This is the peer reviewed version of the following article: Storø, J. Leaving care in Norway in a historic and current perspective: As a function of the Nordic welfare model. Child & Family Social Work. 2021; 26: 240– 247, which has been published in final form at DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12805.
This article may be used for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Wiley Terms and Conditions for Use of Self-Archived Versions.

Title: Leaving Care in Norway in a Historic and Current Perspective – as a function of the Nordic Welfare Model

Running title: Leaving care within the Nordic Welfare model

Jan Storø

Abstract

Care leavers need support in the transition to adulthood. Care leavers in Norway benefit from the universalistic and somewhat generous Nordic welfare model. However, this model is constructed to meet general needs identified in the whole population. More specific needs in smaller groups may not be so well planned for. The article discusses this dilemma in the light of two previously published articles by the author and two co-authors, where the topics are the history of leaving care support in Norway and how the Nordic welfare model may represent a problematic frame for leaving care support. The "parental functions" of child welfare and social services are discussed, and so is the connection between the welfare model`s ability to cover up for the needs of the many versus the few and vulnerable.

Key words

Leaving care, welfare model, universalism, child welfare, social work

Introduction

Personalized emotional, practical and social support is an important resource for young people when they leave state care, in their transition to adulthood and an independent adult life (Bakketeig and Backe-Hansen 2008, Storø 2012, Stein 2012, 2019). Such support is meant to compensate for potential and real support shortcomings in the young people`s families and social networks (Curry and Abrams, 2014). The support is crucial, given the challenging life experiences many care leavers are carrying with them when they start their adult life (Stein 2012, Storø 2012).

Earlier work has revealed that there are similarities as well as differences to the challenges and the way the young people in transition are met in different countries (Stein and Munro 2008, Mendes and Snow 2016, Stein 2019, Mann-Feder and Goyette 2019). The similarities

This article may not be enhanced, enriched or otherwise transformed into a derivative work, without express permission from Wiley or by statutory rights under applicable legislation. Copyright notices must not be removed, obscured or modified. The article must be linked to Wiley's version of record on Wiley Online Library and any embedding, framing or otherwise making available the article or pages thereof by third parties from platforms, services and websites other than Wiley Online Library is forbidden.

are often connected to the actual personal challenges the young people meet in the transition, and how they deal with them. The differences are more often found in the different legal systems in the countries where the young person lives, the terminology used, the economic support given, the local or national traditions for when and how to give this type of support and to a certain extent, cultural demands on young people in their transition to adult life within different societies (Munro and Stein 2008, Ward 2008).

Because we find more differences on a system level than on a personal level, it is interesting to look at how the organisation of the welfare state affects the leaving care field, how practice is shaped, how legislation is formulated and how the authorities in direct and indirect ways govern this part of the state`s policies.

In this theoretical article I aim to discuss how the leaving care issue is embedded in Norway by looking at some issues that are made central in the Norwegian (and to an extent, the Nordic) welfare model. I will do so by drawing on the history of leaving care in Norway.

The Nordic Welfare model

The most widely spread and acknowledged classification of welfare state models, is that of Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1990). He describes three different models. The two first are *The "liberal" welfare state* and *The "corporatist" welfare state*. The third, *The Nordic Welfare state*, is described as:

> *The third, and clearly smallest, regime-cluster is composed of those countries in which the principles of universalism and de-commodification of social rights were extended also to the new middle classes. We may call it the 'social democratic' regime-type since, in these nations, social democracy was clearly the dominant force behind social reform* (Esping Andersen 1990:50).

This model is a classic one, and has proved to be useful over time according to Emmenegger, Kvist, Marx and Petersen (2015). Others state that "The Nordic Countries do not perform systematically worse than other "varieties of capitalism"" (Halvorsen, Hvinden and Schøyen 2015:1). [1] In recent years, other authors have critized this model. One criticism is concerning "a tendency to marginalise or exclude the less qualified, fit or productive" (Kvist, Fritzell, Hvinden and Kangas 2011:9). Another criticism is forwarded by Mendes, Johnson and

[1] They did not focus on care leavers, but on migrants and persons with disabilities on the labor market.

Moslehuddin (2011) and Stein (2014) who suggest that Esping Andersens classification builds overly on Western models.

The modern Nordic welfare state is largely a post Second World War (WW2) project. This is also the historic period where the social work professions developed (Messel 2013).

Historically, the Norwegian welfare state developed both along similar and different lines compared with other western welfare states (Vike and Haukelien 2016). During the last 150 years, the Western welfare states have increasingly absorbed tasks that earlier were taken care of in local relations, primarily within the family and among neighbours, but also to some extent by charitable organisations. According to Vike and Haukelien the development of the welfare state in most of Europe (and in USA) represents a continuation of authoritarian bureaucracies of military origin, where voluntary work was connected to the charity tradition of clerical bodies. In Norway, however, the welfare state is a product of the process where the local authorities, and later, the state, have taken over the initiatives that started as voluntary, local activities.

