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URBAN POLICY INNOVATIONS IN LOCAL WELFARE IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND: CORE IDEAS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The shaping of 'concordance' in the Geneva welfare system

In Geneva, there is a general agreement about the existence of a local welfare system which supports vulnerable populations. Many stakeholders and observers pointed out that Geneva certainly has one of the most supportive welfare systems in the Swiss Confederation in which cantons can develop diverse social policies in an autonomous way. According to well-informed participants such as the Member of Parliament (MP) Pierre Weiss or the journalists Marc Bretton and Eric Budry, the agreement is also about the interventions of cantonal/regional social policies to reinforce the federal system. The financing of social policies has changed over the last years. Social expenses have greatly expanded and they are founded by the business tax, which has increased in the last years due to the growing number of international companies in the canton. Their value added is high so that the volume of business tax has increased. The canton can thus develop social policy without increasing the level of general taxes. As one of the people interviewed mentionned, Switzerland does not love taxes so much, especially in comparison to other close countries such as France.

The legitimacy of the welfare system is also related to the political system of Switzerland characterized by direct democracy processes and frequent series of votes about diverse issues including social policies. Diverse participants emphasized that people's vote oblige political actors to compromise about social policy. Eric Etienne, chief manager of the reform of the Cantonal Minimum Income (RMCAS) argued that: "The vote of people implied changes in the debate. 68, 5% of population approved the reform and finally decided. People sometimes voted against social policy. On the reform of the RMCAS, they said yes and had the last word". Through the "initiative populaire", groups of people can propose a law or a change into a current law and submit them to the population vote; this initiative requires the signature of 10 000 people in the canton of Geneva (Chapters III and IV of the Constitution of the Republic of Geneva, articles 64, 65 etc.). The "initiative populaire" encourages the agreement and the shaping of compromise into civil society in order to counterbalance the power of the Parliament. But the latter also generally elaborates a "counter project" contradicting the "initiative populaire" or proposing significant changes. Once again, members of parliament have to agree about a common file (Saladin, 1976). This "democracy of concordance" is shaping at different levels and by diverse mechanisms that all value a large agreement as far as possible. According to Leonhard Neidhart (1970), in the Swiss context, public decisions go forward through defeats and at the end compromises. Finally, the legitimacy of the welfare system is rooted in its strong impact upon the local society: it employs a significant part of the population and goes hand in hand with a distribution of large subsides to the non-governmental organizations and through benefits to the whole population.

The making of public decisions in Geneva encourages the gathering of people sharing similar view points about the local welfare system. The recent reforms of benefits for long term unemployed people was, for instance, shaped by a significant coalition gathering political leaders and state policy-makers. According to Christophe Dunand, head of the NGO Realise,

> *some individuals shared a similar vision of the great principles of the reform. The head of social assistance, the head of the Cantonal Office for Employment, the State counsellor François Longchamp, some higher managers of organizations working on reintegration of unemployed people… All of them defended similar ideas:*

encouraging people to go back to work, working as a key dimension
of life, for instance.

They did not only agree about the cognitive and normative dimensions of the *referential*. They also estimated that improvement of reintegration of people into the labour market required that the sector of employment and that of social assistance should open to each other rather than being referred to antagonistic principles. Agreement was also about the instrumental dimension of the *referentiel*. To a certain extent, we have witnessed the shaping of a "reformateur" milieu converging towards the necessity of changes into social policy, which does not mean that people cannot oppose on other issues, in other times. Diverse factors may explain why coalitions perhaps emerge more easily in Geneva than in some other cities. We hypothesize first that the federal organization of the Swiss Confederation matters. The city and the canton of Geneva form the State of Geneva, with its own Constitution and parliament defined in a quite autonomous way with respect to the Confederation. To some extent, important participants have to agree on important issues in order to maintain viability of the State. In addition, at a very concrete level, many people with high responsibilities know each other for a long time and some are used to working together. Routines of collective work are perhaps more present in the city of Geneva than in some other metropolises. Another factor is both conjectural and secondary but it is worth mentioning it. It seems that the profile of François Longchamp, State Consellor and head of the Department of solidarity and employment, also mattered in the shaping of a coalition. According to some participants, "he knows how to make a compelling case which can convince people".

1.2. Similar values, opposing definitions and perspectives

Stakeholders mentionned similar core values to describe and analyze the local welfare system -solidarity, humanism, individual responsibility, respect of people, equal access to social opportunities- but they are not defined in the same way. In a matter of solidarity, for instance, we can bring out three perspectives. The first one refers to an institutional and collective system which supports vulnerable people. The second one means a system to which people participate according to their capacity/ability as it was argued by the General Secretary of the Social Party. In comparison to the first meaning, we find a more active definition of solidarity with the word "participate" and the idea of equity (depending on people's abilities). The third definition is proposed by the right wing politician Pierre Weiss: "solidarity implies rights and duties. Society has to support people who meet heavy difficulties; society has to be in charge, for its own dignity, it may be for a short or a long time. But recipients must make efforts to reintegrate even though it requires time. I give you in order than you can give/contribute in the near or long future".

