

ed reader. As far as the philosophy of education is concerned, the book does not present a novel synthesis of ideas; it is rather a collection of various concepts that often fail to establish meaningful connections with each other and remain underdeveloped throughout the book. If the intended readership is practitioners in the field of sexuality education, much of the theorising and concepts ring hollow. Why do we need to delve into considerations of new materialism if the ultimate conclusion is that attention should be directed towards the material attributes of a classroom?

Additionally, the book's desired outcome is to open up 'more expansive understandings of sexuality and the related experience of gender' and to create spaces for 'expressions and manifestations currently designated "unnatural", "uncommon", or "stigmatized"' (p. 161). However, the author seems to overlook the fundamental fact that sexuality education does not take place in a socio-cultural vacuum, and that two critical factors come into play. First, the school as an autocratic institution with fixed hierarchies is a point acknowledged by Allen but not explored further in terms of how it may affect the realisation of her philosophical ideas. Second, the intensifying culture wars over the definition of sexuality education (whether the sexuality of children and young people is spoken about at all and whether it is a public matter) link the curriculum subject to broader sociocultural structures that significantly shape sexuality education. This point does not feature in the book at all. The author wraps her sexuality education in an approach that presumes if not the same view of sexuality, then a mutually shared respect for the right of children and adolescents for sexual and gender self-determination. Ignoring the ever-growing anti-gender movements that challenge the very inclusion of sexuality education in formal education and exert significant pressure on public in-

stitutions will not make this cultural conflict go away. It is precisely in a book of this kind, written with an activist tone of voice, that different socio-cultural perspectives on sexuality and sexuality education need to be reflected and a platform for communicating different perspectives needs to be opened. Otherwise, we will risk committing the very forms of egoism Allen condemns in her book – the colonisation of other people, other ideas, and other cultures.

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Elisabeth Anderson: *Agents of Reform. Child Labor and the Origins of the Welfare State*

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Although a rich body of scholarship has gradually unpacked how the umbrella concept of a 'welfare state' emerges from the multi-faceted challenges of modernization, the common denominator has remained a macro-structural approach predicated on testing the causal strength of individual variables. Picking up the gauntlet, Elisabeth Anderson 'refocuses attention on the modern *regulatory welfare state*' and argues that its emergence, as a key component of overarching social states (to use the terminology of Moses, J. 2018. *The First Modern Risk: Workplace Accidents and the Origins of European Social States*. Cambridge University Press), cannot be explained without accounting for the role of agency (pp. 1–3). By focusing specifically on child labor laws, understood as an early a component of the worker protection that underscores modern welfare states, Anderson's book dissects how 'middle class and elite reformers'

fundamentally warped the ‘proper relationships between state, market and workers’ (p. 3). While agency features prominently in other studies of welfare state emergence (Moses, 2018), Anderson uses seven in-depth studies across 19th century Europe and the United States to develop a ‘general theory of individual reformer influence’ (p. 13).

A first key component of the argument is that centralizing agency does not equate to a sequential account of ‘historical great men’ (p. 7). Rather, Anderson carefully delineates that macro-level economic and political transformations opened up space for individual reformers to devise institutions for social issues they viewed as requiring state intervention (pp. 7–8). It is precisely in this line of thought that Anderson carefully dissects the limitations of conventional theories of welfare state development to carve out analytical space for agency. For instance, whereas the ‘logic of industrialism’ struggles in explaining timing of policymaking even in countries with similar levels of development, power resource/class-based explanations overestimate the internal homogeneity of groups, particularly in early capitalism development (pp. 8–10). Similarly, virtually all institutionalist accounts are argued to struggle with the gradual, endogenous change that seems more common in welfare policymaking than exogenous shocks (pp. 10–11). Although the literature review misses important branches such as sociological theories of social policy (Kaufmann, F. X. 2012. *European Foundations of the Welfare-State*. Berghan Books) or recent interdisciplinary historical research (Moses, 2018), which do allow some space for agency, it does nonetheless highlight a key point: whereas conventional approaches test variables across national cases, a more holistic picture can be drawn by focusing on episodes of grappling with the common challenges associated with modernity (similar to Moses, 2018).

Drawing on Bourdieu-inspired concepts of field and capital, Anderson identifies two main types of reformers – policy entrepreneurs, aiming to primarily influence legislative outcomes, and administrative entrepreneurs, typically seeking to determine how policies are practically implemented (pp. 14–15). The common denominator is that both types of actors seek to blend in strategic alliance building with creative problem solving, so as to attain key positions in the field that allow ideas to play causal role(s) in policymaking (pp. 16–18). Because actors are problem-solvers, they resort to creative use of ideas embedded in strategies such as framing, citation, compromise and signaling expertise (pp. 16–18). Although not explicit, the intended dialogue is with political science studies on the role of ideas in welfare policymaking (e.g. Beland, D., & Petersen, K., eds. 2014. *Analyzing Social Policy Concepts and Language. Comparative and Transnational Perspectives*. Bristol University Press), which are seen as limited to the macro-level of ‘national cultures’, thus missing micro-level ideational debates (p. 20). By carefully delineating between the micro-level of ‘problem definitions’ and the overarching level of a ‘policy program’, Anderson argues that actors have a range of options for action that transcends typical policy window arguments (p. 22). While the theoretical framework operates with a somewhat rigid boundary between intrinsic and instrumental action, it does raise the crucial point that agency matters in both structural and unconventional ways.

