based on a set of implicit rules migrants are expected to conform to: removing the outer garment and the shoes, speaking in a low voice, supervising one's own kids, withdraw from reprimanding others' children, avoiding taking too close contact too quickly with strangers, respecting the tidiness of the premises, and being autonomous. The respect of these rules forms the criteria against which the social workers evaluate the "degree of integration" of migrant clients as Seija explains:

> You can tell very easily just how integrated they are. It's normal in the beginning to be loud and not to respect the rules by mistake, but if it continues, you just understand it's a problem of integration. The younger ones and those who have been in the country for a long time are mostly integrated and easy to communicate with. But sometimes it's not a question of time. It's a question of attitude and it's hard for us to work on that.[20]

As I make a further inquiry into the "attitude", Seija mentions Amiina, a Somali woman I had noticed the workers treat with reticence:

> It's her general attitude since the beginning. She comes in, barely says hello, doesn't smile. She behaves like a queen, as if we, because we work here, were her servants. She was once sitting down and told me "Hey, bring me a cup of coffee!" I told her to get it herself. [lowering her voice] Also, a year ago she lost a child. It was very sad, the child died at the hospital of a very serious disease. I tried to give her my condolences but she didn't react. Nothing. I was almost crying and I was about to hug her. But it's like something wasn't right about the way she was mourning the child's death. Since then I've just decided that I'm going to be polite but distant and leave her be.[21]

In the Helsinki institutional context, the degree of integratedness of migrant women is not measured according to the criteria of civic skills of personal emancipation like in Paris. The observation makes apparent a particular type of "value-mastering hierarchy" (Bruun et al. 2011), i.e. a hierarchy of integratedness based on the mastering of values held essential to the Finnish domestic sphere such as equality but also autonomy, hominess, emotional intimacy, franchise and orderliness.

7.4 Motherhood and Citizenship as Elements of Immigrant Integration

Evolving at a public institution fashioned to resemble a typical Finnish home, the Helsinki variant of the process of institutional socialization resembles that of *domestication*. The idea of domestication takes a twofold sense: migrant women are institutionally identified *as mothers* and socialized mainly by normalizing their domestic

[20] Interview with Seija, 13.3.2014.

[21] *Ibidem*.

practices. This variant of institutional socialization contracts the gender boundary around motherhood and, although accommodating for ethnic difference, enforces conformity to the "Finnish way of life". As a result, it seeks to create conforming sociopolitical, mother citizens out of migrant women. In Paris, on the contrary, migrant women are more distinctly identified as future political citizens and subjected to the process of *enlightenment* that aims at instilling in them a personal commitment to the French Republican values and emancipating them *as women* from their supposedly patriarchal and oppressive families and communities. The ethnic boundary's salience is here demonstrated by Samina's constant effort to blur it and to replace it by gender as a primary category of collective identification. In order to explain these differences and their consequences to the more or less inclusive/exclusive nature of the category of "immigrant women" requires a joint analysis of the Finnish and French cultural repertoires of ethnic difference and female citizenship at the macro level and their adjustment by the local forms of sociopolitical intervention.

Finnish public policy documents routinely define the process of immigrant integration as one of "individual development of the immigrant with the objective to take part in the working life and society while preserving one's own language and own culture" (Sisäministeriö [Ministry of the Interior] 2006, 17). This definition, influenced by multiculturalist aspirations, needs to be placed in the context of the short history of immigration into Finland and a lack of an established tradition in administering an ethnically diverse population. Just as the project of constructing a universal welfare state during the second half of the twentieth century has been influenced by the reference to the Swedish model in search for pragmatic solutions to urgent social problems (Kettunen 2001), the Finnish immigrant integration policies mirror the Swedish multiculturalist approach that has evolved from its 1970s programme of granting special rights to ethnic minorities to incorporating ethnic difference in the public institutions (Borevi 2012). The logic of incorporating ethnic difference into public institution means that in Finland ethnic difference is dealt with by extending the universal logic to it, for instance by minority language and religion instruction at the public school, rather than separating it from public institutions like in France or creating encouraging separate institutions catering for ethnic minorities' needs like in Great Britain or Canada. In principle, this logic implies that in order for the state to advance equality among all citizens its public institutions have to be designed in such a manner that they allow for all individuals to participate as different as they may be from each other in terms of class, gender or, more recently, ethnic identification. At the level of the Neighbourhood House, this then explains the absence of particular activities of immigrant integration and yet the incorporation of ethnic difference to the institution's organization in guise of encouraging the performance of once linguistic and cultural – as well as culinary – traditions and aiming at "peaceful coexistence" of distinct ethnic groups rather than at forcibly establishing interethnic relations.

The French public response to ethnic diversity has indeed been different. In so far as French policy documents define immigrant integration in terms of the "personal engagement of the foreign national to respect the principles which govern the

French Republic" (Ministère de l'Intérieur 2008: 151) they reveal a more unidirectional conception of the integration process requiring the assimilation of individual immigrants to the national mainstream and increasingly to its "principles" such as the "non negotiable values" of secularism and gender equality (Hachimi-Alaoui 2012). The local Paris variant of the institutional socialization process appears as analogous with this conception of integration as no pragmatic accommodations are made for the recognition of ethnic difference at the local institution: the workshop participants are discouraged from using languages other than French, the group collectively consumes French staple food products, and gender rather than ethnic boundaries are mobilized in order to construct the public's individual and collective identity. In this context, integration is cast in the overtly assimilationnist terms of *individual boundary crossing* that contrasts with the plurality encouraging – or incorporating – Finnish approach resembling the process of *ethnogenesis* (Wimmer 2013), the creation of separate ethnic groups.

The first way the gendered nature of the practices of institutional socialization observed at the Neighbourhood House's establishes undertakes boundary work along gender concerns the creation of the target public of "immigrant women" as a distinct category within the general framework of integration policies. At neither neighbourhood, no policies locally address migrant men whose integration has traditionally been projected to the professional and economic domain. Secondly, this research shows that in addition to separating migrant men from migrant women, the category of "immigrant women" is locally mobilized differently in Paris and Helsinki. In Paris, the local policies put more weight on "women" than on "immigrants" and on "all women" rather than a particular category of them meaning that Samina includes non migrants as well as non mothers in the group. The Helsinki approach is markedly different in that instead of addressing women in general, the local policies are geared towards mothers. The difference is to a certain extent possible to explain away by the national level conceptions of female citizenship. The cultural repertoires activated in the contemporary debates over women's citizenship in Finland and France differ mainly in that in the first, the politicization of the private sphere – of family and care – has functioned as a mode of acquisition of full citizenship. The "women-friendly" (Hernes 1987) character of the Nordic welfare state casts the struggle for gender equality in terms of creating sociopolitical conditions for women to become equal breadwinners with men, hence blurring the public – private dichotomy. Women do not need to overcome motherhood in order to access full citizenship. Through generous family policies and the development of a large public care sector that employs women motherhood and care instead appear as avenues toward full social citizenship.

The French case looks different. Their status as daughters and spouses having historically relegated women to a second class citizenship with no political rights up until the second half of the twentieth century (Rosanvallon 2004) has amounted to the representation of motherhood as an obstruction to the realization of *parité*, the ideal of equal representation of men and women in the professional and political sphere (Revillard 2008). The French state feminism has hence preserved the public-private dichotomy to a greater extent than the Nordic one. At the Neighbourhood

Houses, the Helsinki institution's targeting mothers and supporting motherhood as a means of immigrant integration contrasts with the Paris institution's stressing the importance of women's political rights and empowering them through "offering a place where they can escape their heavy family responsibilities" as Samina puts it. Literally preparing the women to take the stage in front of the local public on the International Women's Day and advising them in one-to-one about good parenting perfectly illustrates the local translations of national level differences in the conceptions of "good" female citizenship.

Finally, keeping in mind that at the level of national policies the category of "immigrant women" is constructed in a way that it theoretically applies to all migrant women it is interesting to examine the case of the groups of migrant women whose presence is significant in the neighbourhood but whom one does not encounter at the Neighbourhood House. This is notably the case of non mothers in Helsinki and of Sub-Saharian migrant women in Paris despite the latter group's being the largest local ethnic minority. The exclusion producing effect of the local practices appears more readily at the Helsinki institution. It is true that the cultural conception of female citizenship is particularly sensitive to unmaking the family responsibilities and social inequalities as an obstacle to full citizenship (Anttonen 1998; Anttonen and Henriksson 1994). It is also true that Finnish policy documents constitutive of integration policies often and increasingly since the 1990s represent migrant women through their family status and responsibilities.[22] The marginal recognition of childless migrant women and the focus on the immigrant mother – child nexus indeed leads to the activation of the mechanism of misrecognition, understood "institutionalized subordination" (Fraser 2000: 113), of non mothers as worthy citizens. This exclusionary effect produced at the national level is further amplified at the local level by the precise form of the practices institutional socialization takes at the local Neighbourhood House. In Helsinki, the fact that an institution the agenda of which has gradually shifted from promotion of "community spirit and a sense of togetherness – respect for the individual, values and cultures, as well as mutual trust, helpfulness and openness to everybody's views"[23] to providing early childhood education and preventive social work in the field of family policies,[24] may be held for the major explaining factor of this form of exclusionary effect. The recruitment of participants mainly at the playground surrounding the House and through the attending mothers' personal networks and the institution's "normal"

[22] A comparison of the 1997 report *Maahanmuuttajanaiset Suomessa* (Immigrant Women in Finland) issued by the Ministry of Work and the 2012 State's Integration Programme by the Ministry of Employment and Economy makes evident the neglect of a plurality of situations migrant women live in in the 2012 report.

[23] The Neighbourhood House's information bulletin, autumn 2013.

[24] Implanted in a residential area with a concentration of social housing and a large migrant population, it previously functioned as a Residents' House with two municipal social workers mandated to support the local residents' self-organized activities. In the early 2000's, the unit was transferred under the Helsinki City department of early childhood education and its activities have since increasingly targeted families with small children.

activities being concentrated on the domestic and parental practices effectively contract the target public of "immigrant women" to that of "immigrant mothers".

The Paris variant of institutional socialization produces a different exclusionary process. At the macro level, the French Republic's integration policies are not so much concentrated in fostering migrant women's social citizenship than they are, at least rhetorically, in emancipating migrant women from their position as victims of patriarchal family practices and traditions perpetuated by minority men. As the standardization of the category of "immigrant women" proceeds by its construction as an opposite to the French female citizens identifying migrant women as suffering from grappling between "the codes of their foreign families and the values of the French Republic",[25] migrant women's private sphere of life problematic is here identified as problematic in two senses: as a locus of anti-modern cultural traditions and a domain of patriarchal oppression. Not only are migrants *stigmatized* along ethnic/racial boundaries, the ideal of gender equality that now strongly informs immigrant integration policies bids migrant men and women against each other through a process of "sociocultural leveraging" (Morgan 2017) portraying in particular Muslim men as enemies of the supposedly equality-embracing French Republic and migrant women as the victims of the formers' attitudes and practices.

At the level of the local institution, the fact that Samina personally recruits the workshop's attendants among the public already using the institutions services and discourages the mobilization of ethnic networks for bringing in new participants, along with the local institution's "anti-communitarian" ethos and engaging the attending women in a collective project the content of which revolves around the opposition between "good" French female citizenship and its antithesis incarnated by the figure of the Muslim migrant woman together offer strands of explication of the Sub-Saharian women's absence despite Samina's self-declared attention to "representational balance". In the one hand, given the educating practices content, participating in the workshop means for North and West African Muslim women submitting themselves to considerable symbolic violence. In the other hand, Samina has not made a conscious effort to recruit women from the stigmatized minority of Sub-Saharian migrants in a similar manner to the Helsinki institution's workers' efforts to bring in the Somali migrants. In Helsinki ethnic difference is indeed taken into account through building alliances with local minorities and accommodating for linguistic, cultural, and religious plurality at the institution. To the extent that the Neighbourhood House has been successful in recruiting local Somali women – occupying a stigmatized social position in Finland like the West Africans in France – its activities are in line with the national level multiculturalist policies. Although the ethnic boundary here appears as a less salient factor of exclusion from the target public than in Paris the migrants' presence at the local institution being limited to

[25] *Femmes de l'immigration: assurer le plein exercice de la citoyenneté, à part entière, à parts égales*. 2005. Paris: Ministère de la parité et de l'égalité professionnelle, Ministère de la justice Paris. 6. The document notably identifies migrants of African origin as typical victims of oppressive practices like forced marriage, polygamy and gender mutilation.

the local Somali women opens the question on whether this group does not run the risk of being represented as a radical case of ethnic difference as it alone accounts for the "multicultural" element at the local institution and as more dependent on welfare services than other minorities which, at least at the neighbourhood studied, are not regularly seen as key clients of public services.

7.5 Conclusion

Although attending the Neighbourhood Houses that this research concerns is not mandatory for migrants, the inequality related outcome of attendance should not been overlooked. These public institutions matter because they are durable in time and space, in contrast to associations and short-lived projects, and accessible in immediate spatial proximity. As such they feed into the citizens' perception of their relation to the state and, in the case of migrants, mediate their perception of the dominant national population (Kumlin and Rothstein 2007). The agent-client encounters are crucial for inequality as they inform the formers' evaluation in interaction of the deservingness of the latter which in turn feeds back into the social structures and to the very design of welfare policies (Dubois 2010). This research shows that national level conceptions of ethnic difference and women's citizenship contribute greatly to the construction of the category of "immigrant women" and of the immigrant integration policies that aim at fashioning good citizens out of migrants. The Helsinki case study shows that the Finnish multiculturalist approach to ethnic difference indeed creates openings to the inclusion of ethnic minorities at the public institutions' everyday activities and that the Nordic tradition of advancing women's social citizenship makes family policies an effective pathway to social inclusion for migrant women. The Paris case, on the contrary, illustrates the obstacles the Republican tradition's persistence poses to the mobilization of minorities and how the current discourse that reifies gender equality as a new key value of the French Republic amounts in the stigmatization of Muslim migrants.

The comparative research based on an ethnographic study of local level immigrant integration policies however significantly nuances the picture the study of national integration policies paints and the local level to some extent also portrays. The careful examination of the ordinary practice of institutional socialization, the process of transforming migrant women to "good" female citizens, shows that the ways women are recruited to the local institutions, mixed across ethnic boundaries, and educated about functioning as a full member of each national society induce adjustments to the holistic macro level definition of the target public, i.e. the category of "immigrant women". The intertwining of ethnic and gender boundaries, modes of accommodation for ethnic difference, and form of the socialization activity itself drastically transform the target public in both cities. The Helsinki case shows that applying integration policies at a local institution that is penetrated by the agendas of early childhood education and family policies and that is fashioned to resemble, in its material and functional dimension, a typical Finnish home

contract the category of women to that of mothers. The needs and aspirations of non mother migrant women are effectively misrecognized and neglected by this type of institution that is particularly prevalent in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of the Finnish capital. At the local level in Helsinki, it rather the family status than ethnic difference that unequally conditions migrant women for recognition as worthy members of the local and national community. The Helsinki case study also points to the danger the Finnish "multiculturalist" model of immigrant integration runs of essentializing immigrants as eternal ethnic "others" through the mechanism of institutional incorporation of ethnic difference.

The Paris case study then points to the inclusive potential of weighing gender boundaries against ethnic boundaries in the local fashioning of the target public of "immigrant women". Somewhat surprisingly the very heterogeneity of the goals that the Paris workshop pursues allows for the inclusion of a broader spectrum of women than do the Helsinki policies strictly limited to families. Adding to the initial objective of parental education that of immigrants' linguistic and civic education and yet advancing women's well-being allows Samina to recruit workshop attendants of different family status and situation. The workshop indeed makes inclusive openings towards non mothers as well as non migrants. However, the pervasiveness of the Republican model of integration and the stigmatization of Muslim migrants through the discourse on gender equality contribute to producing social exclusion along gendered ethnic boundaries and in the absence of local efforts to recruit members of the stigmatized minority of North and West African Muslim migrants at the institution's activities the momentum is missed to locally reshape the target public in a more inclusive manner than the national constructs of "good" citizenship.

