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Collaboration between the UK's voluntary organisations and public agencies is often viewed through the lens of the changing welfare state. In this paper we contrast cross-sector collaboration in children's services, an example of 'welfare state', with collaboration in flood risk management as an example of 'environmental state'. We argue that different state histories have implications for understanding how cross-sector collaboration develops, and how power dynamics play out between public and voluntary sector actors in a particular policy domain.

Introduction

Collaboration between the UK's voluntary organisations (VOs) and public agencies is often viewed through the lens of the state's changing role in service delivery, the outsourcing of the 'welfare state', and as a shift in governance to tackle society's most complex problems (for example Lewis 2005, Milbourne 2013, Osborne 2006, Rees and Mullins (eds) 2017). Issues such as climate change adaptation, poverty, child wellbeing and elder care, are fraught with political and ethical dilemmas, with potential solutions lying beyond the boundaries of any single organization (Trist, 1983). Today's resultant inter-organizational policy domains are characterised by multiple, dynamic, policy-driven partnerships across sectors in which we see voluntary sector organisations determined to make a difference, to 'make things happen' (Huxham and Vangen 2000) with and between public agencies and private sector partners (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000; Newman, 2005).

This paper originates first in our past professional experiences and ongoing practice-focused research in the different sectors of children's services and flood management; and second in our theoretical interest in cross-sector collaboration. In early discussions we noted strong parallels in the substantive issues faced by practitioners, and in the dilemmas encountered when adopting a collaborative approach to tackling the challenges of children's services and flood management. We also noted apparent differences that characterise and impact different roles played by VOs in these collaborations. Notably, in flood risk management, cross-sector partnerships motivated by environmental objectives are relatively novel as a formal policy intervention, piloted as recently as 2011 (Defra, 2011); this contrasts with a lengthy collaborative history in children's services spanning four decades. However, these relatively recent partnerships are led almost exclusively by VOs, such as Rivers and Wildlife Trusts. This is in marked contrast to the situation in children's services, where they are led by public agencies - specifically local authorities who carry legal responsibilities for child protection, and coordination of child wellbeing services.

Clifford et al (2013) have noted that our understanding of the field and scale of activity of the environmental third sector is poor, 'patchy at best' (p.242). In addition, our initial review of the literature of cross-sector collaboration highlighted an absence of discussion as to how this different policy domain shapes the structure, processes, and outcomes of collaboration. Arguably, this literature arises primarily from the social welfare domain, working with an assumption that insights regarding the management and practice of collaboration can be transferred across into environmental policy contexts. However, political scientists Meadowcroft (1999; 2005) and Gough (2016) distinguish 'welfare' and 'environmental' as two distinct 'states', the development of the former predating the latter by at least one generation. This suggests that policy domains within each state could have somewhat different relationships between state and non-state actors. Hence, in this paper we aim to compare and contrast cross-sector collaboration in children's services, as an example of the 'welfare state', with the more recent collaborative initiatives in flood management, as an example of the 'environmental state'. Our objective is to further understanding regarding similarities and differences in the two domains to consider how and why collaborative partnerships develop, which partners are engaged, and how power dynamics play out between

actors from public and voluntary sectors. Understanding the implications of these different state contexts may enable reflective practice, and potentially enable environmental VOs more recently engaged in cross sector collaborations to avoid some of the challenges encountered by their counterparts in the welfare domain.

The paper proceeds as follows. First we expand briefly upon the concept of the two states, 'welfare' and 'environmental'. This leads to a short account of methodology, and the comparative analysis of cross-sector collaboration in children's services with the more recent collaboration in flood risk management. Finally, we discuss the insights the 'two states' conceptualisation gives us for understanding the development of cross-sector collaboration and VO engagement in each domain. As this research is ongoing, our reflections in this paper are necessarily tentative, but begin to outline a direction for further practice-focused research.

