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Chapter 5

Vertical Governance, National Regulation and Autonomy of Local Policy Making

Marjo Kuronen and Pascal Caillaud

5.1 Introduction

Comparative social policy analysis has mainly concentrated on the national policy level ignoring the local or territorial dimension (Andreotti et al. 2012). However, the state-centred government approach in welfare policy research is increasingly being replaced or complemented by the governance approach, which is emphasizing the complexity, networking, multi-actor and multi-level nature of policy making, and paying more attention to the local level (for example, Kazepov 2010; Kokx and Van Kempen 2010; Burau and Vabo 2011; Andreotti et al. 2012). Government and governance are two different approaches to analysing welfare policies and service provision (see Kutsar et al. 2014), but governance is a vague concept defined and used in different ways. For example, Newman (2007) distinguishes four modes of governance: hierarchical, managerial, network and self-governance. More often governance refers to the horizontal networks of different actors rather than hierarchical organizational decision-making, but it also refers to the complexity of multilevel relations in policy making, combining aspects of both horizontal and vertical governance (Kazepov 2010). The concept of governance is also often used when studying the welfare-mix in the provision of welfare services (for example, Burau and Vabo 2011).

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Andreotti et al. (2012) argue that in the past 20 years many local government bodies have become stronger actors in planning, financing and implementing social policies, and that welfare systems should be seen as a mix of central and “sub-national” policies, meaning the role of actors such as counties, regions, municipalities and provinces. Kokx and Van Kempen (2010) instead, in analysing European urban policies, emphasize a twofold process in the transformation of political powers. They consider that the power of national central governments has been both upscaled to supranational agencies, such as the EU, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and downscaled to regional and local levels (Kokx and Van Kempen 2010). Furthermore, as Kröger (2011) shows in his historical analysis of social care policies in Finland, the political power in welfare policy making has swung back and forth between the state and local authorities, and since the early 2000s pressure for centralization has increased again after a radical decentralization in the early 1990s.

This chapter later demonstrates how these relationships vary from one country to another, and between different welfare policy fields. There is no common trend. Instead, the analysis shows the complexity and diversity of the legal frameworks and vertical governance structures, and thus, the roles, responsibilities, financial resources available, and actual possibilities for the local authorities in the cities to formulate their own welfare policies and provide services for their residents. The national level is still highly important and its role cannot be ignored in setting laws, providing a common regulatory framework and exercising indirect control of local policy making, and in providing resources for the organization of local welfare services (Kazepov 2010; Kokx and van Kempen 2010; Andreotti et al. 2012). An important issue discussed recently, particularly by several Nordic researchers, is the dilemma between the welfare state’s guiding principle of universalism and territorial equality on the one hand, and on the other, the importance of local self-government and decision-making in welfare policies. Centralized policy making does not necessarily recognize local conditions and needs, while decentralization might lead to local diversity and inequalities between service users (for example, Kröger 1997, 2011; Burau and Kröger 2004; Trydegård and Thorslund 2010; Burau and Vabo 2011; Häikiö and Anttonen 2011; Vabo and Burau 2011). Thus, it is important not only to shift the focus from the national to the local level, but also to analyze the relationships between and powers at different territorial levels.

Vertical governance concentrates more on the hierarchical relations between local, regional, national and even international (often EU policy) levels, and is also related to the centralization or decentralization of welfare policy making (for example, Kröger 2011). However, Andreotti et al. (2012) remind us that it is important to make a distinction between the decentralization and territorialization of welfare policies. They consider that decentralization refers to the level of political administrative power, while territorialization is a broader approach, which takes into account the local social and cultural contexts and the variety of different local actors. However, when studying welfare policy making, both local and national authorities and political decision-making systems are still the major actors in this field, and thus, this chapter concentrates mainly on these formal (traditional) actors.

In this chapter the frameworks of national, regional and local welfare policy making in 11 European countries are analyzed. In order to study local welfare policy making at the individual city level, it is important to ask to what extent and how local policies are regulated and controlled from the national state level, and how much space, possibilities and resources this leaves for local policy actors in their own independent policy formation. In the chapter we also look at whether the relationships between the territorial levels are different in different fields of welfare policy, concentrating on three specific fields: childcare policies, eldercare policies and policies concerning employment oriented lifelong learning. The data used in this analysis consists mainly of local and national policy documents, other documentary data and expert interviews undertaken in the 11 European cities.