Although my research is limited to the analysis of one institution in each country, it makes the case for extending the analysis of immigrant integration at the level of local practices. Whether migrant women are expected to learn to think, act and be like emancipated, politically-motivated citizens or a self-sacrificing, sociopolitically-knowledgeable mothers makes a dramatic difference in the everyday practice of institutional socialization. It contributes to the previous research by broadening the lens of ethnic difference to examining how national repertoires of gendered citizenship condition the formation of migrants' citizenship bond. That the ethnographic filed research shows that immigrants' level of "integratedness" is evaluated against the criterion of participation in local social life and their individual conformity with the national moral order reflect the well documented trends of decentralization, territorialization, and individualization of welfare policies. Therefore, the cases under study do not only speak of differences in ways of governing ethnic and gender difference but also testifies of recent convergences between the "universalist" Finnish and the "corporatist" French welfare regimes with significant effects on the conditions under which minority men and women may be recognized as worthy citizens.

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Chapter 8
From Groups to Individuals? The Making of Target Publics in the French Administration of Low-Rent Housing

Marine Bourgeois

Abstract Recent transformations of public policies have led to the emergence of new coordination measures for local governments and to changes in the role of street-level bureaucrats. Previous researches highlight a trend toward individualization of social policies and ever-greater autonomy of bureaucrats. On the basis of an ethnographic study conducted in low-rent housing organizations in two French cities, this chapter provides a critical discussion of the general hypothesis of social policies' individualization. Through extensive interviews and direct observations of agents at work, it looks into the way target publics are defined and identified in practice. It considers the processes of qualification and categorization according to which frontline workers make their selection, questioning boundaries that are drawn by the administration between the insiders and the outsiders of social housing. This chapter first analyses how housing authorities elaborate rules to deal with legal uncertainties. It also shows how these categories are taken up and actualized by bureaucrats in their everyday practices. More broadly, it sheds light on regularly occurring selection mechanisms which led to a deeper understanding of individualization's process.

Keywords Social landlords · Street level bureaucracy · Discretionary power · Categorization · Individualization

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8.1 Introduction

Social housing[1] affects household budget and has a deep impact on personal lives. As part of the Welfare state, it targets people whose incomes do not exceed certain limits. Social housing policies are supposed to reduce inequalities, and fight against social exclusion and spatial segregation. In 2014, waiting lists for social housing in France gather above 1,5 million people. This number has grown twice over the past 20 years. How do policy-makers determine target publics in practice? How do they sort out and select applications? This chapter looks into the way tenants in social housing are identified and selected within a large pool of applicants. Thus, it addresses the question of symbolic boundaries that are drawn by the administration between the *insiders* and the *outsiders* of low-rent housing.

The legal definition of eligibility criteria and selection principles constitutes the first level of housing policy regulation. Eligibility depends on having valid identity papers and not exceeding income caps. Social housing selection is based upon two principles: the right to housing and the principle of social mix. The right to housing, introduced in May 1990 by the Besson Act, states that "every person or family experiencing particular difficulties, because of the insufficiency of their resources or their conditions of existence has the right to a public assistance from the government […] to obtain access to a decent and independent home or to maintain themselves there". In addition, social landlords[2] have to foster social mix in their housing stock. As a legal principle, social mix found its basis in the 2000 SRU Act,[3] spreading the "burden" of disadvantaged people in social housing between cities. But this concept remains vague and ambiguous. It is understood in many ways, including a mix of family types, ages, jobs, incomes, race and ethnicity (Kirszbaum 2008). In this regard, formal rules do not produce strong discontinuities and strict boundaries. They contribute to dig a gap between "policy as written" and "policy as performed" (Lipsky 1980: xvii). It results that HLM agents have a significant leeway in their working practices. How do they take into account the targets defined at the superior level? Do their interactions with beneficiaries redefine these targets?

Two main orientations can be distinguished in the French literature on social housing. Firstly, in organizational sociology and policy analysis, scholars focus on local systems of social housing to shed light on regulation processes and governance arrangements. They examine the relations between group stakeholders with divergent interests. Bourgeois (1996) argues that public social landlords are primar-

[1] In France, social housing is also called HLM housing. HLM means *Habitat à Loyer Modéré* (homes at a moderate rent).

[2] The social landlords are the key actors in social housing chain. They own 16% of French principal residences, housing ten million people. Two types of social landlords should be distinguished: public organizations called *offices publics HLM* (OPHLM) and private organizations called *entreprises sociales pour l'habitat*. The *offices publics* are attached to local governments whereas the *entreprises sociales pour l'habitat* are commercial companies.

[3] Loi Solidarité et renouvellement urbain.

ily concerned with politics favouring their voters whereas private social landlords prioritize applicants with the most resources. Sociologists and political scientists have pointed out the opacity and complexity of the allocation process. They emphasize on the leeway of street-level bureaucrats and power relations (Houard 2009; Ball 2012). Secondly, much of the literature in urban sociology centres on the discriminatory and segregation effects of housing policies. Research examines how social landlords and local governments use the principle of social mix to develop informal strategies of creaming. Law is being used to limit the access of some groups to social housing, especially poor and racialized minorities. This results in exclusion (Ballain and Benguigui 1995; Tissot 2005), discrimination (Tanter and Toubon 1999; Simon and Kirszbaum 2001; Sala Pala 2013) and concentration of vulnerable groups in underprivileged areas (Pan Ké Shon 2009; Weill 2013). Researches establish clear connections between social mix and discrimination. But they have not precisely explored the regulatory mechanisms that govern housing policy. We know little about how daily practices shape the allocation process. Thus, I argue that policy analysis can benefit from street-level policy analysis and ethnographic approaches, thereby laying the groundwork for a new theoretical perspective on regulation and policy implementation, focused on bureaucratic encounters between the Welfare state and the public.

8.1.1 Understanding the Making of Target Publics Through Street-Level Work

Since the early 1990s, street-level bureaucracy has known significant development into the analysis of policy implementation (Brodkin 2011). Studies specifically investigate the impacts of the transformations of public services and the Welfare state on daily practices. Those researches focused on education, health and social policies, exploring several organizational structures and categories of tasks (Hupe and Buffat 2014). Initially based on agency-centered sociological and rational choice-institutional premises, street-level bureaucracy has been revisited and fitted with other theoretical perspectives, such as Goffman's interactionism and Bourdieu's analysis of domination (Dubois 2010a). The core argument introduced by Lipsky was that street-level bureaucrats actively make policy: "I argue that the decisions of street level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively become the public policies they carry out" (Lipsky 1980). Street-level bureaucrats are responsible for translating clients into institutional categories: "it is only in the interaction between caseworkers and clients that formal policy comes to life" (Rice 2013: 1039). They often exercise significant discretion playing with rules and procedures despite their subordinate position: "neither impersonal bureaucrats nor standardized clients exist: only social agents with individual personalities who, within certain conditions and limits, are required to play the role of the impersonal or standardized bureaucrat or

client" (Dubois 2010a: 3). This research contributes to the foundation of bottom-up approaches to policy analysis, and argues that policy cannot be understood simply as a set of objectives or decisions, but must also be recognized as practices.

Most studies focus on variations at street-level while seeking factorial explanations at that same level, particularly individual characteristics and personal view of the actors involved depending on social properties, professional trajectories and job conceptions, organizational positions and generational membership (Dubois 2010a; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003; Watkins-Hayes 2009). They show that caseworkers' attitudes toward policy goals vary empirically and influence street-level work. Schneider and Ingram (1993) highlight that clients belonging to positively constructed groups will receive better treatment than clients who belong to negatively constructed groups for reasons of "deservingness" and of political legitimacy. In sum, public policies operate through the creation of categories, grouping persons distinguished as eligible for benefits and burdens. Different target groups are treated differently according to their political power and social construction. In this regard, the chapter draws on the street-level bureaucracy literature in order to discuss Ingram and Schneider's ideas.

However, research often overlooks the fact that implementation conditions vary across local systems in terms of institutional design of organizations and of relationships between actors. Within the same policy area, differences may exist in the level of discretion that is available to implementing agencies and their staff depending on the city. Front-line practices have to be analyzed in relation with the social context in which they take place. Economic crisis, decentralization and privatisation have led to the intervention of new actors and the emergence of new co-ordination measures for local governments. A loosening of state constraints on individuals and organizations is also observed (Dupuy and Pollard 2014). This results in major changes in the role of street-level bureaucrats. They are often seen to assume a greater variety of tasks, such as developing new instruments to deal with clients and engage in the formulation of organizational goals (Durose 2011; Ellis 2010; Henman and Fenger 2006). A significant set of studies highlights the general trend toward individualization of public policy and ever-greater autonomy of street-level bureaucrats, replacing an automatic impersonal bureaucracy with a more individual approach characterized by more personal conversations about clients' lives and behaviours (Achterberg et al. 2013; Astier 2000; Ferge 1997; Lima 2013). Dubois (2010b) shed light on a new mode of governance, which he refers to as an "individualized government of conducts".

8.1.2 Explaining Local Regularities in the Era of Social Policies' Individualization

As the previous section outlined, research on social housing suggest that housing policy generates inequalities and discriminations at the local level. These findings were observed in different urban contexts. Are these results in line with the process

of social policies' individualization? Can a case-by-case treatment produce similarities from one city to another? Resolving this puzzle requires to investigate how the combined observation of institutional relations, organizational contexts and individual representations produce an understanding of working practices and regulatory mechanisms.

The chapter is organized along two lines. First, I analyse how social housing actors elaborate rules to deal with the uncertainty of the existing legal framework. Supported by policy instruments, these rules seek to organize spatial distribution of social groups based on several criteria, which bring out institutional categories. The categories of "immigrants" or "poor" are invariably considered as threatening even though they are produced by different types of actors, depending on local power relations. This results in a hierarchy of customers and housing units, which determines the type of accommodations bureaucrats can offer. Second, I analyze how these categories are actualized in micro-level daily interactions. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the regular occurrences of selection mechanisms that inform policy and governing.

8.1.3 Fieldwork

The empirical material is based on extended ethnographic surveys combining direct observations and in-depth semi-structured interviews with members of local decision bodies, managers and street-level bureaucrats from public and private social landlords. The observation of working practices consisted in following bureaucrats in their daily practices: meeting with applicants, visiting apartments and attending selection commissions. Follow-up interviews included open-ended questions about agents' perceptions of clients, their working practices, their application of rules and procedures. This methodology has been applied in two social housing organizations located in two different cities. Cities were selected in order to capture varied land prices, socioeconomic characteristics and local governance settings (see Table 8.1). The first part of the survey focused on a housing company in a medium-sized French city of 400,000 inhabitants renamed Mediumcity.[4] Between November 2012 and January 2013, I followed two HLM agents in charge of renting out 1000 housing units each. In addition, interviews were conducted with all the employees of the company. Between November 2013 and February 2014, the second part of the fieldwork was conducted in a public HLM company in a small-size city of 130,000 inhabitants, renamed Smalltown. On the field, I introduced myself as a PhD student in political science or sociology, aiming to understand how social housing allocations concretely work. For clients, I was an intern learning about sales agents. This position allowed me to stay behind the street-level bureaucrats and to take notes during the interviews.

[4] The names of sites, organizations and individuals have been changed in order to ensure the anonymity of interviewees.

Table 8.1 The two case studies

	Organization A (ESH)	Organization B (OPHLM)
City	Mediumcity	Smalltown
Local context	≈ 200,000 people.	≈ 60,000 people.
	Unemployment rate (15–64 years old): 10%.	Unemployment rate (15–64 years old): 16%.
	Percentage of single-parent families: 13%.	Percentage of single-parent families: 19%.
	Percentage of immigrants: 6%.	Percentage of immigrants: 11%.
	Percentage of social housing: 23%.	Percentage of social housing: 30%.
Local agencies	Three local agencies (A1, A2 et A3).	No local agency.
	5 HLM agents.	6 HLM agents.
Characteristics of social housing	A1: ≈ 2500 housing units.	≈ 9000 housing units.
	A2: ≈ 3600 housing units.	
	A3: ≈ 2500 housing units.	
Characteristics of social housing allocation	The allocation commission meets weekly in the head office building. Chaired by the general director in charge of renting, it is composed of six permanent members. In 2011, the committee examined 3412 applications.	The allocation commission meets bi-weekly. Chaired by the general director in charge of renting, it is composed of six members, always including a tenant representative and local elected officials of the commune where the home involved was located. In 2012, the committee examined 3752 applications.

8.2 The Institutional Construction of Target Publics

In social housing policies, the policymaker entrusts social landlords and members of allocation commissions with the power to select tenants.[5] But as we previously mentioned, formal rules are vague and contradictory, leaving substantial space for the autonomy of local actors. "Secondary norms of application" (Lascoumes 1990) are therefore created through the interactions with clients. They are closely linked to the local actors' capacity for action and the power relations established between them. Thus, analyzing local configurations will allow us to identify the scope of social landlords' autonomy and to explain the logic that underlies categories, according to which applications are selected. Based on contemporary studies of public policy and local governments (Douillet et al. 2012), I make the hypothesis that allocation rules vary locally, depending on the kind of institutions which design them.

[5] In France, the application for social housing passes through the hands of the receiving agent, then on to the social landlords and, finally, is before the allocation commission. All allocation commissions have six members, plus the Mayor of the city where the home is located (or its representative) who has a casting vote.

Table 8.2 The construction of social landlords' discretion and its variations

		Scope of bureaucratic discretion
Organization A	**Mediumcity**	***Very little discretion***
	Agencies A1, A2 and A3	
Organization B	**Smalltown**	***Significant discretion***
	No local agencies	

8.2.1 Who Defines Target Publics?

Contextualized analysis describes environment and power relations that constrain HLM organizations in the implementation of social housing allocation. Several mechanisms in the production of social landlords' discretion are observed: the absence of economic constraints for the agencies on the one hand; a weak political leadership in housing issues on the other. Based on my fieldwork, I identify two different cases summarized in the table below (Table 8.2).

The first constraint which reduces bureaucratic discretion of social landlords is an economic one, which is associated with the principle of reservation. In France, reservation implies that as a counterpart to their financial investment in affordable housing construction, several actors are authorized to name applicants in estates to which they contributed – specifically the Mayor of the city where the housing unit is located; the members of Action logement reserving up to 50% of the vacancies in social housing for employees[6]; and the departmental prefect who, as local state representative, is responsible for housing the most vulnerable groups, quarter of vacancies for this purpose. Up to 5% of social housing is also reserved by the prefecture for civil servants. One or several files are chosen by the reserving actors and sent to social landlords to be examined by HLM agents. In view of the issues at stake, the applications going through this channel are rarely rejected. So, in this case, the allocation committee can be compared with a simple recording chamber (Bourgeois 2013; Sala Pala 2013). In both case studies, the reservation rate is very low: it represents 15% of social housing in Mediumcity, and it only concerns new built projects in Smalltown.

The second constraint is political. It has to do with the key role of local authorities in the allocation process: in their ability to hand out building permits and in their financial participation to the housing effort. According to this, social landlords have to contend with them. However, the intervention of local politicians varies strongly from one area to another. In Mediumcity, the municipal service in charge of housing is central in the architecture of the allocation process. It is responsible for file processing and pre-selecting applicants. Civil servants send one file per vacant unit, and sort out files based on a scoring grid previously defined by local actors, mainly social landlords and elected officials.[7] The HLM agents only come in afterwards by

[6] In France, private employers must deduct 0, 95% from their wages bill to assist the housing effort. In return, they have the possibility to propose candidates.