The general Western model led to the development of means tested measures, and the Nordic model to a universalist distribution of services. Both these models implied a new orientation from the dominant policy of *worthy versus not worthy* of the early 1800s (Kildal 2006).

The Nordic countries are small, and when the model was implemented and made strong – in the first two decades after WW2 – the populations of these countries were quite homogenous. It can be argued that this made it easier to implement a model building on a broad, universal logic, "Notions or myths of homogeneity have historically served as conditions for Nordic willingness to share risks and redistribute resources through collective and solidaristic arrangements" (Kvist, Fritzell, Hvinden and Kangas 2011:5). It should not be forgotten that the Nordic model was created in this unique context.

The arguments for universalism can be described as building society, reducing risk, worthiness and economic efficiency - while the arguments for targeting are economic efficiency, equality and reducing welfare dependency (Kildal 2006). The model is best understood when focusing more broadly than just on cash benefits:

> *Indeed, the most distinct Nordic instrument for reducing social inequalities is not cash benefits such as social assistance and social insurance, but a vast amount of*

> *services in the three core areas of the welfare social services: society, education and health.* (Kvist, Fritzell, Hvinden and Kangas 2011:9).

The Nordic model has been seen as a generous one according to Halvorsen, Hvinden and Schoyen (2015). They also find that the model still works well compared to other models, in spite of problems having occurred in recent times. The 1970s, 1980s and 1990s brought challenges to the Nordic welfare model (Kananen 2014). One was a shift from a collective to a more individualistic orientation, for example in Denmark, where "a universal welfare state model is gradually being transformed into an emergent multi-tiered welfare state" (….) "that is more dualistic and individualistic" (Kvist and Greve 2011:146). The desired mutuality mode of the model seems to be less obvious than earlier.

Another development is increased privately owned service-delivery made possible by an emerging "competition state paradigm" (Kananen 2014:164), promoted by (among others) supranational bodies such as The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), The European Union (EU) and The International Monetary Fund (IMF). This can be described rather as "an administrative rationale and source of policy reform" than "a coherent political ideology" (Kananen 2014:164).

The Danish welfare state is qualitatively different from the model that was implemented after WW2, according to Pedersen (2011). Pedersen writes that the welfare state has been partly replaced by a competition state where the authorities no longer compensate and protect the population and the businesses, but instead mobilise them to take part in a global competition. In this new paradigm, the individual is made responsible for his/her own life, and the concept of solidarity, that forms the basis of the Nordic welfare state has diminished, according to Pedersen.

The Nordic welfare model relies heavily on the family (Halvorsen, Stjernø and Øverbye 2016). This is also reflected in how services targeted towards helping people with social problems are organized. A family service orientation has historically been considered more appropriate for the child welfare system than a child protection orientation (Gilbert, Parton, and Skivenes, 2011). Children and young people are included in the welfare model through being members of a family, not as independent actors in their own right (Backe-Hansen, Højer, Sjöblom, and Storø, 2013). This is real for both children and young people in the general population and for their peers within the child welfare system. In recent years a new

development has been more dominant; a child-focused orientation (Gilbert, Parton, and Skivenes, 2011).

The welfare state has developed somewhat differently in the three Nordic countries. According to Rauch (2005) the Swedish and the Norwegian welfare state deviate significantly from the image of the Scandinavian social service model, while the Danish model complies with it when focusing on childcare and elderly care. He finds, when focusing on Norway, a high degree of institutional fragmentation between the central government level on one hand and municipalities and NGOs on the other. Municipalism is highly appreciated in Norway. This challenges the idea of a coherent nationally defined welfare model.

The development of the Nordic welfare state incorporates a discussion on two different but connected issues: the welfare state`s potential to secure the wellbeing of its citizens versus the politically desired limits to its scope. The latter can be divided into two. First, a necessary on-going discussion on how welfare funding can be distributed in reasonable ways. There are many seemingly legitimate needs to be addressed. Second, a political discussion concerning how far the state should take an extensive role in people`s lives. Here, it is reasonable to say that a dominantly social-democratic view is contrasted to a liberal one. Academics are part of this debate. The universally oriented welfare state seems to be supported by strong arguments in modern welfare state research, for example by Jacques and Noël (2018), who found that they do better than other states to redistribute and reduce poverty.

A broader discussion on the development of a welfare state is brought by Kohli (2007), who suggests that a life course perspective makes it clearer that the personal life of citizens to an increasingly degree is shaped by the structure of the welfare state. Kohli states that the life course has been institutionalized by the way the welfare state is shaped. According to Gautun (2007) this is a predominantly continental, as opposed to a US, perspective.