5.2 Vertical Governance Between Territorial Levels

All of the 11 countries have specific laws regulating the role, powers and responsibilities of local government, and in many countries, these are defined in the Constitution. Thus, local governments are recognized as political actors. However, the division of labour, political power and resources between different territorial levels are very different in the different countries. Also, some of the cities have an exceptional position in their national contexts; Hamburg in Germany is both a municipality and a Federal state, Szekesfehervar in Hungary has the rights of a county, and Brno in the Czech Republic is a “statutory city” differing from most other cities through its different administrative division.

Based on their general vertical governance structures between national, regional and local levels, the 11 countries can be classified as having either a centralized (England, Ireland), multi-level¹ (Italy, Spain, France, Germany) or decentralized (Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Hungary, the Czech Republic) governance system (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Classification of the vertical governance systems in 11 European countries

	Centralized governance system	Multi-level governance system	Decentralized governance system
Country	England	Italy	Denmark
	Ireland	Spain	Finland
		France	Estonia
		Germany	Hungary
			Czech Republic

¹The concept of multilevel governance is used here in a narrower sense than is often used (for example, Kazepov 2010). Here it merely emphasizes the role of the regions, or other intermediate policy making levels between national and local levels.

A centralized system is characterized by the strong role of the state in the welfare policy formation where local authorities only or mainly have the role of implementing national policies. Funding for the municipalities mainly comes from central government. England and Ireland are examples of a centralized governance system. In Ireland, the implementation of policies is the responsibility of three main bodies: the central administration (government departments and officials), autonomous state agencies, and elected local governments based at county or borough levels. The Irish Constitution recognizes the role of local government, but local governments have few responsibilities or resources and very little autonomy. Funding for the local government comes from the central government, but the city of Dublin particularly, also relies on user charges and commercial rates for its local funding. In England, the regions have previously had a major administrative role in the implementation of UK Government policy, but in 2010, the functions of Regional Authorities were transferred to local authorities (City Councils). Welfare policy making is centralized and English councils may only do things which common law or an Act of Parliament allows them to do (See further in Chap. 7).

In a multi-level governance system, policy formation is decentralized but divided between different territorial levels, and characterized particularly by the strong role of the regions not the local municipalities. Funding for the local authorities mainly comes from regional or national sources. In spite of their differences, Italy, Spain, France and Germany are classified here as multi-level governance systems.

In Italy, the regions are powerful policy actors. The Italian Constitution states that the central State is only responsible for the “basic levels of provisions concerning the civil and social rights that must be ensured all over the national territory” (art. 117, comma m, Title V of Italian Constitution). In Spain and France there are actually four administrative levels. In Spain, these are the state central administration, the provinces, the municipalities and the autonomous communities (*Estados, provincias, municipios, Comunidades Autónomas*). The budgets for local governments are based on the collection of specific taxes and on transfers from the regional governments. In France, there are the cities or municipalities, departments (an institution between the region and the city), regions, and the State levels, which are responsible for different welfare policies and service provisions in different combinations.

The French example provides an illustration of complex multi-level governance, often described in France as a territorial “mille-feuille”, an allegory referring to the French pastry made of three layers of puff pastry and two layers of pastry cream. At the local level it can take many forms. It may initially be “de-concentration” of the state action, a technical organization of the distributing agents and their competences from the central administration to its decentralized services. This aims to improve the effectiveness of the state action by delegating certain powers to the local officials of the central administration. The second form is “functional or technical decentralization” where either the State or the local authority decides not to directly manage a public service but to transfer its management to a separate structure (public institution or establishment), as is the case in France for the universities and public hospitals. These institutions are legal entities but only have a

limited competence in the very purpose of the public service transferred. Finally, it may take the form of “territorial decentralization”, which gives local authorities legal powers, administrative autonomy, their own staff, property and services. The State has delegated some competences, decision-making, and guidance for implementation to the local authorities. The local government authorities (mayors and chairpersons of departmental or regional councils) are elected under the control of state officials (prefects). The State determines the competences of these communities. Municipal, departmental and regional councils are elected in open elections. Decentralization of powers to the local authorities in France obeys the principle of “blocks of competence”. Only one territorial level can be responsible for a specific issue to avoid shared competences and it is forbidden for a local authority to establish or exercise authority over another community.