[7] The scoring grid is based on several criteria which encourage housing for the poor, such as homelessness or housing need, residual costs resulting from rent, precariousness, conditions regarding financial means and case processing times.

organizing a "discovery" interview and a visit of the apartment. In light of the information provided, the chair of the commission either confirms or rejects the allocation. This local configuration significantly reduces the work of social landlords and, therefore, most of the bureaucratic discretion that would allow them to intervene in the spatial distribution of social groups. In Smalltown, power relations between local authorities and HLM organizations are more balanced. Bureaucrats register files, receive customers, make housing suggestions and organize viewings. The degree of discretion for social landlords is higher, albeit limited by the political requirements expressed by local governments through the allocation commission. Indeed, elected officials are permanent members of the commission through which the local authority can act directly, claiming "pass-through" and issuing vetoes against certain applications. These political interventions are decided on a case-by-case basis. But they follow particular action patterns that reveal clear political priorities. For instance, one of them consist in limiting access to people in precarious situations coming from "outside the department". The objective is to avoid the congestion of the municipal social services:

> "*How do politics interfere here?*
> It is in the CAL (i.e. the allocation commission)! In the cal, they choose by asking "where are they from? Why did they come here?" And thus… we close the door a bit more than for people who come from… well if you're coming from out the département, it's a bit hard! (laughs). I received quite a lot of applications these past days coming from x, y… pff… "what are they doing here?" They couldn't fit in there! […] "why are they coming to smalltown?" That's what they ask… because they do not want even more congestion than there is at the civil center for social action, help entirely going to a population that is difficult to manage, etc. So in the end… social cases, they say "yes", but you know our quota is met already, we didn't want to get more. So every time, it's "why did they come here?" And when the answer is "they think they have more chances of finding a job here", the economic argument, they say "well they don't by staying at home!"[8]

In either case, the same type of political constraint is observed. But it results in different forms of bureaucratic discretion, depending on the local context.

8.2.2 Translating Clients into Categories

Social housing allocation is based on local rules that aim to assign the "right" candidate to the "right" place (Morel Morel Journel and Sala Pala 2011), establishing a social hierarchy of clients and spaces which requires a detailed knowledge of social occupation and estate. This knowledge is asymmetrically shared by social landlords and municipalities. Since they own social housing, HLM organizations have a very precise view on living conditions in their estate, whereas local authorities hold a global view of neighborhood life. The two case studies illustrate contrasting typical situations: the case in which social landlords exercise a significant discretionary power (Smalltown) and the case in which local authorities are

[8] Alexandre, General manager in charge of renting, Smalltown, November 29, 2013

Table 8.3 The building classification in Smalltown
Based on this table, street-level bureaucrats are supposed to identify the buildings that can be offered to the clients they serve. The original colour code serves to implement allocation process as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Attractiveness	Indicative target
Very attractive	Open-ended contracts, retired and students
Attractive	Open-ended contracts, retired and students, fix-termed contracts, temporary work
Medium	Open-ended contracts, retired and students, fix-termed contracts, temporary work, active solidarity revenue
Unattractive	Fix-termed contracts, temporary work, active solidarity revenue
Specific populations	People who are coming out of prison People who are coming out of shelter

extremely present in the allocation process (Mediumcity). In this section, I examine how these configurations are reflected in local rules. To achieve this, I focus on the policy instruments (Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007) that evidence local rules and institutional categories.

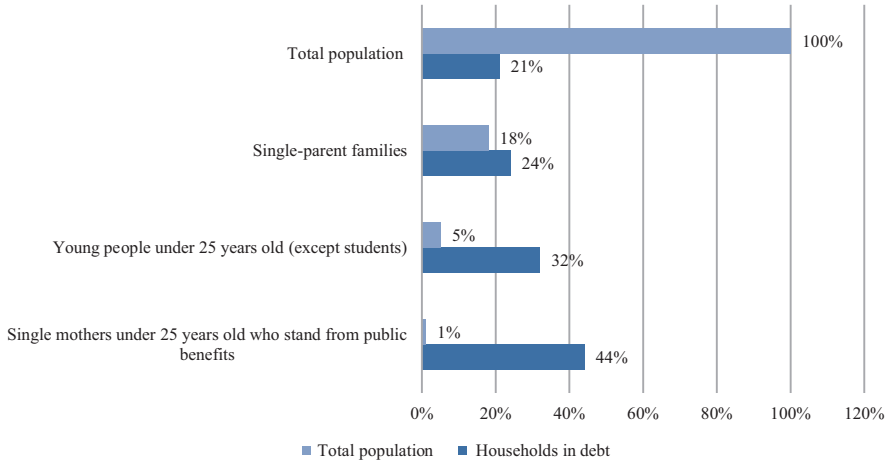
The Case of Smalltown In Smalltown, "*we try to ensure a well-balanced population, so we don't put too many RSA*[9] *where we could still get another profile*" explained Alexandre, the Director-General in charge of renting in Smalltown. Based on the managers' evaluations of neighborhood life, he creates an Excel spreadsheet to classify social groups and buildings.

> "How was it built now?
> It was built by the manager in charge of renting, that's Rose, by the person who takes care of neighborhood life, that's Josiane, by the directors for proximity and recovery, that's it. For each address, these four people with their view, they saw that we were trying to pinpoint "so yes, for us, this is a good population, it's quiet or… It's less calm, this type, and so on". So we built it [Excel table] by comparing what they told us and the way it was actually occupied... In fact, each person, each of the four people did this work individually. We shared them afterwards in order to see "I think this address is very attractive, and you estimate that it is moderately attractive, why?" And from the explanations that have been given, we finally managed to agree on a classification".[10]

The organization distinguishes five categories of social housing attractiveness: building can be very attractive, attractive, medium, unattractive or for specific populations. These levels refer to professionals' perceptions of how people live in buildings: "*An attractive building is quiet, calm, with good surroundings, close to the city center, yet it is housing that have sometimes cheaper rents than some housing in poor areas! The rent has nothing to do with that!"* explained an agent. For each level of attractiveness, an indicative target of desired tenants is defined (see Table 8.3). These targets mingle references to age (student, retired), socio-

[9] RSA means Revenu de Solidarité Active which is an earned income supplement.

[10] Alexandre, General manager in charge of renting, Smalltown, November 29, 2013.



Document 8.1 The Statistical Identification of "at risk" Populations in Smalltown
Source: The social landlord of Smalltown, 2013.
Field: This document compares in debt households with the overall social housing residents in Smalltown.
Example: Single mothers under 25 years old who stand from public benefits, young people under 25 years old (except students) and single-parents families are more often than the others in debt.

professional status (open-ended contract, fixed-term contract, temporary work, active solidarity revenue) and housing situation (out of prison or shelter).

This classification is supplemented by a document categorizing "at risk" populations (Caswell et al. 2010). They are those who are likely to stop paying rent or to get involved in neighbourhood disturbances: tenants in debt, young people under twenty-five, the homeless, people who wander from shelter to shelter, clients needing mental health supports, offenders, traffickers, large families, and so on. For social landlords, the risk is twofold: there is an economic risk and a behavioral risk. The first one is estimated through descriptive statistics (see Document 8.1). Statistics create kind of evidence: "*It is a proven fact that young mothers earning RSA are the people proportionately more often in debt, compared to other folders"* said an agent.

The second one is based on field experience and practical knowledge:

> During the "discovery" interview with some homeless applicants, we realise that they've had an extremely chaotic life, without ever succeeding in keeping an accommodation. Typically, they just wander from shelter to shelter. Well, in these cases, it is more than hazardous […]. You are statistically much more likely to engage in problematic behaviour when your environment is flawed, and vice versa, so it's difficult (Alexandre, Director-General in charge of renting, Smalltown, November 29, 2013).

Those instruments provide recommendations for street-level bureaucrats: people depending on social aids shall be given priority on the "medium" or the "unattractive" social housing, whereas employees, retired people and students must be positioned in "attractive" areas. People who fall into the category of "specific" are "assigned" to targeted buildings in order to be "tested":

> To test them is to assign them to buildings where we have problems, to see how they behave, if they get into trouble. And if after a while they don't create any problems, and if they want to move, then we move them to a nicer place, you see[11]

The allocation process implies a qualification of both clients and buildings. Fieldwork shows a kind of one-to-one equivalent relationship between residency and applicant's quality, which engenders social segregation. Indeed, despite the goal of social mix, the housing company fosters the concentration of similar profiles. Two different arguments are mobilized to justify this strategy. The first argument is a commercial one: they do so in order to address the need to reduce the rate of unoccupied housing and to increase attractiveness of social housing. The organization seeks to restore a sort of "balance" in the spatial distribution of social groups by increasing the percentage of workers: *"we seek to put more workers in good addresses, the idea is to reach 60, 70, 80 per cent of stable people"* explains Alexandre, Director-General of Smalltown housing company in charge of renting. This is a pragmatic reasoning: since "stable people" systematically refuse apartments in disadvantaged areas, the social landlord sets aside units for them in the most attractive neighborhoods:

> If I put people who receive benefits in the most attractive sectors, then who am I going to assign in disadvantaged urban areas where I have 300 unoccupied apartments? This is not… This is… The person I am going to put there, downtown, where everyone wants to go, they will "take the place" (so to speak) of a person with a good job, a permanent working contract, because the person with a permanent contract, I won't be able to assign them to the deprived neighbourhoods. They won't go, so I will just end up with an unoccupied flat.[12]

The second argument is a managerial one. It is based on the idea that one cannot mix different populations in terms of age, family composition or occupational status with different lifestyles in a same building because mixing is a potential source of conflicts:

> They'll be mingled with people who have the same behaviors, so we will succeed in having an "osmosis", quotation marks, of lifestyles... In one building, I'll have people that aren't disturbed by nightlife, they will listen to loud music or watch TV until midnight, and we won't be hearing complaints from neighbors because they have the same habits and that's it, it does not disturb them. On the contrary, if I put that kind of person in the building across the street, in the same area, but where we have half the people that are seniors or people who are working and get up in the morning… No! So we try to curb nuisance by specializing our buildings that way. That is to say that in a given building, there is a target customer.[13]

These local rules highlight institutional categories based on class, age, address and family composition. They are not communicated to applicants but they are materialized in policy instruments. Field observations also shed light on more discrete categories, especially ethnic categories. Indeed, the social landlord seeks to limit ethnic minorities in specific neighborhoods: to Alexandre, "*below 80 per cent of French, we have to rebalance*". These rules are justified by both commercial and

[11] Samia, HLM agent, Smalltown, December 9, 2013.

[12] Alexandre, General manager in charge of renting, Smalltown, November 29, 2013.

[13] *Idem*.

Table 8.4 The recommendations made by social landlords in Mediumcity

Apartment	Adress	Recommendations
T4	6 square	Very disturbed stairwell: avoid people who are coming from shelter, put employees.

managerial arguments. First, the concentration of minorities would be driving the French out, and creating more vacancy: *"The issue is French people's perceptions of the neighborhood. When they say "this is an Arab neighborhood", it means I have a problem"* (Alexandre, Director-General of Smalltown Company). Furthermore, the lifestyle of some minorities is perceived as problematic for community life: the "*Africans*", the "*Yugo*" and the "*Kosovars*" are especially targeted. Jean, CEO of the HLM organization, explains that: *"When the state* tells us *that we have to house the Kosovars, yes* we house them but not anywhere. With their lifestyles... Here we talk about how neighbourhoods live, but we must also look *at the* rents*"*.

The Case of Mediumcity In Mediumcity, local authorities organize the allocation process. Unlike the social landlord whose purpose is to anticipate the non-payment risk and the risk of neighborhood disturbance, municipal officials seek to maximize the number of proposals for social housing while respecting the priorities established by the elected representatives. However, the spatial distribution of populations remains important for them. Before the selection commission, the HLM organisms make recommendations to officials from the municipal service in order to encourage them to take neighborhood life into account. Data on social occupation is orally shared (by phone or during regular meetings) and represented in the form of an Excel table (see Table 8.4).

As we noted above, "at risk" profiles are made visible by the instrument: they are people out of work, people who stand from benefits, single-parent families, persons who are coming out of prison or shelter, homeless people and clients needing mental health support. In the allocation commission, social landlords can also intervene to refuse individual cases or defer them if judged inappropriate in regards to social occupation. The commission can assign those cases to another dwelling, or redirect them to other types of accommodation:

> We didn't give them [the local authorities] the responsibility to control housing allocation. We keep it! And that, it's through the CAL [*the allocation commission*]. The CAL is not a registration chamber at all. If we don't agree with a profile, we refuse it! "Inadequate housing" for the candidate is an argument when their lifestyle is not consistent with the life of the building... […] The spatial distribution of people stays under our command at all times. We can recommend social support or special needs housing.[14]

These categories also refer to local rules targeting the buildings which are perceived as underprivileged and where bureaucrats can no longer house the most disadvantaged people. In applying social mix, actors avoid concentrating poverty. In this organization, social mix is defined in terms of professional status, resources,

[14] Rozenn, Director in charge of renting, Mediumcity, January 15, 2013.

age and family composition. The underlying rationale is that "living together in harmony" can only be achieved in socially mixed neighborhoods. At this point, we highlight a huge difference in framing between the two case studies, by social landlords and local governments. In Mediumcity, social mix is understood at the building level whereas it is thought at the neighborhood level in Smalltown. In the former case, different profiles of people are mixed in a building; in the latter, they are concentrated in a building. These different strategies depend on targeting and the level of knowledge of actors. Concerning minorities, a policy of non-concentration has been applied in Mediumcity for several years. With the support of local authorities, social landlords blocked applications by the Turkish targeting the South End of Mediumcity. Hence, they aim to counter "cultural isolationism" and "communitarianism"[15]:

> We have one community, only one, that follows this rationale, and everything is done to counter it, which I repeat whenever I'm facing the Fasild[16] or the Halde.[17] Yes, we assume political responsibility in favor of social mix, and we're not in favor of communitarianism! So we try to avoid ethnic concentration. Because in this case, that's what it is. All neighborhoods or all the cities are ready to receive the entire population. Everywhere, they find social responses and nonprofits responses. And when you're somewhere in Mediumcity, you're never far from the other part of the city. And therefore, for solidarity, there is no need for people to coexist in the same building.[18]

Decided by elected officials, this policy was implemented by both local government and social landlords. It was deleted with the establishment of a single application form for housing which simplifies the categories informing nationalities.[19] The absence of tools to capture ethnic background accelerated the abandonment of the policy.

Finally, the bureaucratic discretion promotes the construction of specific rules related to the spatial distribution of social groups. Based on a hierarchy of both neighborhoods and clients, they are supported by accurate knowledge of social occupation. Knowledge is based on statistical analysis and field experience, produced by both managers and street-level bureaucrats. It identifies applicants' features in terms of class, race, age and family composition. These criteria are associated with high level of risks. By revealing "at risks" groups, they organize a social and spatial stratification, which provides various strategies for social housing allocation (segregation or diversity, see Table 8.5). In the following section, we will see how these rules are applied on the field. Based on street-level bureaucracy studies, we

[15] In France, multiculturalism is tightly associated to "communitarianism" which is seen as a threat to national identity and republican values. It is negatively perceived as the opposite of the French republican "model of integration".

[16] The support Fund for Integration and the Prevention of Discrimination (Fasild) is a public institution that finances operations in favor of the integration of immigrants.

[17] The High Authority to Combat Discrimination (Halde) was created in 2005 and dissolved in 2011. It was competent to address "all forms of discrimination, direct or indirect, prohibited by law or by an international agreement which France is a party".

[18] Christian, Elected representative in charge of social housing, Mediumcity, February 28, 2012.

[19] Loi de mobilisation pour le logement et la lutte contre l'exclusion, 2009.

Table 8.5 Local rules in Smalltown and Mediumcity

"At risks" groups	**Smalltown**	**Mediumcity**
	The social landlord plays the leading role in the allocation process.	The municipal service plays the leading role in the allocation process.
Rules based on social categories	**Social segregation**	**Social mix**
("Unemployed", "people standing on benefits", "under 25 years old", "large families").	HLM actors seek to reach a kind of "harmony" in their estates by concentrating the same profiles in a building.	HLM actors seek to create social mix in their estates.
Main grounds for justification	**Commercial argument**	**Integration argument**
	The specialization of social housing is thought of as a way to fight against housing vacancy.	HLM actors look aim for "harmonious community life". The "ideal stairwell" is characterized by a diversity of profiles.
	Managerial argument	
	A variety of profiles increases the risk of neighbourhood disturbances.	
Rules based on ethnic categories	**Ethnic mix**	**Ethnic mix**
("Black", "Arab", "Turks", "Yugo").	HLM actors seek to reach ethnic mix in their estates.	HLM actors seek to reach ethnic mix in their estates.
Main grounds for justification	**Argument commercial**	**Integration argument**
	Mixing in order to "preserve the residential image" and to avoid the refusal of housing proposals ("letterbox refusals") which slow down the commercialization process.	Mixing in order to not contribute to "communitarianism" and groups' exclusion and to avoid the formation of "ghettos".
	Managerial argument Mixing in order to limit neighbourhood disturbances and unpaid rents (this refers to a "cultural" argument).	

make the hypothesis that institutional categories are renegotiated according to a case-by-case logic.