The individual is almost absent in the first definition which focuses on the institutional response to vulnerability whereas the last one emphasizes the idea of a contract involving obligations and responsibilities on both hands. The contract refers to the liberal perspective meaning that social assistance should not be mechanical (and universal?) but rather tied to formal arrangements between participants involved.

Moreover, stakeholders developed divergent views of the evolution of the local welfare system in the last decades. On the one hand, narratives are about the withdrawal of the welfare system at the federal scale with an impact upon subsidiary levels. Indeed, the Confederation proposed in 2010 a revision of the Federal Law on Unemployment that diminishes the duration of allowance and the latter was approved by populations through a vote. To the socialist Arnaud Moreillon, "great principles of social policy at the federal level are disaggregating and responsibilities are transferred to the canton, the city and the

individuals. In the most liberal cantons and cities, individuals are more and more in charge of their own welfare, which goes with a fragmented society".

Lydia Schneider Hauser (Socialist Party, MP) also says: "we are witnessing a more individualized welfare. It is up to the individual to find a job, to go the social services, to develop his own networks. And the State fears to spend too much money and implements strict rules to exclude potential recipients. In the canton, we still have the social structures we implemented thirty years ago but access is becoming narrower and more difficult". On the other hand, to Pierre Weiss, Geneva is characterized by an expanding welfare system: "it has become greater with more family allowances for instance but it has also become more rigorous and less mechanically redistributive". The head of an important NGO Realise also states: "I do not feel an ultra-liberal wind in Geneva. If it was the case, we would not have implemented the "emplois de solidarité". In a matter of unemployment, for instance, I think we succeed in spreading the idea that we need a collective responsibility". A head of a NGO and a right wing political leader sharing a similar view suggests that coalition does not necessarily build itself around traditional ideological principles. Other cleavages and lines of conflict are at work, particularly regarding the role of the State.

2. THE FIELD OF UNEMPLOYMENT

2.1. Social assistance and employment: a new *referential*

The Geneva insurance for unemployment was created in 1983 complementing the national insurance. Rate of unemployment was low at this time and the general orientation consisted in supporting unemployed people till they go back to the labour market. Employment policies were mainly passive and implemented at the city level. The economic crisis in Switzerland at the beginning of the 1990's marked a turning point regarding both the representation of unemployed people and the content of unemployment policy. In 1995, the reform of the federal unemployment insurance meant a shift to policies focused on activation of people with logic of reciprocity in which a non-cooperative attitude from unemployed people is penalized. In order to remain in the unemployment insurance system, people must be active (job experience, training, subsidized job), activate their networks and develop their own employability. Switzerland followed the recommendations of the OECD program "Making work pay". The 1995 Federal Law on Unemployment has also meant a control of unemployed people: those who are insufficiently active in job seeking or training may see payments suspended. However, the logic of reciprocity has been interpreted and implemented in diverse ways in Swiss cantons: it has been viewed as a mean to avoid abuses and encourage the beneficiary to reimburse his debt to society whereas in other cantons, it has been perceived as a tool to make reintegration in the labour market easier. According to diverse experts, Geneva was part of the cities where implementation of the law focused much more on reintegration than on control (Giraud, 2006).

In the last decade, one of the most significant reforms has been the growing combination of social assistance and measures favouring employment in the local and regional programs/projects. The main orientation has been enabling people depending on social assistance to access measures to reintegrate the labour market, which was much less the case before. Legal norms were changed as well as the general representation of people on benefits. One considered that they had to work in one way or another. Two new programs were therefore implemented. The first one was the "Emplois de solidarité" put in place in 2008. Through this measure implemented by the Cantonal Agency for Employment, people far from the labour market for a long time may access long term jobs in the NGO's with a salary of 3 000 euros per month, for a full time job. The "emplois de solidarité" have been

funded by the canton (through subsides to the NGO's) and are supposed to support the reintegration into the primary labour market.

The second program was the implementation of the LIASI (Law on Integration and Individual Social Assistance) which replaced the RMCAS (Cantonal Minimum Income). Implemented in 1994, the RMCAS targeted people who previously worked and whose unemployment allowance came to the end after 400 days. It was granted for one year and could be renewed for two years. The amount was 1 100 euros for a single people, 1 620 euros for two people with a logic of activation in the non-profit sector. In 2011, the RMCAS was repealed. Through the new LIASI, unemployed people who exhausted their rights to unemployment allowance depend on the cantonal social assistance and follow a four weeks evaluation system assessing their ability to work. After assessment, two categories are considered: people who can work ►program of reintegration into employment, people who are considered as unable to work►social assistance and program of social reintegration. The LIASI brings together two categories of people which were previously classified into different target groups- people on benefits and long term unemployed people who were not considered as receiving social assistance in the RMCAS system.