Germany, on the other hand, is a Federal state with three political layers: national state, federal state and municipalities. Thus, the roles of federal states are even stronger than those of the regions in the other three countries. The city of Hamburg is an exceptional case because it is a federal state and a municipality at the same time. The German Constitution gives legislative power to the national state as well as to the federal states and in many cases the national state needs the agreement of the federal council, which can be described as “joint decision making”.

A decentralized system is characterized by the strong and autonomous role of the local municipalities. Denmark, Finland, and also Estonia, Hungary and the Czech Republic are here classified as decentralized systems. Especially in the Nordic countries, local municipalities play an important role in forming welfare policies and in providing services, even to the extent that, in addition to the welfare state, it is possible to talk about welfare municipalities (Kröger 1997, 2011; Trydegård and Thorslund 2010). For example, the Danish public sector is one of the most strongly decentralized public sectors in the world, along with the other Nordic countries, and responsibility for many of the core welfare services are placed at the municipal level (Pallesen 2003). In both of the Nordic countries, Denmark and Finland, the municipalities have the right to collect local taxes, and these tax revenues are an important part of their income. Municipalities have the independent authority to manage their own economy and finances, but, for example, in Denmark the state actually finances most of the Danish public sector through grants and subsidies to the municipalities and especially to the regional level.

The other three countries, Estonia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, are also classified as decentralized governance systems, even if not quite as clearly as the Nordic countries. In Hungary, the local governments have their own assets and autonomy to manage their budgets, which are strictly independent from the state, but limited by the lack of resources. Some services are financed from the central budget through “normative grants” and the remaining costs are covered from the independent income of the local government or from the targeted state grants. The city council is allowed to create local decrees but they cannot contradict national level legislation. In Estonia as well local governments are quite independent and central government has delegated supplementary functions to local government. There are, however, some centralized features in the Estonian governance system

as the municipalities are expected to provide the same basic services and central government must cover the costs, and the funding mainly comes from the national budget. The local governments in Estonia have the power to impose some more targeted and smaller local taxes and payments if they choose to, such as taxes on sales, advertising, or road tolls for motor vehicles, or taxes on pets and parking. Only a few municipalities have introduced such local taxes. In Tartu, there are three local taxes: for parking which is the most important local tax revenue, for advertising, and for closing roads or streets. In the Czech Republic, municipalities have a self-governing authority but with several exceptions concerning matters that are entrusted by law to authorities at the regional or local level. There is no municipal tax system, but funding comes from the national budget.

This classification shows some important differences between the countries in the degrees of autonomy that local policy makers have in relation to national and regional policy directives, and national laws related to the formulation and implementation of local welfare policies. All local governments play some part in policy formation, as well as in the design and implementation of policies, but the degree of autonomy depends on the degree of decentralization. In this respect, it is important to differentiate between administrative and political decentralization (Mosley 2003), or decentralization and territorialization as referred to by Andreotti et al. (2012). Administrative decentralization refers to the delegation of the operative responsibilities and implementation of national policy objectives to bureaucratic managers in the regional or local offices. In this respect, the centralized systems in England and Ireland could be described as administrative decentralization. In political decentralization, the implementing organizations are not merely subordinate units of a national administration but relatively independent political entities with their own resources and elected leadership, as, for example, in the Nordic countries. Mosley (2003) considers that in such complex and multilevel governance structures the relationship between central, regional and local authorities is less hierarchical and more negotiated.

The classification formulated here is not clear-cut, and actually, in all of the 11 countries, the vertical governance systems are more or less multi-level. Even in the Nordic countries, where the role of the municipalities is seen to be strong and independent in their own welfare policy making, the central government provides the general legal framework, takes part in the funding of the local municipalities and uses informational regulation to supervise and direct the local policy making. For example, in Denmark the state and municipalities enter into yearly agreements regarding overall expenditure growth, and municipalities can prioritize within this expenditure framework. The state can also impose limits on local taxes and regulate the level of welfare benefits even if the payment of them is a local responsibility. There is also a national regulation or standards for the municipal welfare services.