8.3 Redefining Target Publics at the Front-Lines

We have shown how a set of rules and tools, built both by social landlords and local authorities, reduces bureaucratic discretion. However, agents continue carrying out their activities with discretion. "There is always the question of which rules apply in

particular situation" and, as Evans and Harris noted, "the elaboration of policy can create greater discretion through the conflict, confusion and imprecision of multiple rules and procedures" (Evans and Harris 2004: 883, 890). In this regard, street-level bureaucrats have leeway to categorize and select clients. Administrative decisions remain largely based on HLM agents who can escape bureaucratic rules and resist bureaucracy. The Welfare workers can demonstrate flexibility or inflexibility toward claimant. They can be rule-bound or capable of sympathy and empathy. Therefore, the institutional order seems to be precarious and unstable, and could be challenged in ordinary interactions. In this regard, Dubois (2010a) argues that there are many dysfunctional elements in the front-desk work. He sheds light on the fragility of bureaucratic roles and shows how institutional identities come to be shaped and transformed in the field. Practices significantly vary from one Welfare office to another, and from one agent to the next. This section aims to test this idea by focusing at the micro level.

8.3.1 Street-Level Bureaucrats' Judgments on Clients

In both case studies, street-level bureaucrats lead an equivalent exercise of qualification and categorization based on practice criteria in order to sort out and select housing applicants. Qualification is based on the information contained in the housing forms and on evidence collected when meeting clients. It is a crucial step to clarify the application file. Background and credit checks fuel discourses and representations that categorize people and produce hierarchies (Eymard-Duvernay and Marchal 1997). According to social psychology, these operations are used to reduce the uncertainty and to predict individual behaviors (Jenkins 2000). Judgments made by HLM agents about the applicants result from a body of evidence, especially punctuality for appointments, self-presentation and children's behaviors during the interviews, housing file management. Responding quickly to a housing proposal, bringing all the administrative documents and follow-up calls to bureaucrats are also well considered: "*it means that they're true applicant"*, "*You see those who really want a house compared to others*". Honesty, sincerity and showing goodwill are also valued by street-level bureaucrats. In particular, they pay attention to the consistency of the client trajectories. "Feeling" and "instinct" are thus put forward as a major professional skill (Valli et al. 2002):

> "When I arrived here, I thought that "everyone is beautiful, everyone is nice, and everyone pays" and that's because you see files and receive people that you learn to ask the right questions, you learn to... Some addresses speak to you. I don't know. After, you manage to know when you have people in front of you, when they are confident or… In this case, you dig, you dig, and they contradict each other. Well you know there is a problem. You dig again and you find a debt. Often, when we have doubts, in the end, we always find the... It's always justified when we don't feel it! So yeah, maybe with a lot of cases, we develop a sort of instinct for all of that" (Emma, HLM agent, Smalltown, December 10, 2013).

These discourses contain shortcuts and stereotypes through interactions with customers. They bring out practical categories organized around two segments: the risk profiles on the one hand – large families, families of "troublemakers" (identified by their names), homeless people, former inmates, and alcoholics, social cases, people who wander from shelter to shelter, people needing mental health supports, offenders, traffickers; the good candidates on the other hand – workers and retirees. The "good" candidate is distinguished by his quality of good payer, his ability to occupy the housing and to fit in. His individual quality is examining through family standards (married couple with an average number of children), professional norms (employment, regular income) and ways of living (Sala Pala 2006: 88). Ethnic minorities are often associated to many of the "bad" applicant characteristics: inappropriate, troublemakers, combining social and economic difficulties. These judgments reveal both an essentialisation of difference – "*they occupy their apartment like in their home villages*" – and a negative evaluation of this difference – "*they'll deteriorate housing*" – with a shift from the question of origins to the question of cultural maladjustment (Sala Pala 2010: 22). Physical attributes and appearance can also be a stigma (Goffman 1963: 13), resulting in exclusion and discrimination:

> What matters is less the nationality than the appearance. In X [new housing project], we put Africans dressed in "boubous".[20] In other buildings, we have already put bearded men and women wearing the burqa. That disturbed existing tenants. What matters is the appearance. So, we don't put more "boubous" in X. That doesn't mean that no more Africans are put there" (Barthelemy, HLM agent, Smalltown, December 11, 2012).

Symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnar 2002: 168–169) made by social actors to categorize people are based on group membership reflecting lifestyles and cultural differences. The process of boundary making reveals ordinary forms of social classification and prioritization. More generally, it aims to anticipate the risks related to outstanding rent and neighborhood disturbances.

8.3.2 From Institutional Categories to Practical Categories

The practical categories elaborated at the front-lines do not completely overlap the institutional categories. Actually, many agents reject the general level of the rule and argue for a greater account of their judgment based on the proximity with clients and individual situations. Thus, institutional categories are taken up and actualized in daily micro-level interactions. They are refined and imbued with new meanings. For instance, sales agents in Smalltown make a clear distinction between two types of people who stand from benefits: there are those who deserve to access to housing in a good neighborhood and those who do not deserve it; those who are actively seeking employment and those who rely on social aid. The classic dichotomy between the "good" poor and "bad" poor has been updated on the ground.

[20] A "boubou" is an African traditional clothing.

> We must make a distinction. You have people, young or old, who are unemployed or stand on benefits because it suits them, and you have those who don't have a choice: job loss... Here, between us, we make distinctions. I'll treat all housing files similarly, but between someone who has always stood on benefits because it suits them, and as I mentioned, a woman who finds herself alone... I'll make a distinction (Emma, HLM agent, Smalltown, December 10, 2013).

These discourses are very widespread among HLM agents, and because the company management allows for bureaucratic discretion and values individual treatment, they lead to specific decisions in practice. If after a face-to-face interview, the agent finds the applicant *"good", "quiet", "who won't be a problem"* (Samia, HLM agent, Smalltown, December the 9th, 2013), he may bypass the rule and house him in an attractive neighbourhood, with the approval of the Director in charge of renting:

> "*The "discovery" interview is still important?*
> It is even more than necessary, it helps us to know families, to know who are in front of us, and if we are more in a so-called "specific" population that must be housed in a specific place, or if we are on household's residential opportunities... If the person is one of our tenants, if they stand on benefits, if they are known to us, and that they want an upper floor... If they don't create problems, it won't be a problem for me! We want to foster loyalty in our clients, someone who pays its rent, who perhaps stands on benefits, but who pays its rent, it's not a problem. There! I'm not saying that they can switch from an "unattractive" area to a "very attractive" one, I don't agree, but it could be to an attractive area, yes!" (Alexandre, Director-General in charge of renting, Smalltown, November 29, 2013).

Adjustments around the rules also reveal practical combinations of institutional categories on the ground. One example is the Jean Jaures district in Smalltown. It is targeted by a policy restricting the access of blacks to the buildings where they are perceived as too numerous. The Jean Jaures district is the only neighborhood of Smalltown which is concerned by such a policy. But the fieldwork shows that HLM agents are willing to assign black workers there, since the contractual status of workers – temporary employees, trainees, those with fixed contracts – is supposed to reflect a high level of integration and stability. In this sense, the criteria of class and race cannot be understood in isolation (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991). Other interaction effects are observed, such as between class and address:

> "I'm telling you, I've tried … It depends on individual cases... For large families when I knew it wasn't an option, I didn't start it because I knew that we didn't want to hear "the large families, oh no!" … But for example, I have already moved in a black man who was working. I put him in Jean Jaures. I put him, and he was accepted because he was working. It depends on the case. Because I felt that the guy, if he works; in the daytime, he works, since he isn't at home..." (Samia, HLM agent, Smalltown, December 9, 2013).

These findings show that practical categories built in the field are not neutral. They involve hierarchies between social groups resulting in unequal treatments, discriminations and exclusion. They also reveal some regularities in selection mechanisms, criteria which are predominant depending on local configurations.

8.3.3 Questioning the Institutional Order

Finally, I analyze the behaviors of street-level bureaucrats to see if they contribute to weaken or strengthen the institutional order (Barrault-Stella 2011, 2013). Two elements are salient on this matter: the attitudes of HLM agents toward rules and the organizational context. Indeed, street-level bureaucrats adopt various behaviors when it comes to implementing allocation policy. In a previous study (Bourgeois 2013: 73), I identified three types of HLM agents based on to individual attitudes and working practices. First, "loyal" agents completely endorse the registers of justification which underlie local rules (diversity and integration). They are the rule-abiding bureaucrats described by Lipsky. Second, "critical" agents do not accept the rules and try to fight against them by developing resistances and avoidance strategies. Third, "pragmatic" agents apply the rules with detachment.[21] In a more dynamic way, I also show that these behaviors contribute to the reproduction of the institutional order and explain regularities in selection mechanisms.

First, the study shows that "pragmatic" agents are strongly represented in social landlords. Regine, who implemented the policy regarding Turkish people in the South End of Mediumcity between 2001 and 2006, is an archetype of this kind of bureaucrat. As an employee of Smalltown housing company for 32 years, she felt that she could not get around the rules: there was no possibility to give her personal opinion on it: *"You don't have to agree or disagree... You know, when you're an employee, you do what you're told or else you go see elsewhere"* (Regine, HLM agent, Mediumcity, January the 14th, 2013). Some agents are openly hostile to the rules, but they are not able to accommodate them. In Smalltown, all street-level bureaucrats obey to the same rules. They are strongly criticized by street-level bureaucrats as a way to classify housing applicants. They are also considered as a barrier to their autonomy in the shape of management tools and rigidity in the choice of future tenants.

> I think it's a shame to classify everybody but, well, I don't decide. It's true that it's a shame because you have people who... It is not because they stand on benefits that... (*Samia, HLM agent, Smalltown, December the 9th, 2013*).

Criticism also targets the content of rules. Contradictions between concrete practices and legal priorities are denounced: "We are going to take the fixed-term contractor in order to reduce management risk, but the law tells us to take "people who come out from shelter!" explains Rose, the chief of the renting-service. She even comes to describe the instructions as discriminatory:

> "Because I still remain convinced, but that just my opinion, that it's not... Well, I'm convinced and I weight my words, I speak freely, I still find that it's really discriminatory because you can't categorize profiles like that! This is what I told you "you, you come, you're young, and you just leave your family. I don't know you're on public benefits, you've just finished your studies. I'll put you in "36N" [*Adress number*] with alcoholics! No…" (Rose, chief of the renting-service, Smalltown, December 9, 2013, Excerpt from my field book).

[21] This classification can be applied in other policy areas: for instance, Watkins-Hayes (2009) distinguished similarly three kind of social workers.

Despite the awareness of unequal treatment and discrimination, social housing professionals apply the rules edicted by their hierarchy: they don't "rebel" in Rose's word. "*You live there, you are classified; you have such a name, you are classified. That's a bit annoying but... We rely on the rule; we don't have that much choice"* said Emma. Similarly, Samia "*understands the rule*", she does not agree with it, she is not totally opposed but she must comply with this rule: "*The unfortunate part is that we generalize for everyone, but we have no choice*". Therefore, even if low-rent agents carry out their activities with discretion, they do not come to destabilize the institutional order since their room for manoeuver and their avoidance strategies are planned and organized by the institution. Managers support systematic face-to-face interviews in order to value the individual treatment of customers. In Mediumcity, agents participate in the selection commission and give their opinions on clients. In Smalltown, public instruments are actually defined as "guidelines": "*It is the responsibility of actors to deviate from the rule when they need to after studying situations and meeting people". "I make exceptions to the rule when it is accepted. If they told me "yes, you can do it", well I'm doing it*" explains Barthelemy (HLM agent, Smalltown, December 11, 2013). A good example is the case of people who stand from public benefits, and who are housed in attractive sectors:

> "They don't strictly apply rules. If you want, for the last allocation commission, or the next, we'll attend together, and you'll see that between instruction given and what they did, there's a gap – I'm going to have RSA in these sectors, and I don't step up to the plate because I tell you, they must have some autonomy, the rest is just a directive, an orientation. True, if there is someone who stands on benefits and isn't seen as problematic in the discovery interview they could have, I wouldn't be against… I'm going to oppose when I see "Well, it's ok, this is the tenth RSA you put in this area, and we aren't in the desired target" but if it's only one, I'm not…".[22]

Rules can be bypassed, but it remains marginal. Managers keep them in derogation state through a set of tools, especially the training and the influence of middle-ranking bureaucrats. Actually, on-the-job training can explain the significant place of pragmatic attitudes among street-level bureaucrats. It contributes to promoting transmission and routinization of practices. For instance, the limitation of Turkish applications in Mediumcity illustrates how, despite its abandonment by the local authorities, the fight against communitarianism continues to be applied as an inherited and valued practice by professionals. In addition, the chief of the renting-service holds a key position in the transmission chain of practical knowledge and skills in Smalltown. By signing out forms, she controls the activities of new recruits. Several months after entering the service, HLM agents have yet to obtain her approval to make an offer of accommodation. Comments on applications – "*not the profile*" or "*other building*" – signify that candidates must be reassigned in another housing unit because they will not be accepted by the allocation commission. Hence, the service manager constitutes an important filter in the selection process, which contributes to a standardization of practices and reinforces the institutional order:

[22] Alexandre, Director-General in charge of renting, Smalltown, November 29, 2013.

> "*But, if I understood, at the beginning, you put Black RSA in the Jules Guesde district...?* Yes, and then Rose told me "no Blacks", "another building" she said, "another entry". I went to see her and she told me "other building". […] But, now, I'm better able to target the right person on the right place, but that, it comes with experience" (Emma, HLM agent, Smalltown, December the 10, 2013).

Policy instruments also meet the need for new agents training. Thus, the Director-general in charge of renting describe them as "integration tools": they are supposed to encourage the internalization of local rules.

> This tool then, it was also, beyond the messages we wanted to convey to sales agents who are already familiar with the job, it was an integration tool for us, because before a new agent is actually operational and make the right match between clients and buildings, there's a lot of time. Since September, we have a tool which gives them a clear orientation. If you have such a profile, you suggest that (Alexandre, Director-General in charge of renting, Smalltown, November the 29, 2013).

The fact that rules and policy instruments are based on empirical knowledge can also explain why they are rarely bypassed.

8.4 Conclusion

Social housing allocation is a very slightly legally regulated process, which is implemented by public and private actors with various capacities to act. In spite of the recent reforms in the area of social housing, legal objectives remain vague and unclear. They draw a minimal framework for public action which is taken up and refined on the ground. Guided by the "right to housing" and the principle of social mix, this frame actually defines what is possible or not, and what is legal or not. Despite the significant number of rules and regulations governing their activity, the HLM agencies exercise significant discretionary powers when deciding who qualifies as future tenant. Supported by instruments, local rules are created in order to organize spatial distribution of social groups based on several criteria (social status, race, origin, age, family composition, address). This results in a hierarchy of both customers and buildings, which determines the type of accommodations bureaucrats can offer.

Then, my findings suggest that complex interactions constantly refine institutional categories: they are actualized in micro-level daily practices and imbued with new meanings. However, the distinction between institutional and practical categories has to be qualified since local rules and policy instruments are partly based on field experience. Comparative research is also crucial to highlight regularities in policy-making in various contexts. Even though institutional rules are produced by different types of actors who frame housing allocation differently, we show that populations considered as threatening by local authorities and social landlords are invariably the poor and the immigrants. They are the ones subjected to specific treatments. We brought out two different strategies – concentration and dispersion – depending on the local context. Even if they put forward different arguments, social landlords and local authorities share a common objective to fight against the concentration of ethnic minorities.

Finally, two main findings emerge. First, practices are shaped by organizational rules at the meso-level, and reinforced in their effects by training, routines and collective categorizations at the micro-level. Then, decentralization and individualization of public policies does not necessarily mean case-by-case treatment and local differentiation. The study reveals regular occurrences in the selection process.