Leaving care in Norway and within the Nordic Welfare state

Research on children and young people in care in Norway is a young research field. It was boosted with the implementation of Barnevernets utviklingssenter (The Child Welfare Development Centre) in 1990. Before this, Norway had almost no research on residential care and foster care, and certainly not on leaving care and the transition to adulthood. The leaving care research started up in the first decade of this century, with Storø (2005) as the first contribution, and Bakketeig and Backe-Hansen (2008) as the first large-scale contribution. These first reports focused to a large degree on the young people`s narratives about their

transitions, their needs and challenges, and on the support that was, or was not, available to them.

The discussion on leaving care within the Nordic welfare model is even more recent. The case of leaving care in the two neighbouring countries Norway and Sweden is interesting. Within a very similar welfare model, one might believe that care leavers are treated similarly – and quite well – given the solid economic situation in the Nordic countries. But the two countries have chosen very different approaches to care leavers; Norway has legislation (though relatively weak), and Sweden has up till now chosen not to implement such legislation (Storø, Sjöblom and Höjer 2019).

I will start this section by drawing on two previously published articles: Storø (2014) and Storø, Sjöblom and Höjer (2019).

The first article presents the professional and political discussions – and the shifting legislation – in Norway on leaving care for a period of more than a hundred years. The legislation has traditionally been weak on leaving care issues, but was strengthened in 1953 as part of the larger project of building the modern welfare state after WW2. In the coming decades, the legislation went through shifts in different directions (first weakened (1992) and after that somewhat strengthened (1998 and 2009)), and is under revision again this year.

The article sums up a certain historical development:

> *The material that this article builds on shows two different considerations, the needs of society versus the needs of the young people. They are not always explicitly expressed, yet they are visible. The differences are largely ideological, coloured by the leading views on children, on welfare, and on central issues in society. A hundred years ago, the main consideration was superintendence of the young people well into adulthood. Later this changed to a wish to care for, captured by the term after-care. (Storø 2014:16).*

Put differently, this shows a development from a wish to control young people (on their path to becoming useful in the labour force (cf. Madsen 2006)), to supporting them in their own effort to find a place in the community of adults. The verbs of these two sentences sums this up, from “to control” to “to support”. Both of them can be seen as making a case for individually oriented measures – but with quite different reasoning. The shift to a clearer

ambition to "support" young people cannot be identified until the revision of the legislation in 1998 (Storø 2014).

The historic narrative of care leavers in Norway is not one that argues for inclusion in the measures of the welfare state. The young person as a citizen of the welfare state with certain rights and obligations, is not highlighted. Rather, the discourse makes a case for state measures to prevent young people from living what could be called a "life of danger", a life of crime, alcohol and unemployment.

One example – from 1894 - shows that an (at that time) upcoming act "Lov om behandling av forsømte børn" (Act on the treatment of neglected children, implemented in 1900) should serve both as a "good deed for the children" and as an instrument "to attack the evil at its roots, to block the very source from where the infectious matter spreads out" (Getz 1894, cited in Ericsson 2009) (my translation).

If we go back to the rationale behind the first modern child welfare legislation in Norway (1953), we find an interesting perspective in the case of leaving care support. The legislation introduced the term "aftercare" for the first time (Storø 2014). But this concept was not actively promoted until later. Not until 1961, when the Social ministry published a circular on aftercare (Sos 1961), did the State promote leaving care services. The Ministry's failure to prioritise the issue of support in the transition to adulthood may explain the reason for the long delay. A state review report from much later concludes that "fair words" on the paper were not followed up in that decade, but that this practice improved a few years into the sixties (NOU 2004:23).

According to the 1961 circular, some care leavers need support more than others - in the transition. It mentions young people who have been "in conflict with the law or have had other adjustment difficulties" (Sos 1961, p.3 – my translation). Under this legislation the young person could be under a care order until the age of 21. The child welfare authorities could decide that the young person should be "under aftercare" till the age of 23 - even if the age of maturity was 21 at the time. The circular gives guidance for the process of terminating the aftercare. The child welfare authorities needed to decide if it was justifiable to withdraw the care order (or after the 21st birthday: the prolonged aftercare until 23 years of age). They were given the opportunity to terminate the care order in two steps, preliminary and final. The circular uses the expression "provisionally discharged" about the preliminary alternative. This

status implied that it was possible to take the young person back into care or aftercare if they did not adapt to adult life, and more precisely, to the rules of the society.

The language used in the circular suggests that it was important to exercise a certain control over the young people. A probation supervisor would be appointed to do this work. This person was seen as an actor of special importance if and when the young person showed some type of adjustment difficulties. In the light of today`s professional vocabulary this language would probably be criticized for stereotyping care leavers. It is reasonable to believe that professionals of today would have focused more on the young person`s positive options and potential barriers in the transition, and their opportunities to connect to the many conditions of an adult life - for example:

- Does the young person have a social network with resources to support them?
- Has the young person finished school, and have a plan for further education?
- Does the young person have a place to live and an income to pay for it?
- If these questions are answered with a “no”: how can we assist the young person so that they can develop their circumstances positively?