A Comparative Analysis of Cross-Sector Collaboration in the Two States: Children's Services (Welfare) and Flood Risk Management (Environmental)

In this paper, we draw on Meadowcroft's (1999; 2005) characterisation of 'welfare' and 'environmental' as two distinct 'states' developing a generation apart, and respond to his call for comparative research. Gough (2016) explores the two state conceptualisation further, identifying that industrialisation and ideas of neoliberalism are drivers that are common to both, but that the specific constellation of ideas, power interests, and institutions is somewhat different. While Gough (2016) focuses on the ways in which institutions, power interests and ideas frame activity at a state level, we extend this thinking, to explore if and how the identified drivers have a differential impact on the state's engagement of VOs drawn in for their particular knowledge and expertise. We highlight the ways in which these drivers frame VO engagement in the two policy domains and the development of cross-sector collaboration – both historically and in the present day. In the process, we begin to argue for a greater focus on socio-political context in collaboration theory, and for policy and practice guidance that takes account of different state contexts.

In brief, the methodology adopted for this ongoing research takes the form of a comparative analysis of the policy domains of children's services ('welfare state') and flood management ('environmental state'). The comparative work proceeded through secondary analysis of our previously independent qualitative research in the two policy domains (Jacklin-Jarvis, 2013; Potter, 2013). Our respective research methods both combined policy analysis and fieldwork, including semi-structured interviews and observation. In addition, the comparative study draws on and analyses academic literature from each policy domain. As engaged researchers (Van de Ven, 2007), we are interested in insights that both build theory and are of use to practitioners.

Children's services

The provision of children's services has its roots in the charities of the 19th century, arising in the period of industrialisation to care and campaign for the children of the poor.. With the inception of the welfare state in the 1940s, the state became the primary protector and provider of the nation's children, with VOs complementing state provision. At this point, few charities received state funding (Prochaska, 2006).

The policy endeavour to achieve 'integrated' children's services began in the 1960s, with the Seebohm report (1968) and consequent introduction of local social work departments in 1971. This move to 'join-up' services provided by different agencies can be traced through to Labour's 2008 'Think Family' policy to coordinate packages of support services around families in need (Parton 2009) – and beyond. The 50 years since 1968 have been characterised by a proliferation of policy-led collaborative processes and structures centred around two key ideas – 'protection' and 'prevention', each with somewhat different implications for state and non-state actors (Parton, 2004; Parton, 2009; Parton, 2012). While the policy discourse of protection focuses primarily on the coordination of state actors (social work, police, and health) to safeguard a child from harm, the prevention discourse draws attention to the role of VOs who keep children from entering state

services by providing support before problems escalate (see for example Allen, 2011). The policy narrative is punctuated by successive governments' *Working together* documents from 1974 to the present. *Working together* constitutes statutory guidance on inter-agency responsibilities and processes for information sharing and service coordination to protect children at risk. The continuity of this policy discourse constitutes child protection as an inherently inter-agency collaborative domain (Parton 2011), coordinated by Local Safeguarding Boards (LSCBs). While the latter are led by local authorities, and attended by a range of public agencies, the guidance clearly identifies VOs as partners who share responsibility for safeguarding children.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the continuing endeavour to integrate services for children led to a proliferation of continually dynamic policy-led collaborative structures alongside the LSCB (Percy-Smith, 2005). VOs were engaged as contributors to children's services development and delivery through a range of partnerships that drew attention to the idea of prevention - including Children's Trusts, Early Years, and Youth Justice Partnerships. The rise and demise of these partnerships took place in the broader social welfare context characterised by moves towards the marketization of welfare services. For example, local authorities have a duty to manage the 'market' of childcare services – services that at least until the late 1990s were primarily delivered by VOs. While the marketization of 'prevention' has resulted in significant transfer of services to VOs, it is only more recently that 'protection' social work services have begun to be commissioned outside of public agencies (Jones, 2015). Private organisations must establish non-profit subsidiaries to bid for this work, blurring the boundary between private and voluntary organisations, and in the view of some commentators representing 'an end game for publicly provided children's social services' (ibid p.463).

Since 2010, responding to changes in national government policy, local government has moved away from partnership structures and back to council committees as the mechanisms for leading local children's services. Furthermore, the Department of Education's 2018 version of *Working Together* (currently out for consultation) reinforces the importance of VOs as service providers, but ends the requirement for a partnership board. Such changes reinforce the idea of a 'de-coupling' between state and sector (Macmillan 2013) that promotes a market of commissioned services, but provides limited formal routes for influencing the context in which commissioning takes place.