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Chapter 9
How to Identify and Select Citizens Entitled to Social Housing in a Postcolonial Situation? Administrative Agents Dealing with Changing Bureaucratic Norms in a French Overseas Administrative Department

Mlaïli Condro, Violaine Girard, and Élise Palomares

Abstract When the Comoro Islands gained independence in the 1970s, only Mayotte, out of the islands of the archipelago, remained under French sovereignty. It became the 101st French departement in 2011. Along with these institutional changes, public housing policies have dramatically changed since 2005. The access to social housing is bureaucratized and policymakers intend to redefine the different types of public housing that are being built as well as the way to categorize their target publics. This paper does not mainly focus on the front office interactions between the decreasing number of potential beneficiaries of public housing policies and the street level bureaucrats. It rather aims at depicting trajectories of these intermediate actors. Along with their social, scholastic and professional backgrounds, it analyzes how street-level bureaucrats deal with their duties in everyday work. These agents hold an intermediary position which requires them to play a specific role in the way applicants' files are set up and how they are followed up. Even if they deplore the decreasing number of constructions which leads a diminishing number of beneficiaries, they also contribute to legitimate this change as they promote more comfortable types of housing that are being offered. Our hypothesis is that despite little room for manœuvre given by the administrative categories that prescribe eligibility conditions, these administrative agents take part in redefining and differentiating the different targets of social housing. In particular, they are able to gain extensive knowledge of local families, and thus give extra value to their counselling activities towards households.

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9.1 Introduction

After the political partitioning of the Comoros archipelago and the independence of its other islands in 1974, Mayotte remained French under a variety of statuses until 2011, when it became the 101st administrative department of France.[1] This chapter analyzes this maritime territory's situation to shed new light on the constitution of publics benefitting from social policies. It shows in particular that the identification of nationals, an essential prerogative in the historical creation of nation-States, is still integral to the selection of beneficiaries, especially in a space that is a frontline border of France and Europe in the Indian Ocean. Far from needing to be considered as a case apart, the many legal changes marking its post-colonial situation also prompt renewed consideration of the importance of intermediary agents' administrative work concerning the targeting of publics. Claims processing is indeed based on concrete operations for handling applications, over the course of which agents see administrative categories according to their own social norms.

Some significant administrative and legal changes were implemented even before Mayotte became a department, including the bureaucratization of the relationship between the State and the population, especially in the areas of civil status and land property rights. The ordinance of 8 March 2000 made provisions for the "total revision" of civil status (Richard 2011), aiming to implement the national identification of island residents (Mahorans) by replacing the established Islamic naming system with the "Given name Family name" system, itself the result of a long history in Euro-American societies (Fine and Ouellette 2005). Mahorans do have the option of keeping their civil status under local law so long as they never opted to switch their civil status to that of French civil law, which is an irreversible procedure. But since these changes gained speed in 2000, the new civil status, henceforth called "local law applicable to Mayotte" (and no longer "Islamic law"), is gradually moving closer to French civil law (Blanchy and Moatty 2012). In addition, property and land ownership regularization should put an end to customary property law.

These State actions support a rationale singularizing Mayotte in relation to the rest of the Comoros that comes on the heels of protracted demand for department-hood championed by the Mahoré People's Movement, studied by Mamaye Idriss (2013). The initiative to nationally identify Mahorans is concomitant with an intense politicization of immigration from the African continent and other Comoran islands

[1] The authors thank Lorenzo Barrault-Stella and Pierre-Edouard Weill for their attentive and thought-provoking reading of this chapter, and Juliette Rogers for translating it from French to English.

to Mayotte. Control of border circulation was tightened under pressure from local elected officials with the institution of the Balladur Visa, instituted in 1995 for all Comorans wishing to come to Mayotte, thus reshaping the historical, cultural, and familial connections that have long existed between the islands (Blanchy 1992, 2002; Hachimi Alaoui et al. 2013; Sakoyan 2012). In 2012, foreign nationals (in the legal sense of the term) represented 40% of the 212,600 people living in Mayotte, of which 95% were Comoran citizens and 39% born in a French territory (Balicchi et al. 2014); under certain conditions, the latter may have access to French citizenship. The Overseas General Delegation (DéGéOM) estimated that 50,000 foreign nationals (about one third of the population) had an irregular immigration status in 2011.

These major political and administrative changes were the background for the reform of social housing policy launched by State authorities in 2005. State intervention from the 1970s to the 2000s targeted one main priority: reducing the makeshift housing that predominated on the island. State subsidies allowed the construction of 17,000 "permanent cabins," commonly referred to as SIM cabins after the SIM (Mayotte Property Company), the island's only public housing operator. In 2005, orders from the Prefecture, the department-level branch of the French State in Mayotte, started specifying the social categories that could have access to the new housing under the policy to extend property acquisition to disadvantaged groups (Girard 2014).[2] Although Mahoran households long had access to SIM cabins without formal restrictions, the new eligibility criteria gave "priority [*to*] poorly housed families (makeshift, unfit, or overpopulated housing)."[3] This policy shift excluded foreign nationals, although many reputedly live in hillside settlements of tin shacks. Beneficiaries of public home ownership assistance must indeed "be French citizens or have a 10-year resident card," although there are virtually no cases of this card being granted in Mayotte (Math 2012).

Mayotte's situation reflects the complex postcolonial situation of all territories that remained under French oversight in a range of statuses after twentieth-century decolonization (Lemercier et al. 2014; Trépied and Guyon 2013), circumstances that shed new light on the study of State processes of defining and selecting target publics. The exclusion of foreign nationals and the conversion of civil status first of all necessitate the establishment of strict procedures for verifying the identity of applicants. These procedures continue through the accruing bureaucratization of State intervention, meaning the application of standardized and impersonal eligibility criteria. This results in a significant reduction in the number of beneficiaries and further complicates the work of social housing intermediary agents who, charged with documenting households' administrative, marital, and financial situations, come to develop novel ways of processing claims.

Considerable research has demonstrated the policy-making role of intermediary agents and street-level bureaucrats (Dubois 2010; Lipsky 1980; Siblot 2006). We

[2] This only concerns social home ownership assistance, due to the fact that there is very little public rental housing, although public authorities have been investing in it since the late 2000s.

[3] Order number 175/DE 2009.

also know that agents' social dispositions and positions in ethnic relations have a determinant role in the application or adjustment of regulatory provisions (Rudder et al. 2000; Spire 2005; Watkins-Hayes 2009). Focused on the work of intermediary agents, less studied than senior civil servants and those working the counter (Barrier et al. 2015; Frisque 2003), this chapter is intended to deepen understanding of the process of filtering the public for public housing assistance.

Following Glasman's work on the late colonial State in Togo (2012), this chapter studies the effects of State bureaucratization on the work of mid-level Mahoran agents who occupy a singular intermediary position in the socio-racial order shaped by the legacy of colonial history. Since the 1990s, the position of director of public housing has invariably been held by men from mainland France. This means that Mahorans work either as agents under the administrative authority of a "white" manager in the DEAL (Environment, Development, and Housing Division) or closely tied to its recommendations in the case of those working for the SIM. This chapter thus reconstructs these agents' biographical trajectories, dispositions, and practices as they deal with the vagaries of rationales for filtering and selecting target publics. While administrative relationships between the State and various populations are being redefined, these Mahoran agents are able to use vernacular language as well as concrete knowledge of the structure of families living on the island, unlike colleagues from the mainland. Although they mobilize State administrative categories in their work, they have also been personally affected by the civil status revision and/or family migrations.

The researchers developed and implemented a novel way to do collective research in a field site where only two members of the team lived full-time.[4] V. Girard conducted the interviews at the DEAL that are used in this chapter. She spoke with the director of public housing as well as three agents having worked in the service; the fact that she is a woman may have somewhat reduced the intimidating effect of being a white academic from mainland France. Interviews with managers and agents at the SIM were conducted in pairs (Maili Condro with Violaine Girard or Elisa Palomares). The first section of the chapter is devoted to variations in how DEAL agents handle application processing. Indeed, social housing reform demanded stricter controls of applicants' civil status and confirmation that they had never previously been allocated a SIM cabin. SIM agents are confronted with additional requirements. The SIM's commercial constraints oblige them to presort households not only according to eligibility criteria, but their financial capacities as well (second section). The conjunction of all these requirements leads to a differential treatment of claims on the basis of implicit criteria for assessing family configurations, in a context marked by a formal ban on polygamy and by the presence of mixed marriages, between Mahorans and foreign nationals or between foreign nationals (third section). We thus study how intermediary agents, at the interface of the State administration and housing applicants from the island or elsewhere, invest their attributions.

[4] Funded by the ANR (French National Research Agency) through the program INEMA (2012–2015), "The departmentalization of Mayotte: Construction and handling of social and linguistic inequalities," of which E. Palomares coordinated the third theme, entitled "Circulation, migration policy, and figures of the foreigner."

9.2 "We've Got to Know Who We're Giving this Money to": Identifying Housing Assistance Beneficiaries

Agents of the DEAL's FLS (Public Housing Financing) service are responsible for processing claims for housing assistance. Their work begins with the verification of applicants' identities based on the provided identity papers. An additional provision formalized by the Prefectural order for reform also began to complicate their work. State assistance took on an "exclusionary" character: people who had already received a SIM cabin were henceforth ineligible for further social housing ownership assistance.[5] This provision led Mahoran agents to develop a database of past SIM cabin recipients. This might seem to be nothing more than a simple tool for implementing public policy, but creating such a tool is anything but obvious in this context, especially since many Mahorans have changed how they declare their names since the civil status revision imposed new norms. As a result, the civil status changes of the past decade impacting applicants' declarations had to be taken into account in verifying the admissibility of claims according to this criterion of exclusion.

9.2.1 Making the Recipient File into a Real Database

Samirah Saidi was 47 years old in 2014, and has worked at the DEAL (previously called the DE [Equipment Division]) since 1990. She comes from a family of 11 children. Several of her sisters also work in public administration. During her interview, she herself stressed the diversity of her family background: her maternal grandmother was "Malagasy," her maternal grandfather "Breton," and her father "Anjouanais" (from the Comoran island of Anjouan). This allows her to stress "the open-mindedness [*that*] was there from the beginning" between her "Muslim father [*and*] Catholic mother." Ethnically speaking, although she does not use the term, she seems to see herself more as "creole" (in the sociological sense defined by J.-L. Bonniol, "anyone born in a place without being indigenous"[6]) than "indigenous" Mahoran, although she does speak shikomoro, one of the two main vernacular languages. She thus finds a parallel situation with that of another island department of France, Réunion, also located in the Western Indian Ocean: "There's a mix. Here we marry Europeans, French, so Mayotte becomes… it'll be a little like Réunion. I see it around me, there's going to be a heck of a… I hope minds will open."

[5] Unless they are able to obtain an exception from the Prefect on the grounds that their old SIM cabin has been assessed as dilapidated.

[6] Thus going beyond "racial" boundaries. He also notes that "in the identity dimension carried by creoleness, we thus primarily observe an attachment to the place, the affirmation of a principle of autochthony" (Bonniol 2013: 245).

She started working at the Equipment Division as a secretary after passing the *baccalauréat* exam (an exam capping completion of secondary studies) in literature in the Comoros, and after a few years she had advanced to bureau chief in charge of State and local government funds. She then hoped to pursue training to move into management, but she ran up against her hierarchical superiors, who refused to let her go to mainland France to finish the program. As a result, she remains stuck in an intermediary position (at civil service grade B[7]), which she connects to her ethnoracially in-between position: "Given my experience, Mahorans stay among Mahorans, and *mzungus* [*shikomoro term for whites*] hold hands! And I'm a mix of both! I'm not a grade A civil servant, I'm grade B". She nonetheless reached the position of assistant service chief, which she occupied for 8 years. From 2003 to 2011 she thus acted in a grade-A capacity under the authority of the FLS service chief. In this new position she was confided with the management of a file of all SIM cabin recipients. She identified several failings in the file and took on the significant task of redoing it, despite her superiors' opposition. She says she began this update of her own free will, even before the "exclusionary character" of State assistance appeared during the reform process.

> I found myself in an office where there was a heap of files… They'd explained to me that I had to take care of those files, claims for housing assistance – it was SIM cabins. There was a database with all the claims; I realized that it was totally obsolete. When you were typing on something, you'd realize that you didn't have all the functionalities you needed. Things like Mr. /Mrs., spouse/no spouse! When I saw files from 1995 to 2002, 2003, *I realized that there was something wrong: the files were incomplete.* [Italics our own, for emphasis, here and in the quotes that follow].

Committed to a path of professional advancement, she wanted to demonstrate her professionalism and mastery of administrative requirements, their technical aspects included. She says that the information available to them has many gaps, which prevents the identification of beneficiaries:

> We had the birth dates for some [*files*], but not for a lot of others. You've got Fatima Abdallah, there's a ton of Fatima Abdallahs! So if you don't have the birth date, confusion! […] You've got people in this database who we don't even know when they were born, who they are!

This is a problem for her because it creates unsatisfactory conditions for the allocation of public assistance: "If we make criteria and we aren't able to [*respect them*], there's no point. So give it to everyone, me included!"

She finds this intolerable from personal experience, because her mother had been allocated a SIM cabin of minimal comfort.

> My mother benefitted from a SIM cabin, with no door, no window, no toilet! I never understood. And that was ridiculous**.** *I was angry at the State. And why does the other one get a house?* A good SIM cabin? Since I found myself once again in [*public housing issues*], I put myself in the place of others. I said, if it was me in their place, I'd, like, denounce! I lived it!

[7] French civil service grades are as follows: Grade A consists of "senior officials that are responsible for executive management and administrative decision making"; grade B officials are "responsible for basic implementation of policy"; grade C employees "provide basic clerical work, secretarial support and carry out routine administration" (Elgie and Griggs 2000: 50).

Samirah thus seizes upon this task of managing the beneficiary file to prevent new injustices. She decries certain clientelist practices by briefly mentioning the figure of mayors:

> Whether you're a mayor or not, I don't see why you've got this and I don't – what's the difference between you and me? If there's a State subsidy, it's for social cases, without making distinctions. So why does this person, who already has a house, get given another one?

She thus subscribes to the administrative norms the State introduced through the reform, since she has picked up the discourse of the necessity of restricting public assistance exclusively to helping "social cases."

9.2.2 "My Word Against that of an A-Manager": A Mahoran Intermediary Runs Up Against Hierarchical Relations

Her attitude puts her into conflict with her superior, however:

> I started my verifications. And my boss came to see me, saying, "But what are you doing?" […] So I explained the situation to him. He says, "But that's not what we asked you to do. You're an assistant." Yes, I'm an assistant, but there's a problem here! I realize as I get into it that there are a lot of blanks [of missing information], people who have received four houses! This gentleman got two houses, married madam, who received three houses…

We are not in a position to say if such situations were actually numerous, since official documents only tersely evoke "significant corruption in the use of cabins, observed in the field."[8] Regardless, Samirah latched on to the SIM cabin recipient list as a tool allowing her to declare some refusals: "For me, it was based on this principle [*of exclusionary assistance*]. No more, no less. So since I have the information, I say no. I looked, this person does not have the right, so…" His reaction suggests that the FLS service chief does not want her to be able to exercise such responsibility. This is largely due to the complex relationship between civil servants from the mainland and local mayors. On Mayotte mayors play a major role in getting access to public assistance, since it is up to them to identify potential beneficiaries in their city or town. The DEAL database thus becomes an instrument that "displaces a configuration of public intervention" (Baudot 2015: 30), by limiting elected officials' ability to act and further enhancing Samirah's authority, since she controls the available information on applicants.

> There was a space where "observations" was written [where] I put everything on the person, I had no choice. I said, this person was born on this date, at this place, they got married to so-and-so, have so many children, live at this place. Well my whole team that saw that said every time, "you're getting carried away, you're reacting like the [information service]!" Do your work, I'll do mine. If my superiors ask me questions tomorrow, I'm the one taking responsibility.

[8] DE Note, "Reform of social housing policy in Mayotte," 2007.