The *referentiel* of the LIASI and the Emplois de Solidarités is mainly based on the principle of dignity of people through work. A key cognitive dimension is that people depending on social assistance for a long time should not stay apart from employment measures and more generally the whole population. To achieve this goal –and this is the instrumental dimension of the *referentiel*- social assistance needed to be reformed in order to enable people on social assistance to go back to work even though it may mean implementation of long term jobs subsidized by the State.

2.2. Opposing values and perspectives

The progressive implementation of these programs provoked significant debates in the city. A first discussion was about the relevance of the *emplois de solidarité* as a way to reintegrate people into the labour market. Diverse core values were mentionned by the right wing parties. Individual responsibility was put forward to oppose the creation of long term subsidized jobs: people should find jobs offered by the primary market and make efforts by themselves. Another important value was centrality of work in Switzerland. Marie Thérèse Engelberts, a MCG member of the parliament, defines it such as "a very strong aspiration to be independent, values such as proudness, courage and willingness". She says: "work has been the privileged way to achieve one's goals in Switzerland". The journalist Marc Bretton added: "Stakeholders have been increasingly aware that some people on benefits were not able to go back to the labour market. Not because of the lack of abilities but because the market excludes them. Therefore, we needed a segment between the market and total inactivity. But for some right wing politicians, it was really difficult to hear and understand". A second debate did not refer to core values but rather to policy-oriented approaches, general choices on the relevant patterns of intervention: the leftist political parties that did not oppose the principle of the *emplois de solidarité* were much more active in the policy orientated debate. Most of them along with trade unions criticized the low level of the offered wages. To the Socialist Party and the leftist party *Solidarités*, wages did not abide to the collective agreements and people getting a *emploi-solidarité* were a cheap labour, creating a new kind of wage dumping. Arguments were about the whole labour market and the sharing of the value added between employers and salaries. To the contrary, the private employers in the for profit organizations, included in the discussion, argued that wages had to be low in order to encourage people to go back to the primary labour market. Activation of people was the key argument.

Concerning the LIASI, there was first of all a relative agreement about the "inefficiency" of the RMCAS with respect to reintegration into employment. We find in the diverse arguments a technical approach of the welfare dominated by the tryptic goals-inputs-outcomes.

- "Diverse reports that were overlooked pointed out that the RMCAS lacks financial means to achieve its goals" (The Greens, political program)
- "The main problem of the RMCAS is not about what it has been but about what we have done with it (or rather not done)!" (The Socialist Party, Solidarités, political program).
- "The RMCAS is more an annuity than a way to employment" (Journal of the Liberal party).

Besides this first common ground, we found conflicts in the cognitive approach of the RMCAS. According to the Socialist party and the Greens, the RMCAS should not disappear because it is a relevant and necessary transition before the unemployment allowance system and social assistance. To the Liberals, this intermediary system discourages unemployed people to look for a job. RMCAS traps people into social assistance and is a real barrier to employment.

Moreover, the debate about the repeal of the RMCAS and the implementation of the LIASI brought out diverse conceptions of long term unemployed people. In the RMCAS system, long term unemployed people were not considered as people on social benefits. They were not at the bottom of the welfare system but rather in an intermediary category preventing them to fall into social assistance. Eric Etienne who participated to the implementation of the RMCAS argues:

> The original idea was keeping unemployed people in the RMCAS system for one or two years. And then, they should have depended on social assistance. But it had not been the case because it was not easy to tell people to go to social assistance, also because benefits of the RMCAS were more important than those offered by social assistance. Some people remained in the RMCAS system for 13 years and social workers said "why don't we consider them as people on social assistance? They are similar.

The orientation of the LIASI has been both considering long-term unemployed people as similar to those depending on social assistance and reforming the latter so that it comprises programs supporting reintegration into employment. But this orientation was not approved by the Socialist Party for instance. To the latter, long term unemployed people were different from people on benefits. They suffered from a structural employment problem and not from « social fragility ». These populations should not be mixed. To the right wing parties, to the contrary, long-term unemployed people who got the RMCAS had become very similar to those who are on benefits. Within this category, the main barrier to employment is not a lack of education or a low level of qualification but how people distance from the labour market, which is reinforced by the RMCAS allowance.