The second article discusses how the modern Nordic welfare state, as it has developed in Norway and Sweden (and in the Nordic countries in general), may represent a problem to care leavers – at least in its present historic stage. The model seeks to cover the needs of all citizens, through universal services on a broad range and a high degree of de-commodification. The principle of universalism is meant to provide security for the citizens in most situations. The universalistic approach is also highly important to young people leaving care in some distinct areas, such as free higher education and affordable study loans from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund.

On the other hand, some citizens may be quite vulnerable within this universalistic model. Given its fundamental policy to treat the population as a homogenous group, it may cause some citizens (small groups with specific needs), to be left out in certain situations. The model relies so heavily on its own universal ability to reach out to the whole population that it may fail to spot those who have exceptional, different needs.

If a citizen, or a group of citizens, falls out of or finds themselves poorly covered by the general measures within this model, they risk being left alone. There are no strong alternative services – neither state driven, nor private/NGO driven. Put in other words: the Nordic

welfare model may be criticized for lacking a “plan B” to cover the needs of certain small and highly vulnerable groups.

One specific group is even more at risk in the transition to adulthood than the “average” care leavers. Young people who have come to Norway as unaccompanied asylum seekers, may need support of a similar type as care leavers in general. Svendsen et.al (2018) and Lidén et.al (2020) write that there is not published much research on this group. Within the Norwegian welfare state these young people risk falling even more short of support, as they rarely have families to fall back on. On the other hand, they receive leaving care services to a higher extent than other care leavers, 64.7% versus 14%, but rarely beyond the age of 20, according to Svendsen et.al (2018). There are large variations between different municipalities in this practice, which is a paradox. The state services of the overarching welfare model do not solve the question of transition support for these young people. Some of the municipalities do.

The state as a parent – and as “family” - when young people leave care

As mentioned earlier, young people in Norway and Sweden are largely included in the welfare model through being members of a family, not as independent actors in their own right (Backe-Hansen, Højer, Sjöblom, and Storø, 2013). This comes very much into focus when young people leave placements in care and start their independent life (Storø, Sjöblom and Höjer 2019). Many care leavers experience less support from their families of origin in this stage than their peers in the general population (Storø 2012).

This leads us to look at the “parental function” of the leaving care services. One interesting issue within welfare models, identified by (Vike and Haukelien 2016), is how professionals within child welfare and social services think about their task. The central question is whether they “just” deliver the services they are demanded to deliver, or whether they also invest to discover needs that are not yet met by the welfare system. The actual function of the services of the welfare state is not only shaped on a systemic level. An important issue is how the policy that drives the system is put into practice, and how “holes in the system” are covered up.

An interesting work on leaving care measures in the Norwegian welfare state that discusses this, is provided by Oterholm (2015). Another is that of Paulsen (2017). These are developed in English in Oterholm and Paulsen (2018). They argue that it is of interest to look at how

leaving care services differ from the often obvious support given to young people in the general population when they move out of their families. The latter is largely informal. This quality is rarer for care leavers to experience, and therefore a more formal type of support is necessary. Formal support may be given by child welfare services or the adult social services.

Oterholm and Paulsen found that the two different bodies give formal leaving care support of very different kinds – embedded in two different institutional logics. The child welfare service as a continuing support in the transition from care to adulthood and the social services as a general support for adults who for some reason need support. Oterholm and Paulsen (2018) found that the child welfare workers took a distinct responsibility for the transition to adulthood of the care leavers, and the professionals in adult services did not. The care leavers "were understood more as children in need of care by child welfare services and more as adults by social services" (Oterholm and Paulsen 2018:25).

The same tendency is reported in Mølholt et.al (2012) (from Denmark) where the child welfare services took an adult child perspective, and the social services took a young adult perspective.

The different institutional logics reflect the general debate on whether the welfare state should provide universal or targeted measures. It seems that social services are less willing than child welfare services to give tailored service to young people in the transition to adulthood, even if they may have a heavier burden to carry than their peers. The universalist mode of the services is considered good enough. The position taken by the child welfare workers suggest that some flexibility is both desirable and possible within this body.

The strong position of the general support measures of the Swedish welfare state was highlighted in Höjer and Sjöblom`s study. 111 managers of social service units were interviewed about services to young people leaving care:

> *Only 6% of the managers had information of the young people's whereabouts once they had left care. 86–88% had general support programmes for all young people concerning housing, employment etc. but only 2–4% had specific programmes for young people leaving care. A majority of the managers were attentive of the difficulties the young people leaving care may encounter, but displayed little awareness of the consequences of a prolonged transition to adulthood, and the need for continued support after leaving care* (Höjer and Sjöblom 2011:2452).