In so doing, Samirah opposed her colleagues from the mainland, who were only assigned to Mayotte for a maximum of 2 or 4 years according to the rules for overseas civil servant posts. Samira refused to give up maintenance of the database: "I wrote a letter with everything that was wrong. It took three pages. My letter was clear. It was a real clash." The conflict was only settled with the arrival of a new service chief in 2011, shortly before Samirah changed services. Speaking today of her superiors from the mainland, she confirms with hindsight that "with time, they ended up understanding," since the beneficiary file has become a formal database that it still used to this day. Despite the satisfaction of having seen her self-imposed task through to the end, she still has one regret: not being able to pass her assistant position on to another Mahoran woman. In fact, when she left the FLS her job was split in two: the assistant position was given to someone from the mainland and the work of maintaining the database, thought to require lower qualifications, was filled by a Mahoran woman, Anissat Ibrahim. Could this be an avoidance of the "Mahorisation" of management positions, which is indeed an issue on the island? Regardless, Anissat sees reaching a grade-B position as a professional accomplishment.

9.2.3 "Purging the Base" by Verifying Civil Status

After failing out of her first year of studies in psychology in mainland France, Anissat came back to Mayotte in 1999. She was hired at the DE as a secretary with a non-permanent employment status. She advanced through jobs in two other services before arriving at her current position at the FLS, and in 2010 she was fully integrated into State civil service as an agent of grade B. She defines herself as Mahoran while at the same time describing her many connections with the Comoros:

> Actually I'm Mahoran, my father is Comoran. And my mother is from here but she never lived here. So I was born in the Comoros, I grew up there. I came here, I passed the bac[calaureat] here, and I left for the mainland. That's how I have French citizenship, through my mother.

She has experienced some civil-status problems herself. Her identity card has "Anissat Ibrahim" under the heading "family name" but indicates no given name, a transcription choice that bears traces of the "Comorian system that makes no distinction corresponding to the distinction in the French (and more broadly Euro-American) system between "family names" and "given names" (M'Trengoueni et al. 1999: 7). An administrative staff person at her university told her that "It's impossible for you to have no first name," so she began the process of administrative regularization that is common for Mahorans. Furthermore, her colleagues from the mainland mispronounce her given name, which contains a silent letter, but she rarely corrects them.

The civil status revision was considered complete in 2011, after 10 years of work by the CREC (Civil Status Revision Committee). It recommended that Mahorans

choose "the second term" of their former designation as their patronym, which amounts to their father's given name when their parents' marriage was registered (the "first term" being the personal given name chosen specifically for each child). But the administrative formula "Family name, Given name" raises the likelihood of the person's given name being reversed with his or her father's personal name, and indeed it is behind a good many errors (Blanchy and Moatty 2012). As a consequence, lingering uncertainty limits and complicates Anissat's work:

> [On the civil status records], people are born "around" [a date, as opposed to on a specific date], there are records that are scribbled in. If you don't have a revised document now, they ask you where you're from, why you don't have a revised document. […] There are fifty Fatima Abdous, so we verify that it's not the same birth date. So you really have to be vigilant. You even have to go looking on the dad's side to verify. Is it the same father who's written on the birth certificate? We go so far as to go down to the children to verify that given names are right, are they really related to the same mom, to know exactly who it is. We are forced to take detours with this civil status business. I think that we'll have purged the base a few years from now.

Even when applicants present a revised civil status document, Anissat sometimes has to compare it with other elements (ascendants' identities, children's birth certificates) to establish their identity with certitude. She also often has to refer back to the "former term" (the form their name took before the reform), which is mentioned on the revised documents, and stress the importance of entering this information into the database.

The first consequence of social housing reform is found in the administrative formalization of the process for identifying applicants. Occurring even before the selection of the target public, the compilation and regular updating of the State assistance recipient database runs up against limitations arising from the revision of Mahoran civil status. These tasks have fallen to Mahoran civil servants: they have a fine knowledge of naming systems that mainlanders lack. They invest themselves in this work according to their dispositions, related both to their position in the socio-racial order and their professional career in the administration. For Samirah, State services should have accurate information in order to work toward social justice and avoid clientelism. For Anissat, it is more a matter of avoiding confusions that could be harmful to applicants. And although their benefits allocations are closely supervised by their mainland-French superiors, both feel they are invested with an essential role: they are the service's sole guarantors of confirmed civil status, a central operation in the bureaucratizing logic of social housing policy.

9.3 "We Can Have a List of 50 Applicants and in the End Only Take Five! "

Social housing reform coincided with the arrival of a new director at the SIM in 2005, who also happened to be the first Mahoran to head the company. As a public operator, the SIM is the portal making it possible to file claims for public home

ownership assistance, and the unit called *makazi* ("house" in shikomoro) is charged with assisting applicants in the preparation of their applications prior to their treatment by the DEAL. Agents of this unit thus play a vital role as intermediaries between families and State services prior to the DEAL's final ruling on requests in assistance-allocation commissions. More specifically, these agents are well placed to evaluate the formal acceptability of applications in terms of the three State-imposed criteria, in addition to nationality and the exclusivity of State assistance[9]: applicants must be between 18 and 64 years old,[10] be able to "prove residency in Mayotte of at least one year," and possess household resources inferior to a ceiling set by order of the Prefecture. In order to avoid spending time preparing ultimately ineligible applications, *makazi* unit agents conduct a first sort of applicants based on administrative criteria. Since recipients of social property accession subsidies must pay a "contribution" toward their new housing, SIM agents also have to address socio-economic criteria, because they are responsible for working out the financing plan that applicant households will present to the DEAL.

9.3.1 On SIM's Side: "Maximally Purging" Claims to Meet Bureaucratic Criteria

In the progression of claims, it falls to municipalities to identify potential beneficiaries of social housing, although not all towns have social services. Agents of the *makazi* unit use these lists to identify claimants and help them with their applications, which they pass along to the DEAL. These applications are then examined for eligibility by a pre-selection commission composed of civil servants from the FLS and *makazi* unit agents. An eligibility commission composed of the same people plus the mayors of the relevant municipalities then rules on the claims. Throughout this process, the introduction of bureaucratic norms extensively informs agents' work.

Saïd Ibrahim, a Mahoran who has worked for the SIM for about 30 years, heads the *makazi* unit. He was a "sales manager" for a long time, but explains that the unit's activities now follow another logic: "We do a lot more social help – because we have populations that often don't know how to read or write, or even have some problems getting ahold of documents – in assembling administrative applications". To guide this transition from a commercial to a "social" logic, a new employee was hired in the early 2010s. Sarah Zaïnou has a university education: she studied sociology for a *licence* (undergraduate degree) at the University of Tours, then got a Master 2 in urban planning. Upon her return to the island, she worked for about 4 years in an urban and social project management group (called MOUS), where she managed a team that acted on the DEAL's behalf. One of the (mainlander) upper

[9] Order number 175/DE 2009.

[10] Exceptions can be made after a social service investigation, but they are few.

managers at the SIM is pleased she is there: "She's someone on-the-ground who's worked in all kinds of social service investigations. And we're the ones that got her!" And yet, although Sarah was clearly hired for her social work skills, there is a perceptible fluctuation in her speech, in which she referred to housing assistance applicants as "clients" instead of "recipients" upon multiple occasions.

From the beginning of their respective interviews, both Saïd and Sarah shared the difficulties they face as a result of the new conditions for social housing acquisition. According to Saïd, "We are mainly in a logic of looking for potential applicants because departmentalization is here. There are many limitations. There are also some very restrictive criteria". Without dwelling on it, we should point out that one significant stumbling block relates to difficulties arising from property reform, which is still underway. But the State now requires that households prove their right to use the land where the house would be placed before the keys to their social housing can be handed over. For this reason, SIM agents have come to anticipate the DEAL's requests concerning civil status and property titles.

> Saïd: For example, in the same village you find Fatima and Fatimatou. [At the DEAL] they say, "Isn't this the same person?" So us, we'll move the obstacle a little by presenting the identity card. […] We mostly verify things, because we go into the field to see the families, the municipality doesn't do that, but we do the deep work, we manage to detect certain problems, we inform the DEAL, which also verifies after, the DEAL doesn't go into the field but they have a computer program… of "suspicion", in a way (laughs)!

In Saïd's speech, the DEAL's database becomes "a computer program of suspicion," an expression that highlights the extent of the changes he has experienced. So their preliminary checks are intended to avoid submitting too many applications that risk being rejected by the eligibility commission, but also to avoid having to announce such refusal to families that had committed to lengthy administrative procedures. As Sarah put it, "*It's up to the DEAL to verify that, but to cover ourselves, and to be confident of the applications that we send so they go through as favorable, we're obliged to verify.*" The *makazi* unit makes a preliminary selection of people who will ultimately be assisted with their applications. This aspect of preparing applications is left informal in the DEAL and SIM's agreement setting the parameters of the SIM's intervention, which is why our informants were uncomfortable talking about it. The mere existence of the commission thus produces specific consequences in the form of a preliminary selection of publics, since SIM agents try to anticipate the decisions that will be made for the applications they present (Barrault-Stella 2011).

The introduction of strict eligibility criteria systematizes the differentiated identification and treatment of "clients" according to nationality and the regularity of their migration status, and people not meeting the one-year residency in Mayotte requirement are also eliminated. Soifiati Madi started working at the SIM in 1996, with a *baccalauréat*-level education. In 2006 she joined the makazi unit, where she works under Saïd and Sarah.

> Out of ten clients, there might be three or four who obtain the [property] title, and if we get that far… there are also papers to provide, the conditions, it's kind of difficult. To be eligible, on the papers, it's kind of difficult because we're, like, mixed, and you've got to have… to be a French man, a French woman, or indeed a stay of ten years, and its really kind of difficult.

Since social housing attribution depends heavily on the initial designation made by mayors, SIM agents are also caught up in the tensions that may arise between people living in the same village. Sarah thus explains that "people talk," meaning sometimes denouncing certain applicants that already own land or housing:

> Before I got here, there was a commission, maybe something got bungled, the DEAL called us: "So-and-so already has housing." My colleague went to verify, and luckily it was people who were talking, basically, that's it. Yes, so-and-so already has housing – well no, actually, it's not his housing, that person lives at his mother's place. So there, that was verified.

Our interviewees think that there are few cases like this. At the same time, they demonstrate that there are some tensions related to the clientelist relations that may form between elected officials and certain residents: SIM agents sometimes have to explain to both mayors and applicants why, due to State criteria, the makazi unit will not help some of them.

9.3.2 Verifying Applicants "Solvency"

The *makazi* unit also provides assistance concerning households' financing options. The introduction of an income criterion plays a very minor role in limiting the number of beneficiaries as such, since the ceiling is not very restrictive: according to estimates from the French national statistics institute INSEE, 60% of Mahoran households are eligible for LATS (Housing in Very Social Acquisition). But the financial criterion does enter into the filtering of target publics by selecting for the most stable households: since the reform, the rising cost of construction is compounded by the drop in State subsidies, which now cover 75% of the construction costs for a LATS house, the remaining 25% representing the beneficiary's contribution. These beneficiary contributions are higher than they used to be, even if the allowances disbursed by the CAF (*Caisse des Allocations Familiales* – Family Allowances Fund) also covers part of their monthly payments.

Sarah is in charge of editing a summary on the financing for each claim presented in commission. This brings household composition into play, since the allowance amount varies according to the number of children.

> So we get information: applicant, their income [based on tax documents], if they have a salaried job, if they're married, the spouse, the piece of land where they are. We get information on the family through birth certificates. We get information on the children, and then we send a copy to the CAF, and in their files they tell us if the child is on record at the CAF, and so we confirm the child. If he isn't at the CAF, well, we don't check it off. So next, request for housing assistance. And we see the subsidy that's attributed to the family, which comes up automatically, same. And then at the end we've got a summary sheet of all the information. So we've got a report here, with the amount of the project's investment and the [beneficiary's] contribution, just like I was telling you: "total residual share."

The new system henceforth obliges some beneficiaries – those with regular and formal incomes – to take out a bank loan. People who do not have a regular or declared income have more difficulties, although they are very likely to be in the intended "poorly housed" public.

Applicant households with access to the banking system must not have any other debt, so SIM agents have to verify that the people nominated by municipalities are not already committed to a bank loan:

> Sarah: We have someone here who goes into the field to see if these people are solvent, well (laughs), I mean if we can keep them as applicants, like, clients. And so with this list from [village name], [the SIM agent] tells us "that one, he's got an active loan through 2015, this one has a document to be updated." We already know that if there are loans, they're not applications we can keep!

For the relatively numerous families with only informal incomes,[11] the *makazi* unit suggests an arrangement that relies on informal family savings to skirt the banking obstacle, as was done to obtain to SIM cabins before the reform. Sarah gives the example of a family with no income and four children registered in the CAF files. She describes how she takes the beneficiary contribution as the point of reference. From that she subtracts the total amount of the housing allowance that will be received for X years to obtain "the total residual share," meaning the sum the household should have paid off at the end of X years. For this example, the total cost of a house under LATS is 100,000 euros, and the residual share falling to its recipients is 5295 euros. The family agrees to pay the entire residual share before moving in: although this sum is quite high given the household's resources, paying it all at once is the only option available to people who are not able to borrow. The *makazi* unit thus plays a central accommodating role for families that banks do not see as solvent.

Sarah: To help, financially, I can't do anything to help, but even in giving advice, I'm still in social work. So, we receive the family, we listen, we explain the situation, we have an estimate, a financial report, so we explain to the family, "Here it is, your housing will be this one, Vanilla or Cinnamon," (because we've got [*model*] names here) and after, "It's going to cost so much, and your contribution, it's so much." After that we explain to the family, "Well, what're you going to do?" The family in need, obviously it's going to tell us "I'll do what's necessary to bring you the sum."

Some families prefer to take recourse to informal loans than to have to make monthly payments for 15 years:

> "There's a period for informing the family: "So here's the deal, you have 406 euros to pay every month for 15 years." There are families that say "I can pay ahead, I can give 10,000" (laughs), there are some like that. They can in this case, we give them a receipt. But we leave four, five months anyway, we inform them: "Four months from now, you've got to bring in the 5,000 euros, the work hasn't begun yet."

[11] Mayotte has a particularly low employment rate: only a third of the working-age population is employed, another third is unemployed or on the edge (i.e. people classified as inactive by International Labor Office criteria, but who would like to be working), and a third is inactive (Fabre and Rivière 2015). While half of the employed work in the public sector, informal income predominates for those without access to formal employment: "In an economy where the employment market continues to lack dynamism (…), part of the population can (…) content itself with one or more poorly compensating activities that is not declared as a job" (Daudin 2010).

> "But some cases prove to be more complicated, as another of Sarah's examples illustrates: "I have one application, a lady who doesn't work any more and who owes 13,000 euros. The cabin is done, and she's penniless!"

Contrary to the initial objective focusing on the poorly housed, increases in the beneficiary contribution and the need to turn to bank loans leads SIM agents to exclude the poorest of eligible households when they do not have an income sufficient to repay the significant sum associated with the acquisition of social housing (Weill 2013).

Soifiati, who holds a subaltern position, subscribes less to the imperative for bureaucratic normalization than our other interviewees. Situating herself as Mahoran, she sums up the accumulation of constraints weighing on her work or intermediation with Mahoran applicants thusly:

> There are three sorting processes: we have our sort, starting with the files here; there's a sort at the CAF, and the last sort is in the commission with the DEAL. And when that day comes, since it's the DEAL that gives the subsidy, they try to tighten, tighten, tighten… They're looking for a few applications, at least (laughs). There are those three sorts that are too much trouble, for us at the SIM.

All these difficulties arising from the administrative contradictions of a postcolonial situation are manifest in the low number of applications ultimately presented in commission: one or two commission meetings were planned for 2014, in anticipation of forty or so applications.