Beyond the opposing views of long term unemployed people, we have been witnessing contrasting set of beliefs and values about what unemployment is and how it should be tackled. To the Socialist Party for instance, solving unemployment problems requires making more diverse employment in the region and offering low qualified jobs in diverse

sectors such as childcare, elderly care, in the green tech sector, catering; the Socialists emphasize the need of an industrial general policy impacting upon the job offer. The Left wing party *Solidarités* has a similar view but insists on the increase of public employment. Unemployment is therefore framed as a structural problem that requires a macro approach of the economy and employment functioning. On the other hand, the right wing parties reckon that unemployment is above all related to the distance of some people from the labour market. The individual is at the core of their perspective. They only consider higher scales when emphasizing that the welfare system tends to reinforce distance from the labour market. Therefore, to the Liberals, tackle unemployment is not about changing the types of jobs: it requires focusing primarily on the micro level to support the reintegration of individuals into the labour market and on the meso level in order to improve how the diverse services work with people.

2.3. Supportive and contrasting networks of actors

Conciliation of social assistance and services in charge of unemployment has shaped diverse coalitions in the local society. Clearly, this reform was supported and somewhat initiated by a group of NGOs, very proactive in the area. Non-profit organizations such as *Realise, L'orangerie or OSEO,* specialized in the reintegration of unemployed people and even marginalized groups, developed diverse practises of lobbying. As Christophe Dunand, head of Realise, argues: "the Office for Unemployment and the Office for Social Assistance did not talk each other. We cooperated with both institutions and we tried to build a bridge. In Realise, practising lobbying is in our mission and institutional philosophy. This is also the case of the OSEO. We are close, we talk a lot".

These NGOS defended for many years the idea that people on social benefits should access measures implemented for those who get the unemployment insurance. They also developed their network being often in touch with political leaders, entrepreneurs and journalists. "We carefully follow the news and as soon as a journalist calls us for an interview, we are able to develop answers and arguments" (C. Dunand). This group of NGO's was supported by a part of the Greens.

There is another supporting network comprising higher managers in state institutions such as Eric Etienne, the head of the *Emplois de Solidarités*, the Director of the Office For Employment and the head of the Hospice general. They all worked with François Longchamp to implement the *Emplois de Solidarités* and the LIASI. According to Christophe Dunand, "this coalition was not shaped by the submission of higher managers to the head of solidarity, Longchamp. They really shared a similar vision about unemployed people". As a matter of fact, Eric Etienne was one of the founders of Realise in the mid 1980's and therefore involved in the reintegration of marginalized groups in employment a long time before working at the Office for Employment. Individual trajectories help to understand why people join and work together on some specific projects or reforms. The most important output achieved by this coalition is the introduction of significant changes into the role of the Office for Social Assistance, *The Hospice general*. The latter is now in charge of implementing diverse tools to encourage people on benefits to participate to the labour market as the assistant head of this institution told us:

> *The main orientation of the Hospice General is now focused on employment. The population voted in favour of the LIASI and we have a new mission: working on the professional integration of people on benefits who do not receive the unemployment insurance any longer. The Office for Employment was previously in charge. But it is now our role. Social policy in Geneva is in charge of reinforcing the professional integration of people and we have*

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implemented specific new services. We aim at working on a lasting/sustainable integration to enable people to maintain in the labour market.

Another coalition has been very critical on the conciliation of social assistance and employment. The common point of these diverse participants –the Socialist party, *Solidarités* or NGO's such as Trialog- is that they insist on how unemployed people are mistreated by the state services due to the new frame focusing on employment. According to Arnaud Moreillon, "the RMCAS was repealed in favour of another approach in which the individual is in charge of his employability. The service for reintegration offers a one week evaluation to measure distance from employment. What we look at is whether people are involved enough to accept such a kind of humiliation".

3. THE FIELD OF CHILDCARE

Most of the stakeholders agree with the insufficient number of childcare places in the city of Geneva. We have been observing three frames emerging from the debates. The first one, which is the most representative, is related to the combination of family and working activities. The female working rate in Switzerland is one of the most important in the European countries but we also note that women are heavily over represented in part-time jobs (one of the most important rate in Europe). Female participation to the labour market should be encouraged through a rise of the childcare places in the city: participants with diverse and even opposing interests agree with this outcome.

"Conciliation between family life and working activity must be supported and a more important childcare offer can participate to achieve this goal" (Cantonal Federation of employers").

"New childcare places would offer women and men -mothers and fathers- more opportunities to combine working activities and family life, to value their qualification, to have a more important income and get out from precariousness" (Organization of higher managers in the childcare area).

"The economy of our country would benefit to enable mothers to go back to the labour market as soon as possible before they distance too much from working activities" (The Christian Democrat Party).