Flood risk management

Flood 'defence' can also be traced back to the 19th century, attempts to control rivers financed by the newly powerful industrialist class and agriculturalists in their own private interests. State resources were employed from the inception of the Land Drainage Act of 1930 and further increased in response to the dramatic East Coast storm of 1953, in what was seen as one of the greatest civil engineering problems of the time – building flood defences in order to protect property and prevent repeat floods. In contrast to children's charities as service providers, conservation VOs were positioned in a campaigning role against this rapid urbanisation and agricultural expansion (Cook and Inman, 2012), the embankment of rivers with concrete and the associated loss of natural floodplains and wetlands viewed as a 'barbarism' against ecology.

For the remainder of the 20th century, flood defence remained firmly in the technocratic domain of engineers within government agencies. The impetus for 'integrated' water management arose through the wider international movement for sustainable development from the late 1980s, eventually filtering through to the UK policy domain in the form of European Union (EU) Directives (Water Framework Directive, 2000; Flood Directive, 2007), gathering further momentum following the shock domestic flood events of 2007 and ensuing recommendations from the Pitt Review (2008). As such, we can also see flood risk management as a policy domain diverging around the similar children's services ideas of 'protection' and 'prevention', again with different implications and roles for VOs.

For flood risk management as 'protection', decisions and priorities for flood defences remain centralised, set by the Ministerial Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). A state regulatory body (the Environment Agency), is operationally responsible for managing risks,

setting out national objectives and prioritising investment from the national to local level through a framework of benefit–cost analysis (Donaldson et al, 2012). The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (HM Government 2010) places main responsibilities on 'Lead Local Flood Authorities' (Local Government) for their local area. *Co-operation and requesting information in flood and coastal erosion risk management* (Defra, 2011) sets out how risk management authorities (the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authorities, Water Utility Companies) should 'work together' constructively under their new statutory duty to co-operate and share information. Partnerships are 'encouraged' with community forums, whereby VOs (e.g. the National Flood Forum) endeavour communities to be heard by the authorities and to be empowered in taking control of their own flood risk (nationalfloodforum.org.uk). Employing Meadowcroft's conceptualisation of the 'Environmental State' in terms of securing environmental goods, we can identify a distinct set of practices whereby ecosystems approaches or 'natural' flood risk management interventions more closely parallel children's services ideas of 'prevention'.

The opportunity to innovate with natural flood management, as a subset of the catchment based approach, came about partly in response to criticisms and a threat of a judicial review by VOs for Defra's low ambition for environmental improvements and lack of stakeholder participation in local decision making (Robins et al, 2017, Watson, 2014, Whalley and Weatherhead, 2016). The Government committed to a full policy review and subsequent new initiative 'the catchment based approach' (Watson, 2014).   These events converged with government led public sector reform, whereby Defra adopted the language of localism, decentralisation and the need to encourage civil society to take responsibility and initiative for improving their own communities (Defra, 2011). The adoption of the catchment-based approach, is seen as progressive in theory, as an opportunity to fundamentally reshape water management by devolving responsibilities and leadership. In reality, the government agency (EA) only have to show 'due regard' to CaBA partnerships' input to EU directive led activities (Forster et al, 2016; Robins et al, 2017). VOs lack a formal mandate, without any power or control over state resources and decisions regarding flood risk management. Top-down state led arrangements and engineered flood defences remain the dominant paradigm entwined with housing delivery, 'natural flood management' only slowly gaining traction (Van Buuren et al., 2018). In the context of austerity, Defra has emphasized that there is limited funding available for the catchment partnerships, instead the approach is expected to garner local support, new sources of funding and other resources to deliver on local aspirations for the water environment (Defra, 2011).

Discussion and Conclusion

In this discussion, we reflect on the ways in which the particular constellation of ideas, institutions and power interests (Gough, 2016) in children's services and flood management impacts on the engagement of VOs in each domain and collaboration with public agencies. The different histories of welfare and environmental states reflect different understandings of state responsibilities, with consequences for the ways in which interdependency of state and VOs plays out in children's services and flood risk management, and for the development of cross-sector collaboration in each domain. Although both are now characterised by structures and processes of cross-sector collaboration, there are significant differences in voluntary sector engagement that can be explained, at least in part, by these different state histories. We comment on the different interdependency of state and sector in each domain; then explore how the concepts of prevention and protection that have emerged in the comparative research play out within these interdependencies.