9.4 "We Don't Even Know If the Gentleman will Stay": Selection by Reconfigured Conjugal and Procreative Norms

There is one remaining aspect of SIM and DEAL agents' filtering work, concerning the examination of family configurations. Two elements related to the Mahoran context can cause problems in this regard: polygamy, and a general instability in couples compounded by the relatively common occurrence of families where one parent (usually the mother) has an irregular immigration status.[12]

A ban on polygamy was a preliminary condition for becoming a department of France; it took effect for new marriages in 2005 following its ratification in 2003. But it is still a common practice, despite sanctions, chief among them "a way of calculating the RSA [*welfare benefits for people with no income*] that is unfavorable

[12] According to 2012 census data, one third of couples are composed of one person born in Mayotte or elsewhere in France and one person born in a foreign country; of these couples, most consist of a French citizen born in Mayotte and a person born elsewhere in the Comoros archipelago (Baktavatsalou and Clain 2016). Women start to cohabitate earlier here than in mainland France (7% of women 14–19 already live with a partner), but over the age of 30 they are less likely to be living with a partner (68% of women 30–34, as compared to 72% in the mainland). This difference becomes distinctly stronger after the age of 45.

to polygamous families" (Lemercier 2015: 149). Public authorities have ceased to recognize polygamous households since the ban took effect, and, as indicated earlier, non-French citizens are ineligible for social home-ownership assistance.

But in practice, people in this situation are found throughout the application process. Respect of the income ceiling is indeed evaluated based on sections of the subsidy application form addressing spouses and domestic partners and the presence of children in the household. Although forms are officially submitted in the name of an individual person, this information is on the form so that calculations can take account of all available household income and housing benefits, which varies with the number of children. Agents' judgments of family configurations are informed by certain marital and procreational norms that have been reconfigured by the postcolonial situation. Guided by respect for administrative norms, these agents thus implement an implicit conception of what a "good" family should be in contemporary Mayotte.

9.4.1 The Avoidance of Polygamy

Anissat explains that she encouraged modification of the form bearing the State letterhead[13] in order to stop recording applicants' polygamous status. Before the interview she had pulled out an old form in use 2007–2010 that she had kept in her files. This form, which she stressed was no longer in use, offers two categories: Married under local law (with lines for specifying names of first, second, and third wives), and "married under French civil law." In the interview, she showed us this form, not to express a Mahoran women's mobilization against polygamy, but in anticipation of an outside, "mainland" view of a situation likely to prompt mockery, so obvious does the incompatibility of belonging to the French nation and this family form seem to her:

> And then there's polygamy. [I have an] example I'm going to show you, something that would be unacceptable on the mainland. I'm sure this is going to make you laugh! (…) Well, now we get rid of all that, that's why I worked on that… to get rid of the first and second [wife categories].

Anissat is nonetheless aware that this deletion of administrative categories will not lead to polygamy's disappearance, merely its relative invisibility.

They will still exist in the wild, these thirds… they are still there. The problem, they request the family allowance for housing. Sometimes [we say to people] "You're asking for a house with Madam X, and you bring us the CAF attestation with Madam Y. Who's going to live in this house?" Because there's a risk of a catfight (laughing). People say, "That's how it is, that's here, it's quaint." That's how you've got to take it because otherwise, preparing applications, you go crazy. The

[13] Form entitled "Request for State subsidy for the construction of a house in social or very social acquisition."

deputy who was here [the mainland civil servant who replaced Samirah], she used to say, "But what's this? How? But that's impossible!" There you have it, it exists. Mainland colleagues that say, "That works well for you in Mayotte! It doesn't bother anyone!" (laughing). Except for the women themselves, who'd really like to have their husband for themselves.

When the researcher asked her if that might run the risk of "making problems out of situations," Anissat offered several examples of possible (or plausible) scenarios showing that she, like Samirah, indeed sees her role as controlling who obtains resources, although in her case it is less about Mahorans having already received assistance than it is concerned with verifying claims' conformity with the legal bureaucratic categories of action.

Polygamy's becoming invisible on forms can be read through the lens of a more general process of invisiblizing Muslim marriage, commonly called "cadial marriage" (meaning having gone before the qadi[14]). And yet this kind of marriage, not recorded in civil status, remains common or even in the majority. "Instead of being clearly recognized for what it is, Muslim marriage [becomes] invisible in the eyes of the law following a series of displacements" (Blanchy and Moatty 2012: 136), although this category of union is still formally present on DEAL forms.

Anissat moreover makes a direct connection between the formal removal of categories of wives in polygamous unions and the need to update forms to include certain other common situations that have become more legitimate, especially her own situation of cohabitation (legally referred to as concubinage in France). Anissat is not married to her partner. They have "only" two children, a choice connected to their wish to pursue their educations, and which seems to conform to the procreative norms established in Mayotte in the 1990s encouraging a limit of three children per woman (Lemercier and Muni Toke 2013).

> "I am going to try to redo [the form] for this kind of thing, so: civil marriage, marriage… I dunno … cadial marriage, PACS [French civil union], divorced, widowed, and we're going to add cohabitation, too. Take me, for example, I'm not married. I don't have a cadial marriage or, uh, a civil, or a PACS either, but cohabitating, which I'm going to add. So I told [my boss] we've got to…"

The issue of polygamous unions is thus subject to bureaucratic handling by avoidance, since the most recent forms hide their very existence.

[14] Prior to the recent transformation of this institution, the qadi was "a Muslim judge assuming civil, judicial, and religious functions. It is a justice of the peace and a notary resolving everyday problems: marriages, divorces, repudiations, successions, inheritance, etc." (Blanchy and Moatty 2012: 118).

9.4.2 *"I Prefer an Application from a Woman with Children": The Ambivalence of Goodwill Toward Female Applicants*

These women positioned as intermediaries between the State and families also implicitly admonish the instability of conjugal ties and the presence of children from various kinds of unions.

At the SIM, Sarah says she does not try to find out why some children mentioned in the application are not declared at the CAF. The case she offers as an example concerns a family with five children, only four of which have been "confirmed" by the CAF. Speaking of the fifth, born in 2011, Sarah explains that "we don't know why he isn't confirmed at the CAF. It's possible that the child isn't in Mayotte anymore, or for a bunch of reasons". She goes on to add that the current wife is not necessarily the mother of all the children, "but what we retain is that it's a family without income that should pay this amount here".

Because of the (often presumed) instability of family configurations, a differential logic is established in relation to applicant gender. Representations of what conjugal relationships should be thus have very direct repercussions on the handling of applications. At the DEAL, the chosen course amounts to giving preference to applications from women.

> We always look at who is making the claim, if it's a woman with children… because generally, even Monsieur Martin Leclerc [the service's chief engineer] says so, I prefer an application from a woman with children because you're sure. You're sure that the man can't bring in another [woman] the next day, throw out the mom and kids. It's true that when an application arrives from a man making the claim, we think hard about it, we look, we dig.

This preference for female applicants also stems from a continuing customary practice in Mayotte that contradicts French law: upon marriage girls are given a house in their mother's village, "matrilocality ensuring stability and protection for women in face of polygamy and successive marriages" (Blanchy and Moatty 2012: 135). Our female interviewees see this as a counterbalance to women's vulnerability to male practices, especially since polygamy continues to exist. By preferentially attributing social housing to women, State services also condone matrilocality.

But this "preference" also contains more ambivalent consequences for women.[15] Sarah signals the risk that they may end up struggling to make monthly repayments over the long term if their spouse or partner leaves:

> [We ask female applicants]: "Are you ready to pay 5,200 euros with no income?" In concubinage you don't even know if the gentleman will stay there! (laughing) He will stay a while, or he'll take off overnight, but from the moment we have the document in the file, we explain: The gentleman lives with a woman, even if he isn't married.

[15] Clémence Léobal (2016) has found similar processes in Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni in French Guiana, another overseas department: when women from the Bushinenge minority request public housing, they try to conform to a number of administrative requirements, often leading them to strategies not declaring polygamy.

She assumes a moralizing attitude toward women, enjoining them to commit to a stable conjugal model to make their union last as long as possible. For Anissat, however, the problem is that some Mahoran women do not mention the presence of partners:

> Sometimes they tell us "I'm all alone with two children." So exactly, this system where there are no documents, there's nothing to prove you're married. Sometimes there are five kids [listed in the application] and its been ten years… the same father. We say, "Ma'am, it's the same father, same family name, do you live alone?" There's no trace of the husband when we ask for the tax documents. "Yes, but I don't live with him". But still… Does he come by once a year to make a child? (laughs). So there are little stories like that, we saw that at the CAF on the mainland, too – people cheat.

Anissat moreover takes the example of a married man who presented them with an attestation from the CAF showing that he has several children with his wife. But she goes on to add that if this man has other wives, they "might make claims" too. This ambivalence in the handling of the claims of mothers raising children alone can thus sometimes come from suspicions related to polygamy: making the status of second or third wife invisible acts as a sort of double penalty for women, since some of them are suspected of not really being single parents.

9.4.3 Suspicion of Male Applicants

Male applicants are subject to particular suspicions: either, as we just saw, the possibility is raised that they may have multiple wives, or they are suspected of having children with women who are irregular immigrants. And as Anissat explains, this is precisely where administrative checks come in:

> If we see that there's a doubt, something strange, we ask the CAF to really look into it to make it clear for us. When we have a doubt about a family, we set the file aside while waiting for the CAF report. After, we consider whether it's OK or not.

So at the DEAL, the work of verifying the status of spouses or partners and children is delegated to another administration that has a social service division. And yet, despite saying she relies on the CAF, Anissat nonetheless applies some moral judgments, especially concerning children:

> When there are children it's complicated. There are people who don't have [*immigration*] papers. Most of the time the gentleman will bring us [*his children*] with a mom who will not appear [*on the application*] because there aren't any papers. He tells us, "She's illegal." But he has children with her. So, we say okay. The possible trap is also that we'll say yes to the father because it's the father who's making the claim, and what if tomorrow he throws out the woman who's illegal, who can't go complain, and the children with her, and him, he goes and gets someone else, he sets the [*new one up in the house*]…
>
> Violaine Girard: What do you do about the children?
>
> Yes. After that it's the CAF that can keep following… once they see that there's another attestation, another lady who arrives. Because you've got to be sure to live in the house for ten years. Before I think there was a little slack in that, but now, when we hand over the

> keys, we emphasize it. We [tell recipients] "You have a commitment here", because people really are committed.

As with Samirah, Anissat demonstrates that she subscribes to administrative norms and applies their logic to her work as a civil servant: recipients of social home-ownership assistance should respect a clause stipulating that they commit to live in their house for 10 years. The fragility of conjugal unions can make it hard to respect this clause.

In this rationale of control, the figure of the "Anjouan woman" (Hachimi Alaoui et al. 2013) is particularly prominent: she figures as a victim, or at best is described as vulnerable due to her status under immigration and family law.

> The CAF knows the families. They do an enquiry to see if the mom is really deported, is she still on the island, or does she live elsewhere and the dad, he's the one with the means… Because when it comes to family allowances, people who don't have immigration cards don't get them, and people with a one-year immigration card, they don't get them. So automatically it's the dads who are going to declare the children so they can have the allowances. It's not the mom, she hasn't got an account, an existence. But sometimes I wonder, does the dad really use this money for the children?

But the figure of the "Anjouan woman" is also subject to implicit reproaches: Anissat says that "It's true that it's easier for men" due to the presence of many immigrant women with an irregular status on the island. So although the matrilocal transmission of housing protects women, it only applies to Mahoran women:

> Because with polygamy, if the woman lives at the man's house, she gets kicked out with the children, then it's a protection. They were right to do that. It's the mother that has the house, it's not the husband that'll bring her in, it's the husband who comes. If he wants to go wandering, at least the wife is secure. That's why… It was to protect the girls and children, so I think it was well thought out. Because I was thinking that with younger people, polygamy was going to stop! (laughs).

Humor naturalizes the view of men as "skirt-chasers" – and as such unreliable or even unadvisable beneficiaries. As Anissat puts it: "They don't stop chasing! They chase, chase! They don't get tired." Likewise for their partners, "Anjouan women", figures of alterity designated as a supply of weakened wives, easy women, and prostitutes. The assessment of applications thus seems to vary according to assessment of the applicants in terms of disparate criteria that may include family situation, gender, national origin, and immigration status.

9.5 Conclusion

Officially directed toward the "poorly housed," social housing reform in Mayotte was accompanied by the introduction of bureaucratic criteria for selecting the target public, which profoundly altered the work of Mahoran intermediary agents of the State. These intermediaries apply these new norms while changing the system (Frisque 2003) according to dispositions related to both personal experience with

the socio-racial order and subscription to the professional norms in practice in the State administration. Working under the authority of white superiors, Mahoran DEAL agents nonetheless have a central position in the new system, since two essential operations have fallen to them: identification of applicants and the verification of the admissibility of their applications, two operations that are far from being routine in Mayotte. For their part, intermediary agents at the SIM relay this imperative of bureaucratic normalization while making accommodations for the families. Thus, in practice, a non-negligible share of verification and filtering work depends on intermediary agents' social dispositions and moral categories of judgment.

Consequently, the publics that might claim socially assisted home ownership in Mayotte now go through major selection operations throughout the application process. The combination of legal criteria (nationality or the length and regularity of stay in Mayotte) and how actors (agents and elected officials) interpret them result in a majority of foreigners being denied access to this resource, although they are very heavily present among the poorly housed. From the perspective of social selection criteria, the introduction of a maximum limit for resources does nothing to stop a selection tied to the level and regularity of income, even going so far as to encourage it. Only a few households with informal revenue manage to join the ranks of beneficiaries, thanks to informal financial accommodations worked out by the SIM.

Lastly, the administrative treatment that the French State reserves for polygamy and mixed unions (between Mahorans and residents with irregular migration status) demonstrates an avoidance of them as issues. It thus falls to intermediary Mahoran agents to deal with the resulting situations. Faced with conjugal unions of a variety of statuses involving different nationalities, origins and migratory statuses, DEAL agents develop logics for selecting publics that depend on assessments of family configurations based on a mix of procreative norms and criteria of autochthony.

These intermediate agents' actions, especially those of SIM employees, directly contribute to rearticulating two modalities of State population control: face-to-face and control-at-a-distance (Noiriel 2006), with the identification of citizen-nationals and legitimate rights-holders at stake. Indeed, in a situation where, as a SIM employee said, "we are mixed," Mahorans find themselves suspected of wanting to "have French citizenship" in an instrumental logic, instead of "being French," (Hachimi Alaoui 2016) while Comorans are thought to unjustifiably benefit from protections reserved for French citizens. Like the logics for attributing the RSA in Mayotte (Lemercier 2015), the rationales for verifying identities and selecting publics is in continuity with colonial administrators' efforts to fight against "the usurpation of the quality of French citizen" that Saada found behind what had been presumed to be dramatic changes in the legal statuses of French overseas territories (2007a, b).

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Chapter 10
Perspectives on Target Publics and Welfare State Transformations. A Few Proposals from Political Sociology

Lorenzo Barrault-Stella and Pierre-Edouard Weill

Abstract This chapter aims at furthering the debates raised by the previous contributions. Three main proposals for studying welfare policies' target publics are introduced. Firstly, this chapter calls for breaking from a study of the welfare State carried out only by social policy specialists. It sheds light on the heuristic gain to be made from the import of political sociology's traditional questioning in this field of research. Secondly, it underlines the need to consider in which way social policies participate to the contemporary reconfiguration of governmentality. Thirdly, it opens new perspectives of research on policy-feedback, by thinking together the social and political effects of welfare State transformations.

Keywords Targeting · Welfare State · Governmentality · Political sociology · Policy-feedback

10.1 Introduction

It is indisputable that some of the results presented here are well known, as attested by their proximity with many studies discussed earlier. It is perhaps arrogant to claim to originality when one takes stock of the volume of international literature on the changes occurring in social policies over the last 30 years (which are not unrelated to some concerns of the political and administrative elites). When an academic field is nearly saturated, innovation becomes all the more unlikely in the short term, especially coming from young researchers who have produced "specific" empirical surveys. This book also has many shortcomings, such as its rather Western-centric character. There would probably be many profits in the study of the forms taken by

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targeting in social policies elsewhere in the world – Asia, South America, Africa, and so on. Although the approach may seem daring, even incongruous, and only if methods are controlled, comparing democratic situations with more authoritarian contexts (Hibou 2017), would certainly allow a better identification of important issues concerning the social State, such as the safeguarding of public order and security or way support for the political system is produced. There is no shortage in future lines for research, especially for researchers who are keen to revive somewhat routinized questionings. We have emphasized the richness of the surveys presented here. We would like to take our reflection a step further and take the risk of sketching more general paths for thought. Many of these remain hypothetical and would undoubtedly require further empirical research to be corroborated, or perhaps invalidated or reformulated.

10.2 Breaking Down Barriers in the Study of Social Policies

The contributions collected in this book attest that breaking from a study of the welfare State carried out only by social policy specialists enriches its analysis. The challenge here thus lies in the breaking down of barriers in order to renew the angles and issues examined.

For instance, this can be done by taking the "publics" (targeted or not) into account, as well as their specific social relations, therefore drawing on works contending to diverse forms of inequality structuring societies. It can also be done by examining the welfare State's specific measures (family benefits, social housing, etc.) together with those linked to the State's sovereign powers (e.g. fraud repression, taxation, etc.). A good illustration is provided by Vincent Dubois, Morgane Paris and Pierre Edouard Weill's chapter in this book. Despite the risk of exposing oneself to criticism by the finest specialists of social policies, it is heuristically useful to import new questions and research paths into this academic field. Indeed, there is no reason for the welfare specificities to ask for theoretical frameworks, questions and hypotheses, distinct from the rest of the social sciences or, at the very least, general theory pertaining to the State. It is possible that the sociological approaches developed about the construction of what was termed the "liberal" State in Western Europe in the nineteenth century can be used to analyze the welfare State and its current mutations. Given "intellectuals" historical contribution to the legitimization of political regimes (such as Durkheim's links with the French Third Republic and participation to sociology's emergence), a further line of research about the welfare State could concentrate on their role. It can be that research carried out over the past few decades about welfare State reforms – including this very book – partakes in the political struggles around the transformations affecting the forms taken by the State and by its exercise of political and bureaucratic power.

10.3 International Regularities in the Contemporary Reconfiguration of Governmentality

In addition to a broader way of constructing objects for research, we synthesize here a few cross-sectional results from the collected case studies. They mainly pertain to the contemporary transformations of modes of government. Social policy measures, as we know, are at the heart of modern forms of governmentality (Foucault 2004). After the Second World War, the Welfare State was a credible alternative to the Marxist or Communist modes of political organization. Calling upon the interests of the middle classes in order to legitimize the political order is symptomatic of this, as the cross-reading of Andrea Rapini as well as Marlon Barbehön and Michael Haus' contributions suggests. One of the questions still partially unsolved remains that of class morals engaged in the definition social policies' target or "priority" publics. Also under-investigated is the circulation of representations entertained about the "the ordinary people" by the elites (which tend to be especially miserabilist), and which show through their reforms. In direct relation, the instruments used to supervise and control social groups that benefit from welfare also appear to have undergone important transformations in the last decades. These mutations seem relatively convergent in most Western democracies. A trend showing an increasing porosity, or – depending on the context – even a structural relationship, between the "left" and "right hands" of the State (Bourdieu 1999) also emerges from the development of control tools (such as data mining) and the repression of fraud in social policies.

Multi-level research makes it possible to think together the creation of categories of public action that are at the heart of targeting processes (their definition in the political field for example) with their concrete adjustments through their daily use by street level bureaucrats or welfare recipients themselves. Such an approach points out that when defining legitimate recipients for public goods, a central issue for top-level governing actors lies in the domestication of administrations and local authorities. In order to do so, leeway and adaptation to new reforms are reduced through the prescription of specific mechanisms and binding categories, which reduce the street-level agents' autonomy and discretionary powers. However, faced with these attempts, the local actors "on the front line" are never totally devoid of resistance capabilities. Even when central political powers seek to reduce their margins for maneuver, as is the case in the distribution of social housing in Mayotte, street-level bureaucrats sometimes seek to "poach" (De Certeau 1984) and, by so doing, contribute to the effective definition of the "good" publics. Multilevel analysis enables the study of interdependence chains relating political and administrative circles that are sometimes spatially and socially very distant. For example, national or European political elites are far from the daily realities of the most precarious 'users' of social services. Besides, resituating the latter's interaction with street level bureaucrats in a larger political context reminds us how much, to paraphrase

Bourdieu, the truth of what plays out in the interaction "never entirely lies within the interaction" (1976: 275).[1]

The congruence of discourses legitimizing the transformations of the Welfare, the similarity of the mutations of instruments, of modalities restricting local institutions' autonomy, or the trend showing the individualization of practices, these all interrogate the convergence of the social State's evolutions in different national contexts. This convergence is relative, because there exist specificities according to the situations and sectors of public action. Although the contributions do no deal with this enigma directly, drawing parallels between their conclusions invites us to confront it more explicitly. The similarities in the modalities of State targeting, are perhaps one of the byproducts of the evolutions of the dominant ideology (Bourdieu and Boltanski 1976) at the international level. One of the most plausible hypotheses would be the existence of a group of professionals or experts, specialized in the field of government reform, that circulate between different countries (Dezalay and Garth 2002; Combes and Vommaro 2017).

In addition, multilevel studies explicitly ask the question, both scientific and political, of the rulers' intentionality when carrying out reforms pertaining to the targeting in the social State. What do reformers, political elites and/or senior officials believe they are doing,[2] when they target priority groups of populations for social policies, or when they exclude them? In the United States (Gilens 2012), the evolutions of public discourse in political and media circles draw on the emblematic figures of the "deserving poor" and the "undeserving" ones (a typical case of blurred discourse likely to exacerbate social divides), A strategic link is observable between these evolutions and the highlighting of cases of abuse or fraud in the working classes, as well as with the political objective of reforming social protection systems in depth. Is this strategic link observable in different national contexts? One way of addressing the thorny issue of the 'effects' of Welfare transformation is to examine the intentionality of the actors producing the categories and trying to influence the social State's targeting practices.

10.4 Thinking Together Social and Political Effects of the Welfare State Transformations

Dissociating the epistemological analysis of "effects" from that of "causes" is a well-known error in the social sciences. The study of the mutations of the welfare State is no exception (Pierson 1993). Studying the complex effects of public policies also implies distancing oneself from the State's thought pattern (Bourdieu 2015) as well as from militant points of view, to which researchers sometimes adhere spontaneously. Now that we have laid down these precautions, how do we

[1] Here, the French sociologist points to the social structures (incorporated under the form of social dispositions but not exclusively) weighing on situations of interaction.

[2] The question is borrowed from Philippe Bezès in his analysis of the French State reforms (2009).

actually study these effects from the point of view of research practices? On this point, the chapters of this book suggest at least two elements. On one hand, studying the effects of changes in social policy targeting modalities requires a relational analysis of the rulers' intentions, the producers of public policies' multiple redefinitions and adjustments at different levels, and the system of relations (appropriations, use, reception, non-recourse, etc.) that the different governed groups entertain with the considered public measures. The sole analysis of the making of public action, as many political scientists do, is insufficient to grasp their effects, just as an exclusive focus on the affected social by some sociologists also appears reductive. Relationally, the effects of social policy transformations appear much more complex, largely unexpected and above all, never fully controlled by one group.

On the other hand, and as opposed to the sole research about inequalities (although this is legitimate) as is often done in more militant analysis, the surveys in this book show that it is necessary to distinguish several types of effects. The welfare State is now primarily oriented toward specific dominated populations, to the detriment of others. Regardless of the society and level that are examined, its mutations demonstrate that the political framing of the working classes in their diversity is being reconfigured. Implicitly, it also points to the same phenomenon regarding the middle classes. Thus, at least two types of social and political effects – which are never mechanically articulated – can be distinguished.

The first is probably one of the most expected social effects. Various experts – drawing on the "perverse effects" whose conservative implications Hirschman (1991) pointed out –, as well as the works collected here, have established that the generalization of targeting practices and the multiple forms of individualization in the State's distribution of public goods produce and maintain different forms of social, gendered and racial inequalities.[3] The increasing targeting of social policies leads to the sorting out between individuals and groups entitled to welfare benefits and others who are not. It tends to accentuate the atomization of individuals coming from different fractions of the working class – these being unequally racialized (Miles 1993) –, especially in their relations with the social State. A direct consequence is the stigma sometimes linked to the use of social benefits in the lower classes. For a long time now, North American literature has emphasized this phenomenon, especially concerning ethnic minorities in urban areas. The "disqualification" processes sudies (Paugam 1991; Duvoux 2009) point in the same direction. Social inequalities are further accentuated by different forms of non-take up (Warin 2016) or difficulties to assert social rights (Brodkin and Majmundar 2009). Robert Castel (2003) considers that the public and individual treatment of social difficulties generally induces a form of "negative individualism" in the concerned individuals. Indeed, several chapters show that changes in the social State tend to exacerbate the social struggles within the working classes and in relation to the middle classes. It is as if the individualization of poverty's public treatment accentuated the fragmentation within the most deprived social groups. The divide builds along the targeting of some priority groups ('deserving', 'workers', single-parent families, etc. – in

[3] On these issues of "intersectionality", see above all (Crenshaw 1989).

short, those in line with institutional expectations) to the detriment of others who are completely obscured by State agents or, worse, labeled 'at-risk' of fraud and, as such, targeted by various forms of control.

The production of inequalities through social policies' targeting practices is now seldom contested. In this context, Esping-Andersen (2015) even recently adjusted his analytical model, by focusing more centrally on the links that welfare State systems can entertain with social stratification,[4] although these obviously vary according to national contexts. Nevertheless, the increasing targeting of social policies, without entirely determining the whole range of social relations as some analysts may suggest, tends to maintain divisions among populations considered legitimate and those who, due to patterns of race, age, class, or gender, fail to successfully claim access. In this sense, Linda Haapajärvi's fine comparison of the integration policies of migrant women in Paris and Helsinki shows how inequalities are produced in Finland by the delineation of gender boundaries around motherhood. Generally speaking, the transition from universal categories conditioning access to social benefits to more individualized targeting contributes to disparities that doubtlessly were until then less generalized. This is the case for differences based on individuals and groups' unequal capacity to "assert their rights" (Siblot 2006; Weill 2017) and/or to negotiate with street-level bureaucrats in order to adjust the rules to their benefit (Barrault-Stella 2013). Indeed, inequalities seem mainly related to the social groups' unequal endowment with "procedural capital", i.e the social capacity to call upon diverse types of intermediaries (Spire and Weidenfeld 2011).

Besides, the development of targeting in the social State's policies can produce political effects[5] on the social groups that are selected as well as, relationally, among those that are excluded. In reality, these political effects are inseparable from the social effects mentioned above and these must thus be considered together. This issue is only marginally addressed in most contributions, or at least not explicitly in these terms. The comparison of the case studies presented in this book, however, allows us to reformulate the question and point out some paths renewing research on policy feedback. Indeed, the fact that Paul Pierson, a leading specialist in welfare reforms, helped to formalize research programs on policy feedback (Pierson 1993) is perhaps no coincidence. Pierson's initial idea is to articulate the analysis of policy process and policy feedback, in order to understand how public policies contribute to shaping the political system by inducing political effects on citizens (the mass public) and their electoral attitudes. Following this, Andrea Campbell (2003) argues, for example, that being protected by social policies (in this case, programs for retirees in the United States) contributes to politicizing beneficiaries and promotes political mobilization in favor of maintaining specific social entitlements. The social State would thus have a policy-driven effect on its beneficiaries. Soss and Schram's conclusions (2007) go beyond this: racializing and localizing social policies in the

[4] For a critical discussion of this type of enterprise of classification of social stratification (Hugrée et al. 2017).

[5] Analytical distinguishing between social and political effects must not bring us to obscure the fact that politics are intrinsically constituted by social relations (Lacroix 1985).

late 1990s in the United States was made possible by the general support of public opinion due to the congruent presentation of the reforms and the dominant representation of "deserving" poor people. Targeting is thus better accepted in the public opinion because it corresponds to the dominant political orientations, themselves linked to previous social policies.

A large part of the academic literature relating to policy feedback has precisely examined measures implemented by the social State. This literature mainly focuses on (de)legitimation effects – measured almost exclusively by opinion surveys – and the electoral consequences related to transformations of Welfare. For example, Rosanvallon (2000) suggests, without clear empirical material, that the political shift to the far-right in the United States in the 1980s could be linked to the increasing concentration of social benefits on the most disadvantaged populations. One of the few qualitative studies carried out on these questions also tends to confirm that welfare State offices can be places for learning about politics, sometimes supporting militant activism and likely to guide voting choices (Soss 1999). More recent work led in Scandinavian countries seems to go in the same direction (Kumlin and Stadelmann-Steffen 2014). However, policy feedback studies mainly rest upon quantitative approaches, exploiting international comparative datasets. Most of these works then draw on Esping-Andersen's well known typology in order to emphasize the match between types of welfare States and types of attitudes entertained towards these by citizens.[6] These research often come with difficulties already mentioned about comparing several countries and using these types of sources, which insufficiently contextualize and disembody attitudes".

Above all, the possible effects of the welfare State's new forms of targeting are not at the center of this research trend. Nevertheless, much is to be gained by questioning the extent to which policy evolution and increasing targeting of the most vulnerable groups within the working classes impacts the different social groups's forms of politicization and, through this, the political field. One of the few studies on the subject, again based on the mixing of international and comparative public opinion surveys, is Jason Jordan's (2013) concerning the countries of the European Union. He concludes that targeted redistributive policies weaken the population's trust and political support for the governement. The ongoing erosion of the universal welfare State, under the impulse of categorical measures and increasing targeting in their implementation, could thus imply a potential reconflictualization of class (or even racial) relations, which could have electoral consequences. The comparison of different case studies presented in this volume suggests that the welfare benefits targeting accentuates social and racial tensions between groups that were formerly all welfare recipients. Today, only part of them access benefits, and these often come with a stigma. The government of the poor in the United States (see Elisa Chelle's contribution), as well as women's integration policies in Finland (see Linda Haaparjärvi's contribution) or the allocation of social housing in Mayotte (see the contribution of M'Laili Condro, Violaine Girard and Élise Palomares) all testify to this.

[6] For a recent overview, see Gonthier (2017).

Public action maintains divides between different class fractions in the working classes, or even between working and middle classes. However, the link between these divides and political behaviors (voting, "support" to the rulers and reforms, etc.) seems more complex and in no way automatic. Whether we like it or not, political attitudes (electoral orientation, militant investments, mobilizations on specific issues, etc.) cannot be reduced to the governed people's experience of Welfare, although these may in some cases participate as suggested by some of the aforementioned studies. All other forms of socialization and mediations which make political action possible must be considered in the analysis (Gaxie 1978; Barrault-Stella and Pudal 2018). Despite the complexity of this issue, making progress in the understanding of the relationships between the way policies are conducted and their broader political and electoral consequences (eg. increased abstention and the rise of far-right parties) is a first-class research project on policy feedback. For example, we can assume that focusing targeting in social policies increasingly on the most disadvantaged populations generates disappointment for other fractions of the working classes. This phenomenon could favor the political enterprises building upon divisions within the least endowed social groups. The social sciences must therefore pursue their objectification of the reasons leading the different social groups, and more specifically the deprived populations, to engage (or not) administrative or judicial proceedings opening rights to welfare benefits. This understanding can be used to promote these social groups' interest in public institutions, and improve their representation in public debate.

It is also possible, and probably advisable, to include in the analysis of the political effects of welfare reforms – particularly the increase in targeting practices – the study of the different social groups' relationship to the State, especially in terms of consent to legal-rational domination (Weber 1947 [1919]). In recent decades, the restriction of the State's perimeter of action and social policies' trend focus on the most vulnerable populations could participate to the shrinking credit granted to the State (Bourdieu 2015) and the diminishing of expectations of various social groups, albeit those which historically contributed to its consolidation. Reformulating the questioning in this way would allow nothing less than to revisit, at new expenses, the political and bureaucratic system's stability. Nevertheless, it entails a definite break with David Easton's theory of 'diffuse supports' (Easton 1975),[7] upon which most of the works concerning policy feedback build. This would mean turning to an approach mindful of to the State's capacities to produce conformity and to channel dissatisfactions towards spaces already controlled (Dobry 2002).

[7] This approach's central assumption is that the political system's stability relies mainly on the majority's belief in the system's legitimacy.

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