The complex multi-level systems become even more obvious when analyzing the local policy making, administration and service provision separately in the three specific sectors of welfare policies; policies concerning childcare, care for older people, and employment oriented lifelong learning. Vertical governance between

territorial levels differs from one sector to another, even within the same country. In the following, we will analyze the role of local authorities in these three welfare policy sectors, and make categorizations of the countries and cities based on that. It is important to bear in mind that the categorization does not mean that the actual coverage and the level of service provision would be similar within these categories and between or within the countries.

5.3 The Role of Local Authorities in Welfare Policy Making

5.3.1 *Childcare Policies*

When it comes to the public responsibility for the provision of childcare services in general, and to the roles and responsibilities of the state and the local authorities in policy-formation, there is a large variation between the 11 countries and cities studied. These 11 countries can be divided into three groups concerning their childcare policies, vertical governance structures, and legal frameworks regulating childcare service provision, even if there is also variation within each group.

First, there are countries with strong national legal regulations on the provision of public childcare services, rather extensive service system (see Chap. 8), and the local authorities have the major responsibility for organizing them. These countries include Denmark, Finland, France and Estonia. Also, in Germany, nationally and locally, childcare policies have recently been moving in this direction.

In Finland and Denmark, there is a legally established enforceable right for all children under school age to have a place in public day care, and the municipalities have a legally binding responsibility to organize these services. However, the local authorities might have different policies and practices in how they fulfil this requirement (Repo and Kröger 2009; Naumann 2011; see also Chap. 8 in this book). State support for early childhood care in France is based on the principle of free choice for families. The implementation of the national early childhood policy is the responsibility of the local authorities. In Estonia, the Pre-school Child Care Institutions Act requires local authorities to provide day care for all children between the ages of 1 and a half to 7 years old. The municipality is responsible for guaranteeing the place but parents must pay for it and also pay for food. Tartu city has not yet been able to meet the requirement to provide places to all children between one and a half (the age when parental benefit ends) and 3 years old. The supply is smaller than the demand. In order to resolve this problem, a new Act is being drafted and the system of childcare will be revised towards increasing support to marketization and the diversity of service providers (see Chap. 9 in this book).

The second group consists of countries with a national legal regulation for public childcare provision and some responsibilities for the municipalities in service provision. Responsibility to offer childcare can also be divided between the state and the local authorities, most often according to the age of the child, so that the service

provision for over 3-year-old children is more extensive and legally binding. These countries include Hungary, Italy and Spain. Germany is between the first category and this one.

In Germany, there are both national laws and complementary Federal state level laws regulating childcare service provision and both nationally and locally there is a move towards a more extensive right for public childcare. Thus, there are active childcare policies at both the national level and in the city of Hamburg. In Hungary, the national legal regulation concerning public childcare provision gives quite extensive responsibilities to the municipalities to organize childcare services, as is the case in the first group of countries. However, for children under the age of 3, the local authorities are legally obliged to run nursery schools only if there are more than 10,000 inhabitants in the city. Thus, the provision of services depends on the size of the municipality, and the generosity of the local policy, and access to day care places is often limited. For older children, the local authorities have an obligation to establish kindergartens but there is no legally binding obligation to offer childcare for all children.

In both Italy and Spain childcare has historically been a family responsibility and the public responsibility for childcare service provision, especially for younger children, is more modest than in Hungary and Germany. Responsibility for childcare provision for younger children is delegated to the municipalities without any national legally binding responsibilities and the regions define their own regulations and finance the municipalities. Consequently, there is high disparity between regions and municipalities in childcare coverage for children under 3 years of age, and the gap in service provision for the two age groups is huge. For the older children there is practically full coverage and the state, rather than the local authorities, is responsible for organizing the services as part of the educational system.

Third, there are countries where both national and local public responsibility to organize childcare services is either very limited or even non-existent, or where it has been left to the local or regional authorities to create their own policies and provide services. However, there might still be some legal regulations and inspections of the existing services. England, Ireland and the Czech Republic are classified into this group.

There is no extensive national legal regulation in any of these three countries concerning public childcare provision and the responsibilities of the state or the local authorities to provide them, but this is only limited to pre-school education. In Ireland, the law provides the regulation and inspection of pre-school childcare services for children under school age (Child Care Act 1991). In England, all 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 h of free nursery education for 38 weeks of the year until they reach compulsory school age. In the Czech Republic, the Education Act (2004) gives the municipalities an obligation to provide a free kindergarten place for children for 1 year before the school entry age. In all the three cities, Dublin, Leeds and Brno, there are some minor local initiatives to improve the situation and provide some services.