The impact of the neoliberal idea of marketization on children's services is contextualised by the broader move towards the outsourcing of welfare state services. The commissioning of children's services over the last 25 years has offered opportunities for VOs to contribute to and shape service delivery, particularly where commissioning and collaborative governance arrangements have been intertwined, as in the New Labour period. Commissioning has also increased the complexity of state/sector interdependency, as the financial value of public sector commissioning of VOs initially increased, then decreased as a consequence of austerity. In the post-recession period since 2007,

children's VOs that have contracted with the state have faced the same challenges of independence as other welfare VOs (Independence Panel, 2015). Environmental VOs are also impacted by the ongoing spending constraints within the public sector, however, interdependency has not played out in the same way in the flood risk management domain. Given the generational gap in the development of the environmental state, the policy drivers and statutory basis for collaborative working in flood management only came to the fore in the context of public sector austerity and localism. VOs leading these partnerships were not engaged at the time of the 'Third Way' era of major financial support, capacity building and growth in the sector (Jones et al, 2016). Instead VOs received what commentators view as 'paltry' state start-up funding and immediately faced the challenge of securing other independent sources of funding (Watson, 2014). However, as a consequence they have not developed any reliance on state funding and do not face the consequent concerns of maintaining programmes of activity and retention of staff (Lindsay et al, 2014). They are also not at present in the same marketized relationship with state agencies and have maintained their independent voice.

Finally, we reflect on the ways in which the key common idea of 'protection' impacts collaboration in each domain and consequently VO engagement. In children's services, 'protection' is established as a state responsibility, and defined in legislation, with statutory guidance (*Working together*) for collaboration in place since 1974. Although this accountability framework arguably masks the idea of 'prevention' that has been associated with the flexibility and innovation of VOs (see for example Allen 2011), it has at least offered a clear focus for collaborative working and the continued development of institutional arrangements. However, in flood risk management, the idea of 'protection' in the guise of engineered flood defences is directly contested within the same policy domain with ideas of 'prevention' in the form of natural flood management and ecosystem services approaches. As indicated by Gough (2016), pro-environmental ideas and goals often challenge and conflict with the dominant economic framework. In this case, the unresolved nature of these questions relates to the power interests and disciplinary focus of players in the same flood risk management domain – the dominance of engineering ideologies and the path dependencies to the protection of private land owning and property interests (Potter, 2013; Van Buuren et al, 2018). This also echoes Gough's (2016) further assertion that science and scientists play a role in defining, measuring, modelling, and mitigating climate change in a manner that is un-paralleled in the welfare arena. Although we note some similarity in child protection in terms of the involvement of medical science, the mix of scientific/technocratic ideas and private interests holding power over the flood risk management domain has no direct parallel. Again, this raises particular challenges for VOs with limited power, influence and resources, endeavouring to innovate with an ecologically inspired (prevention) approach to improving and protecting the local environment.

We conclude this exploratory paper with brief comments on the implications of these insights for VOs that collaborate with the state in a particular policy domain. The two state conceptualisation points to the importance of understanding the particular constellation of ideas, institutions, and power interests in a policy domain in an historical state context. We encourage VOs to explore this constellation in their own policy domain, but also to compare and contrast this with other areas of policy with a somewhat different history of state activity and VO engagement. We note the need to take care in drawing generalised conclusions about how state/VO collaboration may progress over time, and in transferring policy and practice advice uncritically across domains. The challenge to protect children was led by VOs in the 19th century, the role of primary protector then moved to the state, then back towards a more collaborative but contested shared responsibility. In broad terms, the development of children's services into the 21st century reflected the move through New Public Management (NPM) towards the more fragmented inter-organisational arrangements of New Public Governance (Osborne 2006). A key question that emerges then - can differences in the two domains simply be accounted for by suggesting that the domains of children's services and flood risk management are at different points in the same developmental trajectory? If so, is it simply a matter of time before VS-led flood risk management partnerships become a site of

commissioning and competition, or can this be avoided and a more robust and collaborative approach to governance established?

From a research perspective, this study affirms the value of comparative studies of collaboration in different policy domains. It provides direction for the next stage of our research as we explore further the changing relationships between the state and non-governmental agencies delivering public policy and services, and more broadly the importance of socio-political context for understanding how cross-sector collaboration develops in a particular policy domain.

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