Beyond the general agreement, we may nonetheless mention that some organizations exclusively refer to women or do not refer to the gender equality in an explicit way whereas the ARDIPE for instance includes men and fathers in the arguments. Childcare concerns both women and men to the ARDIPE point of view, which is not mentioned by other participants. The frame of fertility was weakly mentioned in the Geneva debates even though we may consider that it is a bit active behind the stage. Switzerland has a quite average rate of fertility for twenty years (between 1.3 and 1. 5 children per woman). The issue of women who do not have any children and seem to choose career rather than family life has been mentioned in the Confederation policy but very few participants referred to this frame in Geneva.

The financial crisis has led many participants to underscore the child care expenditures. To some participants, professionals' wages and norms in a matter of management are too high, which hampers the creation of new structures. The Democrat-Christian party tabled motion in the Cantonal parliament to revise norms downwards and reduce the number of employees:

Financial costs for building and managing childcare centres are too high for cities and towns. The costs of a childcare place represents 30 000 francs per year. Money brought by parents varies according to their income and goes from 3600 to 24 000 francs per year. What is hampering the building of childcare centres is not the investments costs but those related the managements of structures. Excessive norms mean very high costs, which also discourage companies to implement childcare structures for their employees (PDC motion).

The right wing party (Liberal radical party) also proposed to lower the existing standards in order to enable private companies to build childcare facilities and to make higher the number of places. The PDC and PLR motions were the starting point of significant debates.

3.1. What is childcare?

First of all, participants do not have similar conceptions of the childcare working activity. The PDC and the PLR claim for a lowering of standards and the possibility to hire unemployed people to take care of children. We do not need to have only qualified workers to care about children and a significant part of workers may be non-qualified, according to these political parties. Luc Barthassat, a PDC member even said that "changing babies' nappies does not require higher degrees". To these participants, caring about children is not necessarily a working activity with a specific set of knowledge and know-hows. Caring refers here to the domestic and the mothering spheres with daily gestures such as nurturing, changing nappies or bathing. As Caroline Ibos argues: "The word *nounou* (or nanny) shows the social disregard with respect to women. This word shows the submission of people caring to the children' desires. How could a society take seriously these women while their job is identified in such a regressive way?" (p.229). The former head of the Geneva Red Cross also shares this perspective although her view is more balanced. She argues: "we need qualified professionals but childcare centers may also employ women with a common sense and another vision".

The Ardipe, an organization of managers in the childcare sector, wrote an open letter which defended a professional view of the caring of children. First of all, workers emphasized the social disregard expressed by the PDC motion, a "disregard of childcare workers and babies". In addition, they argue that the environment in which they work is not similar to the home: "we face plurality of values and needs, the diversity of situations and individuals". Moreover, according to this organization, "working in childcare centres requires actions in a matter of prevention, socialization, integration, which requires skills in psychology, communication and pedagogy". The PDC referred to daily gestures such as changing nappies and the Ardipe answered by emphasizing a conceptual approach of caring: "theorizing educative goals, elaborating an institutional project, reinforcing parental skills, meeting individuals needs through a generous and balanced approach, creating social ties" (the Ardipe open letter). The intellectual dimensions of the childcare work are clearly brought out in order to contradict the mothering approach defended by some other participants. The Ardipe argued that taking care of children required not only a training of three years but also a significant professional experience. Professionalization of the childcare is building through the making of an expertise, the definition of a system of references and the controlling of the access to the profession (Aballea, 1992). This open letter was also a search of respect of these professionals. "The childcare area is still considered as one not requiring specific skills. There is a lack of recognition of our work and a lack of recognition of this life stage, the childhood" (Marianne Zogmal, co-initiator of the Ardipe petition).

Beyond the qualification of childcare workers, the debates raised issues about the care activities in general. They are often associated with tenderness, empathy and kindness –all considered as typically female qualities. This is reinforced by the growing number of female migrants in the care activities in the European countries. Coming from South America or West Africa, they are often perceived as "naturally" caring because their socialization would have made them familiar with this attitude. Female and race stereotypes converge to overlook professional skills. Still, research show that kindness and empathy are mainly, in the professional area, a know-how acquired through a training and professional experience. Caring and supporting require a tangible work (Molinier 2008). Moreover, "nannies" are most of the time chosen according to the tenderness and caring they are able to give to children. But studies on this category of workers show how they distance, in their "for intérieur", from the children they take care of and their parents. Far from the enchanted vision of the naturally and unquestioningly "loving nanny", they criticize education given by parents and easily forget children they take care of once the job is completed.

3.2. Who should be in charge of childcare ?

In the local welfare system, diverse coalitions oppose about the production of childcare services. We find first of all a constellation of actors considering that public facilities should have a near monopoly in a matter of childcare: building and management of facilities, control of standards, conception of services. In 2011, initiative 143 called "In favour in a real childcare policy" was launched by the Socialist Party and The Greens. The file claimed for the mention of a right to a childcare place for each child in the Constitution of the Geneva State. In addition, the petition emphasized the responsibilities of the cities and the Canton with respect to the creation of more childcare facilities.

> **Article 160G**
> Each child has a right to a childcare place. Besides the family, the State and cities must enact this right while respecting parental choice.
>
> **Means**
> In order to create favourable conditions for families, cities, supported by the State, analyse the needs, plan and implement day care facilities.
> The State is in charge of the monitoring of day care facilities. It supports the creation and the exploitation of childcare places (…).
>
> **Deadline**
> As far as this initiative is approved by the population, the State will guaranty that cities or gathering of cities abide to the Constitutional principles in a matter of childcare in the next five years.
>
> (Petition launched by the PS and the Greens)

This initiative is funded on the key core idea that the only way to guaranty equality between families and between children is a massive state intervention. It should constraint cities to offer more childcare facilities. The inclusion of new right in the Constitution turns the childcare place into a legal obligation to which the State has to abide as far as the Constitution is the higher level in the hierarchy of norms. Cities also have a key-role as they are in charge of planning the childcare offer and coordinate the network, with significant financial constraints. Marianne Zogmal, the former President and current Secretary of the ARDIPE is also part of this coalition defending the key-role of the state

and public facilities. She is as a matter of fact quire reluctant with respect to the development of the *Mamans de jour*, welcoming children every day at home. Although they receive a training in NGO's, Marianne Zogmal says:

> *It is a problematic solution because these women should be supported and have a place/space to think about their own practises. There are important and complicating issues when people take care of children who are not their own. The State has to guaranty the quality of the diverse solutions with similar rules for all. From my point of view, the Canton should have a key role in coordinating cities and guaranty the equality.*

We may wonder to what extent this perspective on childcare services is coherent with the general orientations of the local welfare which tends to encourage initiatives from individuals and for profit/non-profit organizations. Civil society is quite overlooked in the Petition 143 and only appears in an article referring to NGO's. This petition seems to be, to some extent, close to the tradition of centralism and may remind a French law obliging cities to build social housing (2000).

To the contrary, another constellation of actors defends the intervention of other producers in the childcare area and points out the discouraging effect of strict standards. Differing from Marianne Zogmal, Eliane Babel Guérin, the head of the Geneva Red Cross, has a positive opinion of the *mamans de jour* system and criticizes the strict control of the access to the childcare professions.

> *The Red Cross implemented a home-care system. These women have no education in the childcare area but they follow training once they work with us. Public facilities require employees with a school qualification, this is absolutely silly! Women working at the Red Cross cannot be hired in public facilities, we are wasting skills!*

Eliane Babel Guérin also supports the creation of childcare facilities by for profit companies as the Liberal radical Party. The motion tabled on Parliament argues that the childcare is the outcome of diverse participants- private and public, for profit and non-profit. They defend a partnership between participants rather than a state as a central organizer. The Liberal radical Party as the PDC argue that the high level of standards in childcare facilities discourages private initiatives and hampers the creation of new facilities. For the PDC, achieving equality, that is to say welcoming as many children as possible in the childcare facilities, is only possible through a State withdrawal, contrary to the first coalition. In this perspective, freedom and equality are combined whereas the Petition defends regulation/constraints and equality.

3.3. Privatization or opening of the debate ?

Within the childcare area, we find diverse social representations about who should be allowed to participate to the debates. A coalition mainly comprised of managers of childcare facilities tends to monopolize the right to take part in the debate. It appears in the open letter launched by the NGO Ardipe:

> *To the female and male politicians: we are grateful to you when your engagement contributes to improve situations of families, equality of life chances and to reduce gender inequalities. However, we would like to ask you to let us work properly in order*

to fulfil our tasks. Please do not question our work through arguments which tend to make parents and children more fragile.

The interview with Marianne Zogmal repeats this position:

At the political level, there is a very weak knowledge of concrete issues and realities. For instance, politicians defend a social philosophy but they know very little about the situation of families. There is no politician coming with concrete proposals, with a good knowledge of the sector. On childcare, many people think they know to which they speak about. People throw ideas without getting the relevant information.

To the Ardipe, childcare workers and especially managers are the first experts in childcare and the organization tends to deny politicians any knowledge in childcare and even the right to take part in the debate ("do not question our work", "let us work"). The Ardipe wants to say what the general interest is in a matter of childcare through a monopole of expertise.

In addition, the NGO claims for a status of representative of the parents' and children interests and tends to overlook the democratic process through which members of the Parliament were elected by the local population. We have been observing a paradox in the Ardipe position: it referred to parents and children, a significant part of the population, but at the same time it tends to close the debate. It reminds another context and what Bruno Jobert writes about the *grands corps* in France": they consider public opinion as a potential source of mobilization against a political elite in order to reinforce their own perspective/projet" (Jobert, p.228).