The researchers behind this study suggest that “young people leaving care are at risk of being invisible in the welfare system” (p.2452).

It is important to remember that the concept of universalism in itself points to large groups. The objective of developing services built on this principle is to support all citizens with the same service, in the same way (Kildal 2006). But, in recent years, selective arrangements have become more significant, even in the Nordic countries. Research based and targeted arrangements have gained popularity (Kildal 2006).

The organization of leaving care services within the Nordic welfare societies seems to contain a certain challenge - the safety net seems to have some holes in it that are visible only when one focuses on the needs of small groups – such as care leavers.

Even if legislation, and the policy behind regulating services for care leavers have changed for the better through the years in Norway, there are still questions concerning whether the welfare model upholds a sufficient safety net function for this group.

Discussion: The big – and the “small” - questions

The rationale behind the Nordic model has been important for developing the measures of the modern welfare state of Norway. It has proved to be a strong model in the post WW2 years. But, as Kildal (2006) suggests, the model is changing little by little, and some of the practical consequences of these changes have not been debated on a broader scale. In today`s political climate, economic arguments are heard more frequently than previously. Kildal argues that some measures in the Nordic model may be more targeted than the general universalistic principle allows. She argues that, if so, they should be needs led.

This argument takes us directly into the case of measures directed to young people`s transition from care to adulthood. When we look at the issue of leaving care in a historic perspective, we can see that it has not been a simple task to give targeted support to the small and potentially marginalized group of care leavers.

The main concern in a modern welfare state – the big question – is how the model takes care of the citizens, and more specifically: if and how it is able to deliver good and relevant services to the whole population. In the Nordic model, the answer to this challenge is primarily, the principle of universalism.

However, a model cannot be valued only on its main objective. It is crucial to make a more thorough investigation: how does the model apply to smaller and marginalized groups? The

"small" questions may reveal a different picture, and maybe even an important one. If the model meets the needs of the many, but not the few, it is reasonable to argue for targeted support for the few. Here lies a dilemma that needs to be addressed, both in research and in policy debates.

The Nordic welfare model has some weaknesses. They are identified in the research literature and largely concern how people with low work capacity or low productivity potential are excluded (Halvorsen, Hvinden and Schoyen 2015). The debate on how and in what direction the welfare state should develop has dominantly focused on labour, on the monetary situation for citizens and on welfare benefits given to those who are not included in the workforce. A central concept is "arbeidslinja", a concept which is hard to translate into English. Directly it would be "the work line". It suggests that a main objective of the Norwegian welfare system is that all those who are able to work, should be part of the work force. And that the main social services programmes should be those that help citizens outside the work force to be included.

Some authors suggest that a welfare state should be defined more broadly than this, for example "the basic theme of the Nordic approach is a very wide concept of welfare that is always multidimensional and that includes the quality of life aspect" (Kvist, Fritzell, Hvinden and Kangas 2011:3).

A welfare model that builds on an objective to get people into the workforce may suffer under a dominantly economic rationale. Kildal and Kuhnle (2005) write that in policy debates and welfare research, norms and values often are ignored at the expense of arrangements for rewards and punishments. According to Kildal (2006) the principle of universalism is limited (as mentioned earlier). Some measures are fully universal, such as pensions and child benefit. Others are connected to politically defined categories of need: such as age, health and unemployment. Most of them are connected to the work performance of the citizens. It is crucial to understand this limitation. The model gives citizens – care leavers included – assistance to get work, and an economic safety net. But it is questionable whether care leavers' needs are sufficiently met by this, as their situation is more complex - because they often lack informal support from their families.

On the other hand, one of the strengths of the Nordic model has been its ability to reduce class and gender inequalities, due to its "passion for equality" (Dahl and Eriksen 2017: 7). Other issues have also been highlighted, such as forces that drive marginalization and inclusion.

But, as shown earlier, these forces have been directed at the population as a whole rather than at small groups within it.

In recent years the Nordic countries have experienced a wave of privatisation of social services. New Public Management (NPM) can be seen as one force redefining the very logic of the Nordic Welfare State (Dahl and Eriksen 2017). This does not point in the direction of universalism, but towards a means tested rationale, where targeting services is seen as paramount (Kildal and Kuhnle 2005).

One paradox we can see in this investigation is that the modern Nordic welfare state may fall back on its potential to support *all* groups on other needs than those connected to being included in the workforce. The professionals responsible for service delivery within this model have only a limited tradition of identifying those groups that fall behind. When we look at the situation of care leavers, we can see that the perspective of "the state as a parent" represents a special challenge. If universal services fail to identify this group and recognize its needs, and means tested services are not constructed to cover up for this hole in the safety net, they risk being abandoned.