5.3.2 *Eldercare Policies*

The 11 countries and cities can be put into two groups for policy-formation and public service provision for older people, which are different from those identified in childcare policies. The main criteria of this categorisation are the national legal regulation of eldercare and the role of local authorities in the cities as policy makers and providers of public services (See a more detailed analysis in Chap. 11 of this book.)

Most clearly, it is possible to identify those countries with legal national regulations concerning care services for older people, which give the municipalities and their local authorities an obligation to provide services. These countries include Denmark, Finland, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and England.

In Denmark, the public responsibility is most extensive. The Social Services Act requires the municipalities to bear the responsibility for the care of older people. The political aim is universalism in service provision. Denmark uses more resources on eldercare than any other country in proportion to its population and the percentage of old people, and a large proportion of the older people receive some kind of care (Bjørnholt et al. 2008). Also in Finland, the Social Welfare Act, and since 2013, a more specific Act on Care Services for the Elderly, gives the municipalities the responsibility to provide home-help services and institutional care for older people. It is then a matter of local policy to determine how to fulfil these responsibilities, to what extent to offer public services or subsidize the use of for-profit or non-profit services or informal care. Many Finnish municipalities, including the city of Jyväskylä, have recently adopted more marketized local policies (see, for example, Anttonen and Häikiö 2011; Häikiö and Anttonen 2011; Kröger and Leinonen 2011).

Also in Estonia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, national social welfare legislation conveys responsibilities on the local authorities for eldercare and for defining the types and forms of services for the elderly. In Estonia, the Family Law Act leaves the responsibility for taking care of fragile family members (parents, children, sisters or brothers) to the families. However, the Social Welfare Act also conveys responsibilities on the state and local governments to provide support and organize services (see Chap. 13 in this book). In England, there is a legal minimum standard and volume of services that the local authority must provide. However, the local city council is only responsible for commissioning services, which are mainly provided by external organizations. Local authorities are also responsible for providing care assessments and support for informal carers, and setting and allocating their own social care budgets. However, in deciding which services to fund, they must apply the national framework (See also Yeandle et al. 2007; Chap. 7 in this book.) It is interesting that especially in the Czech Republic and England, the national regulations on eldercare are more binding than in the field of childcare, putting more obligations on the local authorities.

The second group of countries is more heterogeneous and more difficult to identify as one group, but it consists of those countries where national legal regulations

are weaker or non-existent in terms of the responsibilities local authorities have for providing services for older people. In general, public responsibility for the service provision is more limited than in the first group of countries. Instead, regions or local municipalities, or in the case of Ireland, the national Health Services Executive (HSE) in local administrative areas, are responsible for policy making and service provision in their own areas. Public responsibility for eldercare also focuses more on financial support for the service users and the informal carers rather than on the provision of public services. This group includes Germany, Ireland, Italy, France and Spain.

In Germany, there is a rather extensive national legal framework for eldercare, but it does not give responsibilities to the local authorities to provide services. Instead, it is based on a national insurance system (Long-Term Care Insurance Act 1995), which allows the service users to purchase care services from different service providers, including agencies run by local authorities. The federal states and the municipalities are still responsible for the local care infrastructure (See also Pfau-Effinger et al. 2011).

In Ireland, the legal role of local authorities in eldercare is very limited or even non-existent, as policy is largely devised nationally by the Department of Health, and the Health Services Executive (HSE) which is divided into administrative areas responsible for the management of public health services, including health and social services for older people. The actual delivery of services at the local level depends on the resources available in each local health service area. The HSE provides some services directly but also relies heavily on services contracted from for-profit and non-profit organizations. The national policy also relies heavily upon the family as carers of older people. Despite the emphasis on community or home care, the majority of government funds are allocated to institutional care, and the home care market is comparatively unregulated (Timonen et al. 2006). Ireland is ranked lowest of the EU15 in terms of social spending per older person, equivalent to only a third of the spending in Denmark (O'Shea 2009).

In Italy, eldercare policies are not defined as a specific arena in the national welfare policies, and the care for older people has remained a family issue, with a huge private care market and migrant women working as private carers in families. There is no national legislation giving responsibilities to the local authorities to organize services for older people, and only severe disability or being very dependent gives access to some national care benefits. Instead, each Region in Italy develops its own eldercare policy and defines care needs, sometimes within regional laws, and provides resources to the municipalities or Social Districts. The governance of eldercare policies in the Region of Emilia-Romagna is quite complex, but considered as one of the most advanced in Italy, and the municipality of Bologna provides many types of services, but mainly for old people who are already very dependent on care.

In France, the national policy for older people is based primarily on social benefits or tax reductions rather than public service provision. Due to decentralization defined in national laws, local authorities, so called "departments" (France has been divided into 100 departments since 1790) are the main actors in local

policies concerning care for older people. For example, the Department of Loire-Atlantique, where the city of Nantes is located, has set up a “gerontological plan” in order to identify the needs and existing instruments in the area (see Chap. 12 in this book). Also in Spain there is no specific national legislation regulating service provision for older people. Social services, including services for older people, are the responsibility of the regional governments, and the participation of the local governments in the legislation, management and financing of eldercare is very limited.

5.3.3 *Lifelong Learning Policies*

Lifelong learning is a broad policy area (see, for example, Riddell et al. 2012; Saar et al. 2013) and differs remarkably from the care policies. It is here defined from the perspective of women’s labour market integration, as education policies for adult working age people after their initial (general or vocational) education, paying special attention to more vulnerable groups of women (for example, women without vocational qualifications, school “drop-outs”, women with disabilities, ethnic minority women, and so on). The focus is on how local lifelong learning policies are directed to help them to enter, re-enter or remain in employment. In addition to local and national policies, lifelong learning is also the subject of a specific European policy (Article 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union),² which national policies should integrate with. The Lifelong Learning Programme 2007–2013³ pursues specific objectives concerning lifelong learning in the EU; especially reinforcing the contribution to social cohesion, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, gender equality and personal fulfilment.

The situation in the 11 countries and cities is rather similar in terms of the public responsibilities, national legal regulations and the role of the cities in making lifelong learning policies and providing education and training services for adults. Thus, it seems extremely difficult to make any categorizations of different cities and countries. The complexity of these systems and multi-level governance, both vertically and horizontally, characterize lifelong learning policies in all of these countries. The active role of the enterprises and collective bargaining of the social partners are the special characteristics of national systems. Policy implementation, social partner consultation, collective bargaining and fiscal incentives are thus elements where national and local public action must interact.

²The Union will implement a vocational training policy, which will support and supplement the action of the Member States, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organization of vocational training.

³Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning.

It is typical that the field is divided into different sub-systems, and different forms of education target different groups with their specific national policies, legal bases, and the national and local level authorities responsible for them. At the national level, the responsibility for lifelong learning policies in many countries is divided between different Ministries and different laws regulate diverse forms of education and training. For example, training policies and services for unemployed people are often separated into their own specific field within the lifelong learning system, at least in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, France and Hungary, and employment authorities rather than cities are responsible for providing training at the local level. Local authorities alone have very little chance of formulating educational policies and providing for local needs, even if some of the cities have taken an active role in networking different actors for better coordination.

In many countries, Regions rather than the cities are the key actors at the territorial level in either developing their own lifelong learning policies or implementing national policies. The Regions are even either or both providing funding for the organizers of the training or financially supporting the participants. This is the case at least in Italy, France and Finland, and in Germany, where Federal states are the main actors. For example, in France the Regional council defines and implements the regional policy on learning and vocational training for both young people and adults. It organizes actions to meet the needs of learning and training by promoting the balanced access of women and men into different educational streams, especially training which results in qualifications. It also subsidizes the apprenticeship centres and different training institutions, and funds continuing vocational training for job seekers.

With some exceptions, the local authorities of the cities have only a very small, if any, formal or legal role in the field of lifelong learning for adults. It is up to the cities, in terms of how active a role they have taken in the larger network of different policy actors. For example, the city of Brno in the Czech Republic has defined its role as only a mediator, bringing together important actors in this area. The city of Terrassa in Spain is the only city that has taken an active role in developing this policy area; lifelong learning and training has been one of the main concerns of the local government in Terrassa over the last decade. The City Council has tried to strengthen this area by linking education and employment, and the city runs a large number of training centres.

The exceptions are the cities of Aalborg, Denmark, and Leeds, England, where the city has a certain limited formal role in offering educational opportunities for adults. Still, even in these two cities, they are not really independently formulating their own lifelong learning policies, but merely implementing the national policy. In Aalborg, the legal responsibility is limited to training offered to unemployed people because of the national government policy towards the “municipalisation of the employment effort”. In this reform, introduced in 2009, municipalities were given an extended responsibility to activate both the insured and uninsured unemployed, including offering training to them. This has meant more limited possibilities for the unemployed people to participate in education and training as the municipalities, trying to save money, tend to use as cheap measures as possible

and return the unemployed to paid work as quickly as possible instead of offering training (Bredgaard 2011). However, the city of Aalborg has been more generous in offering training and education for unemployed people compared to other Danish cities.

In Leeds, England, local policy on lifelong learning and education-related training is guided by the national policy framework. However, while the local authority, Leeds City Council, has responsibility for implementing the policy for public education at a local level, the national Skills Funding Agency (SFA) is responsible for distributing public funds to local authorities who commission training in their locality. Local authorities also commission services from independent sector providers. The city currently offers over 1,000 courses at over 200 community venues across the city, ranging from recreational activities to those leading to a qualification and those specifically aimed at people wanting to get back to paid work. Leeds City Council also provides access to information, advice and guidance to help people look at the options available to them and make choices regarding their education and career development.

Unlike in the formulation of care policies, in addition to the specific government bodies at the national, regional and local levels, the role of different social partners, for example, companies, trade unions, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations, is important in promoting and providing lifelong learning locally and nationally. For example, in Denmark quite a large proportion of lifelong learning and vocational training takes place at the work places and is subsidized by the state. In Ireland, Italy and Estonia, the influence of the European Social Fund is important in the development of lifelong learning possibilities, with different programmes and projects. Lifelong learning is a “playground” for various actors both at the local, regional, national and even at the EU level, especially through the European Social Fund. Thus, the field of lifelong learning has features of the multi-level, multi-actor network governance (Kazepov 2010; Andreotti et al. 2012), which might mean more flexibility and openness to the participation of several policy actors, but also weak legitimacy in terms of accountability (Newman 2007).

5.4 Conclusions

The analysis of vertical governance structures in general, and in the three different welfare policy sectors more specifically, shows the complexity and diversity of the national frameworks, legal regulation, and thus the roles, responsibilities, financial resources available, and actual possibilities for the cities to formulate their own welfare policies and provide services for their residents. In their general vertical governance structures between national, regional, and local levels, these 11 countries can be classified as having either a centralized, multi-level or decentralized governance system. However, when looking at each welfare sector, childcare, eldercare and lifelong learning policies more closely, this classification changes

and both the national regulation and the role of local authorities looks different. In care policies for children and older people local authorities are more important actors than in the field of employment oriented lifelong learning, where the formal and legal role of most cities is very limited or even non-existent. It is important to recognize this when studying local welfare policies and policy making.

The concept of governance refers to this diversity, understood from an institutional perspective (Supiot 2007). Internally, the states should face a demand for security, solidarity and decentralization. They respond by negotiation or consultation with representatives from the sectoral interests. Public interest is no longer the prerogative of the state alone, but is the product of power relationships between local interests. The state is no longer an upper third actor but one stakeholder among others in a civil or social dialogue.

The diversity of levels of governance that appears in the comparative analysis of the 11 cities studied can be found in the intra-national analysis. In several countries, especially those with the multi-level governance system, care and lifelong learning policies depend on various institutional levels of governance. In France, for example, childcare policies depend on the municipality, eldercare on the department level, and lifelong learning on the regions and social partners within the national legal framework. In the countries studied, the public and private actors, local and national, non- and for-profit organizations coexist in the implementation of these policies. Regulation and dialogue are articulated with mandatory or incentive legal standards.

These three welfare policy sectors nationally, and especially locally, are seen very much as separate policy issues, and their role in the integration of women into the labour market is not efficiently recognized. There are no proper policy analyses nationally or locally about how or what kind of welfare services might help women to enter, re-enter or remain in the labour market. The better integration of the separate welfare policy sectors from the perspective of women's labour market participation is important.

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