All cases contribute key facets to ‘theory-based patterns’ regarding the causal role of agency (p. 23). Let me illustrate this with Chapter 2 on Child Labor in Prussia and Chapter 3 contrasting the success of policy creation in France and lack thereof in Belgium. This specific selection highlights some of the book’s strongest points – a more coherent explanation of early historical periods than the one offered by con-

ventional theories; a comparison of failure and success that highlights some of the scope conditions for agency; highlighting the underexplored connection between education and welfare states.

Conventionally, the Prussian child labor law of 1839 is argued to stem from state-building, either in the classical sense of raising capacity for war or in the sense of assuaging class conflict (pp. 42–44). Yet, as Anderson argues, neither explanation is fully satisfactory. On the one hand, adult workers themselves did not want restrictions on child labor as it would increase their own workload. On the other hand, a more intellectual-history style reading of the policy documents and debates shows that the militaristic arguments were only used pro-forma (pp. 44–45). Rather, the author highlights how, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, the Prussian state underwent intertwined processes of state-building and a capitalist economic transformation that created space particularly for the high bureaucracy to flourish. Against this background, a key issue became the tension between children's role as economic agents in factories and the modernizing project of mandatory child education (pp. 47–52). Within the overarching ideology of nation-building qua modernization, this tension provided the specific ideational toolkit for would-be reformers.

Altenstein, for instance, an otherwise wealthy member of the landed aristocracy climbing the ladder to the rank of Minister of Religious, Education and Medical affairs, argued that protecting working children contributed to a more modern form of national citizens (pp. 59–60). According to Anderson however, while Altenstein's specific framing of the 'social question' did bank on the widespread trope of nation-building, eschewing direct contact with topoi from key stakeholders (p. 60) and failure to adequately note how the program was a bottom-top creation from multiple local bureaucracies (p. 61) created a rheto-

ric strategy that failed to get traction. Thus, Altenstein's concrete power as a minister did not translate into sufficient alliance-building to enable the project to pass (pp. 61–62). Conversely, by blending in economic arguments pertaining to employers with humanistic tropes not unlike those of Altenstein, Bodelschwingh managed to carve out a more solid policy alliance, from a lower administrative position (p. 65). That framing matters is further evidenced by the fact that Bodelschwingh did not in fact solicit as thorough an opinion from employers as Altenstein (p. 65). Similarly, the contrasting fate of the two proposals also perfectly highlights the importance of field position. While Altenstein may appear to have wielded even the power of a 'veto player' (p. 69–70), he was in fact at a rather isolated level of administration, whereas Bodelschwingh was so enmeshed in multi-level bureaucratic networks that he could constantly build alliances for his specific framing.

The comparative analysis of Belgium and France further strengthens the idea that agency and field position matter, by looking at divergent outcomes in relatively similar economic and socio-political contexts (pp. 78–88). In France, the 'parliamentarization of contention', which implied a porous state-society divide (p. 94), opened up analytical space for a range of actors to selectively and gradually put forward the framing of child protection as a social question. While this meant that policy entrepreneurs could appeal to a wide audience, it also implied the presence of stake-holders (such as employers) stronger than in Prussia and as such impossible to bypass (pp. 94–95). As such, according to Anderson, the key to Dupin's successful policy introduction was a 'three pronged framing,' blending in academic and political language with adept citation of employer opinions, signaling that the policy would be a top-down political encroachment on the dominant liberal ethos (p. 100). The wide embedding al-

lowed multiple potential veto-actors to be swayed (pp. 102–103). The end result was that while the French child law of 1841 may have appeared as a functional response to structural issues such as labor unrest, a key role was in fact played by Dupin's creative alliance-building that spanned political and economic actors.

Conversely, while Ducpetiaux in Belgium was also embedded in some key networks (academic and political – p. 106), he framed his project at a relatively high level of abstraction that could not foment alliance-building, particularly among fields that were less porous than in France (p. 112). Whereas Dupin framed child protection using many of the topoi provided by employers themselves, Ducpetiaux used a terminology of rights that was mostly confined to the academic realm (p. 112). In the absence of a wide framing that allowed for alliance-building, the policy window created by labor protests did not automatically lead to welfare intervention as in neighboring France. This re-strengthens

the key point that while agency is not sufficient, it is quite clearly vitally necessary for welfare state development.

Broadly speaking, Elisabeth Anderson's book impresses through analytical clarity and an in-depth historical narrative that sheds new light on an otherwise poorly explained area of welfare state history. By carefully dissecting macro-level economic and political structures, the author offers a finely tuned analysis on the causal role of agency in social policy development, focused at the level of child employment protection. In drawing particularly from anthropology, while seemingly neglecting well-known political science and sociology tropes, the book sends out the strong message that the creation of modern welfare states requires a highly intricate ideational construction, above and beyond an underlying social-democratic thinking (Kaufmann, 2012).

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