Young people leaving care have always been a group at risk of being marginalized – in Norway and in other countries. Throughout history this has been defined and understood differently, but in Norway – as I have shown earlier – they have traditionally been understood as a group that society needed to control.

Care leavers – as a group – have largely not been included in the general political debates on welfare services in Norway. Their needs have been perceived to be covered within the universalist provisions of the welfare model. It is fair to suggest that the number of individuals within this group has been too small to raise attention, and maybe even that they have been too marginalized to be visible to policy makers. The arguments of those few voices which have advocated for improving services for care leavers through the decades since WW2, have not been included in the general political debates.

This is interesting because in the same period – the last hundred years - Norway has gone through a substantial political and economic transition. From being a relatively poor country on the outskirts of Europe a hundred years ago, Norway has developed into one of the world‘s richest countries. Norway‘s failure to address the situation of the care leavers in today‘s society should also be understood in a historic context. It is maybe even fair to say that the experiences of care leavers cannot be understood sufficiently without their historic backdrop.

Bakketeig and Backe-Hansen (2018) found that the relationship between the young person leaving care and the worker, as well as the degree of flexibility of the system, were important for the young people. They write that it was "associated with experiencing agency and satisfaction with their aftercare services" (Bakketeig and Backe-Hansen 2018:39). This raises a discussion of "soft" versus "hard" values. How can the relationship issue be of importance in a well-constructed system built on universalism? Is the system in itself reliable, in all practical situations?

In a modern and well-built welfare state, its apparatus may be so well-constructed to meet its main and well-defined challenges, that it may be less effective in targeting measures directed toward smaller groups with specific needs within its population.

Bakketeig and Backe-Hansen write:

> *The answer to these challenges is not necessarily more regulation. The Norwegian system has several regulations in place that can suffice if properly implemented. It might help to make some of these regulations mandatory instead in order to ensure that young adults ageing out of public care are prioritized* (Bakketeig and Backe-Hansen 2018:40).

This suggestion is interesting in the light of the historical backdrop. It suggests that this is a case of organizing systems and measures, rather than organizing young people. It also suggests that the welfare model needs to be reshaped in certain areas because of its failure to cover all groups, with a special focus on the small ones.

Even in the modern stage of Norwegian welfare history, the issues identified by this article have been discussed. The Parliament has clearly stated that it has no intention of sealing the mentioned holes in the safety net, concerning the situation of care leavers. We have witnessed an active debate in the child welfare field in Norway for two decades on the issue: should care leavers be given a legal right to leaving care services? The Parliament has – on several occasions – debated this issue and chosen not to implement such a right. The reasons behind these decisions have been that it would not be natural to give care leavers more rights than other children, and other children in the care system. The legislation on care leavers has only been changed twice in the last two decades, in 1998 and 2009. Both times, the Ministry argued clearly against giving young people making the transition from care to adulthood specialist support. In the Green Paper (Ot.prp. nr. 61,1997-98) the Ministry of Families and Children argued clearly that it did not intend to create a social service for young people from

care when leaving care services were somewhat strengthened in the legislation. In the Green Paper (Ot.prp . nr. 69, 2008-09) proposing the most recent change to leaving care legislation, the Ministry of Children and Equality [2], admits that the legislation does not give care leavers a secure procedure when a decision is made on leaving care services. Moreover, it clearly states that it would be wrong to give care leavers such a right. The overall picture remains, this small group has not been given a special consideration within the broader welfare model.[3]

Conclusion

The universalist welfare model is supported by strong arguments in the Nordic countries. Some general services are available both for young people in general, as well as for young people leaving care - such as free higher education, reasonable study loans and relatively generous social benefits. But the model builds on a division of responsibility for support between the families and the state / the municipalities. This becomes very clear when young people in the general population move out of their parental home in the transition to adulthood – and when care leavers go through the same transition from care. For young people in the general population, most families take responsibility for informal 24/7 support in an often long-drawn out transition process. This support makes it easier for young people to access the universal services of the welfare state, for example higher education. But this also reminds us about the fragility of the system. When young people lack family support, this type of welfare model has some deficiencies. According to Dierckx and Devlieghere (2019) a fundamental condition of universal services is that people are guaranteed accessibility to them. Care leavers do, in general, have less access to the same informal support from family and others. This, in itself, is an argument for providing them with leaving care services, so that such services may enable them to benefit from the general services of the welfare state.

The history of leaving care in Norway shows that young care leavers have not been truly included in the debates on the welfare model. Dominantly these debates have taken into consideration the larger population groups, they have largely focused on labour and they have led to several solid and relative generous measures for the many. The occasions when we hear

[2] The Ministry of Children and Families is dominantly the same as The Ministry of Children and Equality. Today the Ministry has got its original name back again.

[3] Recently (2018) a general right to services from this act was implemented. Care leavers were not included. An ongoing political debate on the next Child welfare act (expected in 2021), suggests that there might be a climate for such a right to leaving care services as well in the near future.

about care leavers in the debate have traditionally been when they are characterized as a potential problem and where the state has needed to organize measures to protect society.