This orientation of the coalition is quite discordant with the Helvetic democracy which tends to favour debates and the expression of opposing points of view. In 2012, the Petition launched by the Socialist Party/the Greens was submitting for voting as well as the counter project proposed by the members of the Parliament. Each citizen was called for expressing his view and preferences in a matter of childcare.

ANNEX 1: POLITICAL PARTY POSITIONS

Party	Stand points in party's programs	Topic	Key quotations
The Socialist party	The RMCAS should not disappear because it is a relevant and necessary transition before the unemployment allowance system and social assistance. To the Socialist Party for instance, solving unemployment problems requires making more diverse employment in the region and offering low qualified jobs in diverse sectors such as childcare, elderly care, in the green tech sector, catering; the Socialists emphasize the need of an industrial general policy impacting upon the job offer.	Employment	« The main problem of the RMCAS is not about what it has been but about what we have done with it (or rather not done) ! » (Flyer of the Socialist Party).
Liberal-Radical Party	The party emphasizes individual responsibility towards search of a job. Public policy should be more oriented towards professional reintegration of unemployed people. To the Liberal party, the Cantonal minimum income discourages unemployed people to look for a job and has become a kind of annuity working again reintegration of people in the labour market. Therefore, they support the implementation of the Law for an individualized social assistance.	Employment	« The RMCAS is more an annuity than a way to employment » (Journal of the Liberal party).
Solidarités	This party is involved in maintaining a specific policy that enables long term unemployed people to receive a specific allowance, different from social assistance. Fighting unemployment requires impacting upon the job offer through more subsidized and	Employment	

	state employment.		
The Democrat-Christian party	The Democrat-Christian party tabled motion in the Cantonal parliament to revise norms downwards and reduce the number of employees Professionals' wages and norms in a matter of management are too high, which hampers the creation of new structures. What is hampering the building of childcare centres is not the investments costs but those related the managements of structures.	Childcare	"Excessive norms mean very high costs, which also discourage companies to implement childcare structures for their employees". "We do not need to have only qualified workers to care about children and a significant part of workers may be non-qualified".
The Socialist party- **The Greens**	In 2011, the Socialist party and the Greens launched a petition called an initiative 143 called "In favour in a real childcare policy". The file claimed for the mention of a right to a childcare place for each child in the Constitution of the Geneva State. The inclusion of new right in the Constitution turns the childcare place into a legal obligation to which the State has to abide as far as the Constitution is the higher level in the hierarchy of norms. Contrary to the Liberals and the Christian Democrat Part, this petition does not emphasize the role of the for profit sector.	Childcare	

ANNEX 2: LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Name	Status	Contacts
Lydia Schneider Hauser	Member of the Geneva Parliament (MP, Socialist Party)	+41 79 382 82 89 lydia.schneider@gc.ge.ch
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Antonio Hodgers	Member of the Federal parliament (The Greens, Bern)	Antonio.Hodgers@parl.ch
Pierre Weiss	Member of the Geneva Parliament (The Liberal party)	Pierre.Weiss@gc.ge.ch
Arnaud Moreillon	Secretary of the Geneva Socialist Party	arnaud.moreillon@ps-ge.ch
Christophe Dunand	Head of the NGO REALISE (employment of marginalised populations)	christophe.dunand@realise.ch
Michel Nicollet	Adjunct head of the Hospice Général (main administration in social policy in the canton of Geneva)	Secretary : Barbara.Gonzalez@hospicegeneral.ch
Marc Bretton	Journalist (*Tribune de Genève*)	Marc.Bretton@tdg.ch
Eric Budry	Journalist (*Tribune de Genève*)	Eric.Budry@tdg.ch
Marianne Zogmal	Head of a childcare facility and expert in childcare Former head of the Geneva Association of childcare managers	tou@ipe-ge.ch
Doris Gorgé Valérie Vonlanthen	Head of the association Le Trialogue (for unemployed and marginalized populations) Her colleague	cgorge@infomaniak.ch
Frederic Esposito	Professor at the University of Geneva Expert in governance	Frederic.Esposito@unige.ch

André Klopmann	Adjunct head of the Chancellerie d'Etat (Canton of Geneva)	+41 (22) 327 95 30 andre.klopmann@etat.ge.ch
Eliane Babel	Former Head of the Geneva Red Cross (until june 2012)	ebabel@infomaniak.ch Tel : 0794298022.
Maria Morilla	Adviser at the UAC (Unit for communities, City of Geneva)	Maria.Morilla@ville-ge.ch
Martine Gremaud	Head of the social center (neighbourhood Jonction)	mq.jonction@fase.ch 022/418.94.96

ANNEX 3: NEWS REPORTS

Newspaper	Title of the article	Summary
Le Courrier	"The bourgeois party find an agreement about the reformation of the cantonal assistance". Year of publication: 2007	Published in 2007, at the beginning of the public discussions about the social assistance reform, the article is an account of the debates within the cantonal commissions gathering the diverse political parties. The Liberals, radicals and the Democrats-Christians accepted the reform because they think that this reform may significantly reinforce the professional integration dimension of social assistance. The very conservative party UDC and the Socialist Party are opposed to the reform but for very different reasons. The UDC thinks that this reform is still "too much social" and will not lower public funding in social assistance. The Socialist party criticized this reform as it would mean a lowering of the monthly allowance received by beneficiaries.
Le Courrier	"The end of the Cantonal Minimun Income for Social Assistance and the implementation of the new law". Year of publication: 2011	Published in November 2011, this article is an account of the outcomes of the popular votes about the reform of social assistance. The new law was approved by the population of the Geneva canton (54,8% of people answered yes to reform). The residents of the city of Geneva disapproved it but results showed differences according the neighbourhoods (the wealthiest ones approved while the "no side" won in mixed areas such as Jonction). Finally, many semi-rural towns located in the

		canton of Geneva approved the reform especially the most prosperous ones. In a town such as Vandoeuvres, the "yes side" represented 84% of people voting.
La Tribune de Genève	"The Geneva Canton said yes to the end of the Cantonal Minimum Income for Social Assistance". Year of publication: 2011	This article is also about the results of popular votes and relates how the diverse participants reacted. The Head of the Organization of the Geneva Companies approved the result and said that the latter meant a shift of social assistance: from an allowance regime to a professional integration regime. Jocelyne Haller, from the Political party Solidarités, argued that this result was a breach in a matter of social cohesion and said that an observatory of the law will be created soon.
La Tribune de Genève	"Some unemployed people deprived of regular programs of reintegration into the labour market". Year of publication: 2012	In this article published one year after the implementation of the new law, the journalist emphasized that some beneficiaries of social allowances do not access to the programs of professional reintegration contrary to the law program. "Promises made in the campaign are not all respected" wrote the journalist who also interviewed a socialist MP about this issue.
La Tribune de Genève	"Was the Minimum social Income for social assistance sacrificed in vain?" 2013	"The new law implemented in February 2012 is a failure according to its opponents" wrote the journalist. They argued that professional assessment of beneficiaries of social allowances is "humiliating and gruelling". In addition, the staff is not properly trained for this assessment and does not have time to do it.

Le Temps	"Geneva discusses the constitutional right to have a childcare place"

Year of publication: 2013 | At the very beginning of the article, the journalist reminds that only ten towns out of the 45 located in the Geneva Canton provide the most important part of the childcare facilities. The article is about the debates taking place about childcare within the cantonal commission. The Greens and the Socialist party launched an initiative called "In favour in a real childcare policy". The file claimed for the mention of a right to a childcare place for each child in the Constitution of the Geneva State. In addition, the petition emphasized the responsibilities of the cities and the Canton with respect to the creation of more childcare facilities. The right wing parties are really opposed to this law according to three arguments: they do not support the idea of a law that people may claim for in a court procedure. Also, they do not believe in the power of the law that would be illusory as the inefficient right to housing. Finally, they think that local governments should not be considered as the only childcare providers and they claim for a greater participation of private companies. |
| *Le Courrier* | "Right wing parties want to lower supervision standards in childcare facilities".

Year of publication: 2006 | The Geneva parliament discussed three motions about childcare proposed by the right wing parties. The Democrat-Christian party tabled two motions to revise norms downwards and reduce |

		the number of employees:
		"What is hampering the building of childcare centres is not the investments costs but those related the managements of structures. Excessive norms mean very high costs, which also discourage companies to implement childcare structures for their employees (DC Motion). The DC proposes to reduce the supervision standards (12 children for one adult instead of 10) and to employ volunteers in childcare facilities. Only half of the staff should be really qualified according to this party. The Liberal radical party tabled a motion also proposing to lower the existing building standards in order to enable private companies to build childcare facilities and to make higher the number of places.
Le Courrier	"The pragmatic version is the winner" Year of publication: 2012	This article is about the results of the popular votes about the childcare sector in the Geneva Canton. Two proposals were offered to the Geneva population. The first was about the constitutional right to a childcare place for each child (initiative launched by the Greens and the Socialist party) and the second text was the counter project elaborated by the Geneva parliament. The Geneva population accepted the principle of a constitutional right to a childcare place for each child but it preferred the implementation offered by

		the counterproject according to which the canton and towns have to share the childcare costs. The population disapproved the implementation proposed by the Green-Socialist initiative in which tows should provide most of the effort within five years.