The case of leaving care within the Nordic welfare model, and more specifically in Norway, is an interesting one. It holds a dilemma challenging the model itself, on its ability to respond to the needs of smaller, more vulnerable groups.

References

Backe-Hansen, E, Højer, I, Sjöblom, Y and Storø, J (2013) *Out of home care in Norway and Sweden—Similar and different*. Psychosocial Intervention, 22, 193–202. https://doi: 10.5093/in2013a23

Bakketeig, E and Backe-Hansen, E (2008) *Forskningskunnskap om ettervern* [Research knowledge on aftercare]. Oslo: NOVA, nr. 17/08

Bakketeig, E and Backe-Hansen, E (2018) *Agency and flexible support in transition from care: learning from the experiences of a Norwegian sample of care leavers doing well*. Nordic Social Work Research, Vol. 8, 30-42 - Issue sup1: Leaving care. https://doi:10.1080/2156857X.2018.1518815

Curry SR and Abrams, LS (2015) *Housing and Social Support for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: State of the Research Literature and Directions for Future Inquiry*. Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, Vol. 32, 143–153. https://doi:10.1007/s10560-014-0346-4

Dahl, HM and Eriksen, TR (2017) *Dilemmas of Care in the Nordic Welfare State: Continuity and Change.* London: Routledge

Dierckx, M and Devlieghere, J (2019) *Proportionate universalism in child and family social work*. Child and Family Social work, 2019, Vol 25, 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12689

Emmenegger, P, Kvist, J, Marx, P and Petersen, K (2015) *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism: The Making of a classic*. Journal of European Social Policy, Vol. 25 (1), 3-13. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0958928714556966

Ericsson, K. 2009. *Samfunnets stebarn* [Society's Step Children]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity press

Gautun, Heidi. (2007). *Velferdsstatens forming av individers livsløp* [The Welfare state`s formation of Life Courses]. Nordisk sosialt arbeid, no.1, Vol. 27, 56-63

Getz, B (1894) Straffelovgivningreformen [Criminal Legislation Reform]. In: *Forhandlinger ved Den norske Kriminalistforenings tredje* Møde [Negotiations at The Norwegian Criminality Organization's Third Meeting], edited by Francis Hagerup. Christiania (previous name on Oslo).

Gilbert, N, Parton, N, and Skivenes, M (2011) *Child protection systems. In International trends and orientations.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Halvorsen. R, Hvinden, B and Schøyen, MA (2015) *The Nordic Welfare Model in the Twenty-First Century: The Bumble-Bee Still Flies!* Social Policy & Society, Vol 15, 57-73. https://doi:10.1017/S1474746415000135

Halvorsen, K, Stjernø, S and Øverbye E (2016) *Innføring i helse- og sosialpolitikk* [Introduction to health- and socialpolitics]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget

Jacques, O and Noël, A (2018) *The case for welfare state universalism, or the lasting relevance of the paradox of redistribution.* Journal of European Social Policy, Vol. 28, 70–85. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0958928717700564

Kananen, J (2014) *The Nordic Welfare State in Three Eras. From Emancipation to Discipline.* Surrey: Ashgate

Kildal, N and Kuhnle, S (2005) Introduction. In Nanna Kildal and Stein Kuhnle: *Normative Foundations of the Welfare State. The Nordic experience*. Oxon: Routledge

Kildal, N (2006) *Universalisme versus målretting – de evig tilbakevendende argumenter* [Universalism versus targeting - the eternally returning arguments]. Nordisk sosialt arbeid, vol.26, p.2-13

Kohli, M (2007) *The Institutionalization of the Life Course: Looking Back to Look Ahead. Research in Human Development*, Vol. 4, Issue 3-4, 253-271. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427600701663122

Kvist, J, Fritzell, J, Hvinden, B and Kangas, O (2011) Changing social inequality and the Nordic welfare model. In Jon Kvist, Johan Fritzell, Bjørn Hvinden and Ollie Kangas (eds.): *Changing Social Equality: The Nordic Welfare Model in the 21st Century*. Bristol: Policy Press

Kvist, J and Greve, B (2011) *Has the Nordic Welfare Model been Transformed?* Social Policy and Administration.Vol. 45, No.2, 146–160. https://doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9515.2010.00761.x

Lidén, H, Aasen, B, Seeberg, ML and Staver, AB (2020) *Fra bosetting til voksenliv. Den kommunale tjenestekjeden for enslige mindreårige flyktninger* [From housing to adult life. The municipal chain of services for minor unaccompanied refugees]. Oslo: Institutt for samfunnsforskning

Madsen, B. 2006. *Sosialpedagogikk* [Social Pedagogy]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget

Mann-Feder, VR and Goyette, M (eds.) (2019*) Leaving Care and the Transition to Adulthood: International Contributions to Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press

Mendes, P and Snow, P (2016) *Young People Transitioning from Out-of-Home Care. International Research, Policy and Practice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan

Messel, J (2013). *I velferdsstatens frontlinje. Barnevernspedagogers, sosionomers og vernepleieres historie* [In the front line of the welfare state. The history of child welfare workers, social workers and social educators]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget

Mendes, P, Johnson, G, & Moslehuddin, B (2011) *Young people leaving state care: Australian policy and practice*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing Press.

Munro, E and Stein, M (2008) Introduction: Comparative Exploration of Care Leavers` Transtition to Adulthood. In Mike Stein and Emily Munro (eds.)*: Young People`s Transition from Care to Adulthood. International research and Practice.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Mølholt, AK, Stage, S, Pejtersen, JH and Thomsen, P (2012) *Efterværn for tidligere anbragte unge, en videns- og erfaringsopsamling* [Aftercare for young people formerly in placements, a review of Knowledge and Experiences]. Copenhagen: SFI

NOU 2004:23 (2004) *Barnehjem og spesialskoler under lupen— Nasjonal kartlegging av omsorgssvikt og overgrep i barnevernsinstitusjoner 1945–1980* [Children`s homes and special schools under the magnifying glass – National mapping of neglect and abuse in child welfare institutions 1945-1980]. Norwegian Official Reports

Oterholm, I (2015) *Organisasjonens betydning for sosialarbeideres vurderinger* [How Organizations matters to Social Workers Discretionary Jugdement]. Oslo: Oslo and Akershus University College, PHD-thesis

Oterholm, I and Paulsen, V (2018) *Young people and social worker`s experience of differences between child welfare services and social services.* Nordic Social Work Research, Vol 8, 19-29. https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2018.1450283

Paulsen, V (2017) *Overgang til voksenlivet for ungdom i barnevernet.* [Transitions to adult life for Young People with a child welfare background]. Trondheim: NTNU, PHD-thesis

Pedersen, OK (2011) *Konkurrencestaten* [The Competition State]. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels forlag

Rauch, D (2005) *Institutional Fragmentation and Social Service Variations: A Scandinavian Comparison.* Doctoral Dissertation in Sociology at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Umeå University

Sos. (1961) *Ettervern, rundskrivnr.29 til Barnevernloven* [Aftercare, Circular no. 29 to the Child Welfare Act]. Sosialdepartementet.

Stein, M (2012) Young people leaving care, supporting pathways to adulthood. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Stein, M (2019) *Supporting young people from care to adulthood: International practice.* Child and Family Social Work. 2019, 24, 400–405. https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12473

Stein, M and Munro, E (eds.) (2008*) Young People`s Transition from Care to Adulthood. International research and Practice.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Stein, M (2014) *Young People's Transitions from Care to Adulthood in European and Postcommunist Eastern European and Central Asian Societies*. Australian Social Work. Vol 67, 1, 24-38. https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2013.836236

Storø, J (2005): *Å gå over brennende bruer. En kvalitativ studie av barnevernungdommers overgang til en selvstendig tilværelse* [To walk over burning brigdes. A qualitative study of the transition to independence for young people in child welfare]. Oslo: HIO hovedfagsrapport, nr. 14

Storø, J (2012). *Overgang og ettervern for ungdom i barnevernet* [Transition and aftercare for young people in child welfare]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget

Storø, J (2014*) From Superintendence to Transition and Self-determination. Historic View on Policies and Practice towards Norwegian Care-leavers*. Practice: Social Work in Action, Vol. 27, 5-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/09503153.2014.970156

Storø, J, Sjöblom, Y and Höjer, I (2019) *A comparison of state support for young people leaving care in Norway and Sweden. Differences within comparable welfare systems.* Child and Family Social Work, Vol 24, 303-399. https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12471

Svendsen, S, Berg, B, Paulsen, V, Garvik, M and Valenta, M (2018) *Kunnskapsoppsummering om enslige mindreårige asylsøkere og flyktninger* [Knowlegde review on unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees]. Trondheim: NTNU Samfunnsforskning

van der Wel, KA and Halvorsen, K (2015) *The bigger the worse? A comparative study of the welfare state and employment commitment*. Work, Employment and Society, Vol 29, Issue 1. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0950017014542499

Vike, H and Haukelien, H (2016) Omsorgens grenser [The borders of care]. In Cecilie Basberg Neumann, Nina Olsvold og Tove Thagaard (eds.): *Omsorgsarbeidets sosiologi* [The sociology of care work]. Oslo: Fagbokforlaget

Ward, H (2008) Legal and Policy Frameworks. In Mike Stein, Mike and Emily Munro(eds.)*: Young People`s Transition from Care to Adulthood. International research and Practice.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers